

A RESOURCE FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES



Volume 17 Issue 05

A photograph of five business professionals—three men and two women—seated around a large, dark, reflective conference table in a modern office setting. They are all dressed in professional attire, including suits and blouses. The man on the far left has a beard and is looking towards the camera. The woman next to him is smiling. The man in the center is bald and looking slightly to his right. The woman on the right is wearing a blue dress and a necklace. The man on the far right is also smiling. The background shows glass walls and a bright hallway.

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## BUSINESS LINK MEDIA GROUP

# Here We Grow Again!

*Business Link Media Group moves to brand new location in the Honeymoon Capital.*

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By Scott Leslie

From the very beginning, The Business Link team has been committed to educating, informing and profiling local businesses – and helping them be the best they can be.

Today, we're pleased to announce that we're taking that commitment to the next level by moving to a brand new location.

As of April 15th, Business Link Media Group's offices will be located at:

**4056 Dorchester Road, Suite 101  
Niagara Falls, ON L2E 6M9**

The last few years have been busy a busy time for The Business Link team. For years, our firm operated out of a small upstairs unit in a building on 13 Secord Drive in St. Catharines. By the summer of 2011, however, we'd begun to outgrow our office and moved to a more expansive location on 36 Hiscott Street, Suite 200, just off Ontario Street. As the firm continued to branch out into other areas like digital advertising and social media, the company also rebranded itself

as Business Link Media Group in February of 2013. And last year, we proudly marked our 15th anniversary in business.

With our convenient new office in Niagara Falls, we're located adjacent to the QEW and will be able to continue serving our clients throughout the Golden Horseshoe area. Please note that all mailings and inquiries should now be directed to our Niagara Falls address. (Our phone number and other contact info like email addresses will all remain the same.)

Rest assured, we'll continue to dedicate our efforts to providing a unique combination of direct mail B2B publications, magazines, specialty custom publications, event programs, social media and online platforms. We've also expanded our reach substantially in recent years by addressing the growing needs of the global marketplace. Our value-added services now include digital marketing, website building, event organization, distribution, international marketing consulting and plan implementation, and print services.

We look forward to helping you grow your business today, tomorrow – and well into the future. **BL**



## This Just In!

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- Check it out today by going to the Google Play Store at <https://play.google.com/store>.  
*Currently available for the Android system.*

# MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING: A DONE DEAL FOR NIAGARA?

By Rob Welch

Niagara is in the crosshairs for some form of municipal restructuring. Premier Doug Ford has more than once decried the number of elected municipal politicians in the Region (126) are excessive for our population size. We have a population of 448,000 here in Niagara served by 12 municipal councils and 1 Regional Council. The Province has undertaken a review of regional governance in parts of Ontario (including in Niagara). Results and recommendations are expected later this year. Full disclosure, our law firm has been retained by a group of individuals who are advocating for one particular option and Lancaster Brooks and Welch LLP also performs legal services for two area municipalities.

When the Premier announced, and the present provincial government passed, legislation cutting the size of Toronto's council last fall, during the municipal campaign, some observers felt that this would be an obvious action to be replicated in our region. While that may be viewed as simple undertaking for our region, the harder job, and the one that will be the more important, will be the possible change in municipal boundaries. What will that mean for residents of the region? – possibly enhancing service delivery, with potential consolidation of some of the departments and agencies that deliver those services.

Any boundary adjustments or municipal mergers will be controversial and could be met with strong opposition. However, it should be noted that much consolidation has already taken place outside the government sector. For example, the YMCA of Niagara was an amalgamation of three, then four, more locally-based Ys in the first decade of this century. The United Way of Niagara came about just this past year. We have a Niagara Community Foundation. Some might argue that these, and other, organizations have led the way, and municipal restructuring hasn't followed yet.

Nonetheless those in municipal elected office will have significant challenges ahead when these changes are announced. While anything is possible, I would imagine that any new initiatives will not be implemented until municip-

ipal election time in 2022. I would expect that they will be significant, and some might be surprising. We'll know soon enough.

Benefits and detriments of such changes are difficult to predict. There might be some short-term savings from a reduction in municipal councils and/or councillors. However, the Toronto experience of this year seems to indicate that those savings are minimal. (Part of that might be due to the severance payments former/defeated councillors were entitled to in Toronto). Streamlining of points of access to municipal departments could possibly be helpful to those seeking approvals for projects. That could be a definite plus for some. One major worry, for me anyway, is that there could be an enhanced level of service required for whatever municipal government or governments come after this restructuring (public health, welfare, policing, for example), without a corresponding increase in transfers from the Province to help carry those functions out. This was the experience in Ontario when downloading occurred in the Mike Harris years.

Municipal government is important. It's the closest to the people and looks after the services that for some are the most important. Merely reducing the number of councils and/or councillors, without a strong look at the function of the entity or entities that come after restructuring, could result in a short-term "fix" resulting in a bigger problem. Here's hoping that whatever is done is done right with an eye on a long view as opposed to a short budgetary gain. **BL**

---

*Rob Welch is a partner at Lancaster, Brooks and Welch LLP. From 1985-1994, he served as a Regional Councillor representing St. Catharines. He's a past chair of YMCA Niagara and has also served on the boards of the Niagara Community Foundation and United Way. He chaired the former Niagara District Health Council's Hospital Restructuring Steering Committee in 1996-1997 and has been a candidate for municipal and provincial office. From 1992-2018 he held office as Chancellor of the Anglican Diocese of Niagara. Rob may be contacted at 905.641.1551.*



**ROB WELCH** is Partner within the Lancaster Brooks & Welch LLP Wills, Estates and Real Estate Department.

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most important day in the life of your system is the day it is installed. That's why we are introducing our own private label furnace and AC, called Evenflow by Enviro-Niagara. Signing off on each furnace as an artist would sign their work." according to Konderka.

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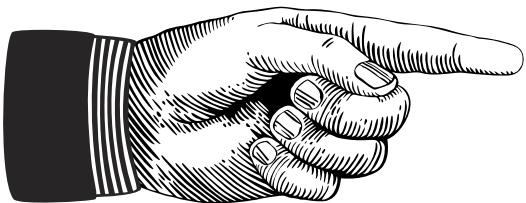
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# The Blame Game

BY DENNIS O'NEILL

It happens a lot in sports. Maple Leaf crowds in Toronto thrive on picking a scapegoat and driving the player out of town. Does it happen in business? For sure. One person gets blamed for a whole lot of things. Often that person has not caused the problem. But they get the reproach.

The Oxford Dictionary defines scapegoat as "a person who is blamed for the wrongdoings, mistakes or faults of others, especially for reasons of expediency." Does someone occupy the scapegoat role in your firm?

The solution! Own up. Teamwork and finding scapegoats can't co-exist. **BL**

Dennis O'Neill, *The Business Growth Coach* is located in Niagara-on-the-Lake. For more information on how to grow your business, please call 905.641.8777, email [dennis@dennisonneillcoach.com](mailto:dennis@dennisonneillcoach.com) or visit [www.dennisonneillcoach.com](http://www.dennisonneillcoach.com).

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## INNOVATION INSIGHTS



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### WHY I CHOSE ST. CATHARINES

BY RANSOM HAWLEY

Four years ago, I had just quit my full-time marketing job to establish and launch Caddle. For myself and our management team, our decision was personal to locate Caddle in St. Catharines; we have roots in Niagara and want it to be part of its success.

#### 1. Access to high-quality talent and lower startup costs

Four years in, I'm still shocked by what's here. If we can't find the talent we need right in St. Catharines, it's available close by. We chose Niagara as our home for the region's lower cost of living, natural wonders, quality of life, and arguably easier access to talent.

Niagara offers the best of both worlds. As a growing region, it's just far enough away from hectic mid-Toronto traffic but close enough that we can jump on the QEW when we need to. Plus, we now have the daily GO train!

Caddle is thriving and continues to grow. In Toronto, we'd have been one of a million promising startups. In St. Catharines, we're a big fish in a small pond. We attract highly talented people in technology, marketing and customer experience.

#### 2. Exceptional quality of life and sense of community

Our employees love the short commute as well. Brian Cline, our head of technology, commuted to Etobicoke for years. Now, he has about a 20-minute commute.

Most of our staff live within a 15 to 20-minute drive, which means they can spend that time with their families and not face the gridlock of GTA traffic every day. We find that our staff love the community they live and work in.

From the first day, I've stressed the importance of family, flexibility, and work-life balance. Because our employees tend to stick around, they enjoy a lot of trust and flexibility within our team, which makes for a happy, productive work environment.

#### 3. Government funding and support

As for local support, there's Innovate Niagara, a business incubator for the region's entrepreneurs. The team there have been critical to our success, from walking us through incorporation to legal advice and hiring employees. They are one of many organizations and agencies playing a role in building our flourishing tech community.

When I knocked on their door, I had an idea, but I didn't know how to turn it into an app. Within our first three months, they'd connected me with legal resources, given me names of three local web developers, and introduced me to their executives in residence.

#### Moving Forward

The future looks bright. We're confident in the leadership at city hall and wholeheartedly believe in Mayor Walter Sendzik's vision. With the right programs, opportunities for incubation and the right incentives, St. Catharines will be at the forefront of innovation. I look forward to the day when Caddle is just another of the many digital pioneers who saw Niagara's potential in its early stages. **BL**

Ransom Hawley is the CEO of Caddle Inc., a consumer insights marketplace serving the consumer-packaged goods industry. Caddle Inc. is based in St. Catharines.

# A HANDSHAKE WON'T HELP YOU

BY LAURA TOLHOEK

You have poured over each word of your job posting and debated where and when to post it. You spent hours reviewing resumes that came in and interviewed each candidate to discover more about their experience and strengths. You discussed your options and weighed the strengths of each candidate. Now, you have made your final choice.

After you've taken all the steps to make a great hiring decision, don't neglect to protect the interests of both you and your potential new hire. A handshake cannot provide the confidence you need in this legal situation. It is prudent to have a thorough and comprehensive employment contract document or what is often called an "offer letter."

**Why?** - The offer letter stands as the last piece of the employer's sale. Hiring is not only about the business looking to bring on a new employee. It is equally about an individual weighing all options for what it is that they want in their new position. In our current competitive hiring landscape, the offer letter stands as a marketing piece and defines who you are as an employer and what you bring to the employment relationship.

The offer letter protects both the employer and the new employee against future risks. A well-crafted letter can legally define the employment relationship by outlining the responsibilities and the expectations of each party. It stands to be the single most important document for entering and exiting an employment relationship.

Finally, a comprehensive employment contract document decreases the chance of confusion. Interpretation of what may have been said in an interview or any verbal conversation through the recruitment process can be outlined, defined, and negotiated through the contract presentation phase.

## An offer letter should include:

- job title
- start date
- salary
- status (full-time, part-time)
- benefits eligibility
- vacation entitlement
- termination clause including probationary period
- Confidentiality, non-compete or moonlighting clauses (if applicable)

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It should also make known that the offer is conditional upon relevant items such as:

- reference verification
- background check
- education verification
- driver's abstract
- previous non-compete review

When it comes to legal protection, ensuring "consideration" is given by the new hire is of great importance. Within the offer, request a signed response of acceptance by a specified date. This date must be prior to the potential start date. Best practise is to set the date three days after the written offer is presented. Also, within the offer encourage the individual to not feel pressured to sign on the spot but obtain advice that will allow him or her to make a confident decision.

Most importantly, seek advice on your employment contract document. Case law constantly updates the language and clause requirements for employment contracts. It's important to have confidence that your employment contract will legally protect you when you need it most.

Take all the necessary steps to outline the tenets of your employment relationship with your new candidate in an offer letter. Let the handshake solidify your trust and confidence in their abilities.

**HR Tip:** Remember, onboarding begins at the offer letter's acceptance. Your employer brand is being analyzed through each interaction with potential hires. Guard your brand's reputation throughout your recruitment process by ensuring communication, in all its forms, is timely and consistent. **BL**

*Laura Tolhoek is the proprietor of Essential HR. She offers hands-on HR services to businesses in Niagara. Her passion is being able to help owners and managers in a way that lets them focus on their strengths and the core of their business.*

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## QUARTER CENTURY OF CELEBRATING CANADIAN CULTURE IN NIAGARA FALLS

PROVIDED BY OH CANADA EH?

### OH CANADA EH? DINNER SHOW CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF DINNER THEATRE.

With 4,785 shows performed, entertaining more than 870,000, Canadiana Productions Inc. is planning a showstopper for this season's Oh Canada Eh? Dinner Show.

Celebrating its silver anniversary staging dinner theatre performances in Niagara Falls, Canadiana Productions Inc. is putting together a show that represents the best of its past, with some new humour, songs and dance to keep it fresh — and all of it is done in the typical Oh Canada Eh? style celebrating the best of Canadian culture.

"For 25 years now we have been staging this show in Niagara Falls," says Eric Hitchcock, general manager for Canadiana Productions,

"and while it would be typically Canadian of us to just politely stand by and say nothing, there is simply too much good Canadian content out there that we can't help but make our award-winning show even better. We are such a low-key people by nature, but Canadian music is excellent, and we have a good sense of humour, so we are able to laugh at ourselves."

Oh Canada Eh? tells a Canadian story through the music of Canadian artists and performers. Each show is an immersive experience with the performers also mingling with the guests, creating a unique experience to get up close to the actors.

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"The entire show ebbs and flows through the emotions we feel as human beings," says Siegel. "We have worked hard to create an emotional attachment to the show, and when you get to the last number you can't help but feel patriotic."

Siegel describes the show as a kind of visual representation of Trivial Pursuit — incidentally a game created in Canada — with a lot of little known facts and tidbits about the Great White North that may raise an eyebrow or two.

For example, the song Wrecking Ball, made famous by popstar Miley Cyrus, has two Canadian songwriting credits — Cirkut, originally from Halifax, and Stephan Moccio, who hails from St. Catharines.

"We get a lot of this: 'Oh, you like that song? Surprise! It's Canadian,'" Siegel says. "We use vignettes to tell the story of Canadian culture, and it's a great story to tell."

Oh Canada Eh? has become a key feature in the Niagara Falls tourism landscape. With 220 performances each year — including its holiday and spring shows and annual Rocky Horror productions every Halloween — it is estimated to pump \$3-million into Niagara's economic engine annually.

# CONGRATS ON 25 YEARS OH CANADA EH!

From your friends at  
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## CELEBRATING 25 YEARS



The 25th Anniversary production will include Canadian classic songs.

"We have come a long way from our humble beginnings," says Jim Cooper, president of Canadiana Productions Inc. "When we launched, nobody figured we'd last six months. For our first five years, we did the same show every time. Now here we are 25 years later, producing Oh Canada Eh? during the tourism season, and three or four original productions through the fall and winter months."

Another testament to the popularity of the Oh Canada Eh? show is their new expansion into Ottawa. This year, Canadiana Productions Inc. has partnered with Totally Legit Productions in Ottawa to bring the show to our nation's capital. Just in time for the Canada Day weekend, Oh Canada Eh? opens June 28th at Clark Hall in the RA Centre on Riverside Drive in Ottawa and will run until September 14th. **BL**

*The 2019 season of Oh Canada Eh? Dinner Show opened in the Log Cabin Theatre on Lundy's Lane in Niagara Falls, Ontario, on April 22nd. For more information, please visit [ohcanadaeh.com](http://ohcanadaeh.com).*

*Follow them on Twitter @OhCanadaEhShow, Instagram @ohcanadaehshow and like it on Facebook. Check out clips of its productions on YouTube.*



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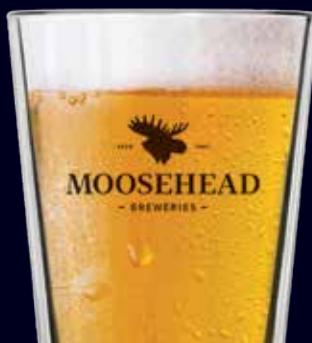
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# THE REAL DEAL

Morris & Parnell Real Estate duo use experienced partners to get the job done for Niagara homebuyers and sellers.

BY SCOTT LESLIE

**B**UYING A HOUSE IS the biggest purchase of your life so it's important to have someone in your corner you can trust – like Dillon Parnell and Ashley Morris.

As two of Niagara's top-selling realtors, Dillon and Ashley have a firm grasp of the Niagara real estate market, having helped their clients buy and sell countless properties throughout the region.

This March, they've taken that client commitment to a whole new level by launching the Morris & Parnell Real Estate Advisors – a subsidiary of their employer Revel Realty Inc.

"Ashley and I have always worked so well together at Revel," Dillon explains. "This seemed like the perfect fit for us."

Serving communities from Fort Erie to Hamilton, Dillon and Ashley mainly deal in residential properties, and are well-known in Niagara for their personable manner, marketing savvy and round-the-clock availability.

Dillon and Ashley have a three-step approach when it comes to doing business. That entails making sure a client is getting exceptional value for their home, providing personalized marketing packages, and putting a strong emphasis on negotiating.

"Our focus on pricing, marketing and negotiation has allowed us to deliver the best results for our clients," Dillon says.

## PARTNERS IN SERVICE

At Morris & Parnell, Dillon and Ashley work hand-in-hand with several partners to ensure their clients receive the best possible customer experience. And Kimberley Gray is a good example. As a Partner at DiSanto & Gray LLP, Kimberley and her team provide legal services to clients referred by Dillon and Ashley, working on the transaction when the agreement of purchase and sale is submitted to her office.

"We rely on Morris & Parnell to provide us with a properly prepared agreement so we can advocate for our clients," Kimberley says. "Morris & Parnell start the process and hand the baton to us to complete the transaction. We're the gatekeepers of the money and do everything we can to ensure the transactions closes to our clients' satisfaction."

Dillon has been working with Kimberley from the moment he started in real estate. She feels their relationship has been beneficial at both ends.

"From the moment I met Dillon, I knew he had all the necessary qualities to become a successful agent and was someone I could trust," Kimberley says. "Right from the start, we referred one another business and have always been able to resolve things effectively and efficiently because of how well we work together."

In many cases, it's necessary for clients to find a mortgage to obtain a certain property. When that issue comes up, Dillon and Ashley bring another expert into the equation – Carmine Mancini, a mortgage agent with

Pinnacle Mortgage Group in Niagara Falls.

"When they refer a client to me," Carmine says, "I'll do a comprehensive review of their financial profile and focus on finding solutions specific to their needs. I want to ensure clients are in a position to obtain a mortgage promptly. If they're not ready to purchase, I'll work on a plan to get them to their home ownership goal – regardless of the timeline."

In Carmine's mind, however, getting a fee is secondary to truly satisfying the clients' needs.

**We're about creating true real estate value and not just a transaction.**

*Dillon Parnell*





Left to Right: Carmine Mancini, Kimberley A. Gray, Dillon Parnell, Ashley Morris and Graham Coppel.

"I use my knowledge and experience to ensure Dillon and Ashley are servicing qualified home buyers and raising their conversion rates," he says. "We're all focused on servicing the client, not on collecting a commission."

Kimberley and Carmine act as resources for Dillon, Ashley and their clients throughout the entire process. That's also the case with Graham Coppel – a licensed insurance agent for the Allstate Insurance Company of Canada. Based in St. Catharines, Graham takes great pride in making himself available for Dillon and Ashley.

"My goal is to provide their clients with sound insurance advice and solutions," Graham explains. "I'm available to prepare quotes, discuss coverages, prepare clients for home inspections, and assist in getting electrical certifications. I also act as a liaison between the client and their legal counsel throughout the closing process."

Graham is always willing to help clients out during the purchase and closing of the home, as well as the ownership period to follow.

"I'm a part of the customer experience, helping to ensure the closing goes smoothly," he says. "I aim to make moving as seamless as possible and make getting the right insurance an easy and positive experience. The peace of mind that comes with knowing a new home is properly protected is priceless."

#### PUTTING THE CLIENT FIRST

Some real estate agents move on as soon as the ink on the agreement is dry. That's not the case with Dillon and Ashley. At Morris & Parnell, they stand by their clients with a full range of after service assistance – whether it's

providing expert advice or following up on their concerns.

"We're with you from the get-go," Dillon says of their clientele. "We're there before, during and after."

Dillon and Ashley are especially proud of the client appreciation program they provide. Three or four times a year, they hold special parties for their clients and people who have referred clients to them. These events include movie nights, winery get-together and family skates. They also drop by clients' homes and offices throughout the year with a little gift to show their gratitude.

Dillon says it's a fun and unique way to build a relationship with their clients.

"It's a great way to stay top-of-mind with our clients," Dillon explains, "but it's also a way to reward them for their business. We're about creating true real estate value and not just a transaction. It's all about the experience for the clients. We wouldn't be where we are today without them."

Right now, Dillon and Ashley operate Morris & Parnell Real Estate Advisors out of Revel Realty's headquarters in Niagara Falls. They've already grown their team to include Sales Representative Mikhail Maronski and Executive Assistant Brittany Goldwin. And their goal is to keep expanding and eventually open their own Revel office.

Being successful is one thing. But Dillon and Ashley are always focused on what really matters most – their clients.

"It's not all about us," Dillon says. "We're not in it just for the deal. We're not happy until they are." **BL**

## HOW TO REACH THE TEAM



**Carmine Mancini**  
Mortgage Agent #M15002008  
905-964-7916

carmine.mancini@pinnaclemortgagroup.ca  
Pinnacle Mortgage Group FSCO #12644



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**Kimberley A. Gray, Partner**  
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905-358-8333



**Ashley Morris & Dillon Parnell**  
Morrisparnell@revelrealty.ca  
www.morrisparnell.com  
905-357-1700

# STREET JUSTICE PARALEGAL SERVICES

**Niagara paralegal team has a strong track record of getting driving charges reduced or withdrawn.**

**By Scott Leslie**

Picture this... Years ago, you were charged with a minor driving offence. Now, you're still being penalized...with high insurance premiums...and employers who won't hire you without a clean driving record. But you don't have to keep paying the price – with Street Justice Paralegal Services on your side.

Street Justice is in the business of helping their clients fight traffic tickets such as speeding, careless driving and driving under suspension.

"People often plead guilty to traffic offences so they can move on with their lives," explains Eric Mattison, the owner of Street Justice. "But the ramifications of that offence can follow you around for years."

When you've been charged, a traffic fine can result in everything from demerit points to licence suspensions to major fines. In some cases, it can even lead to jail time. That's where Street Justice comes in. As paralegals, the Street Justice team works hard to get those charges reduced or withdrawn. They'll even appeal fines after the fact (if possible) so clients can see a reduction in their insurance premiums.

"Your car insurance can get discontinued if your record's bad enough," Eric says, "and the repercussions for car insurance can last three to five years."

At Street Justice, Eric and his partner Ed Kocet understand the stigma of having a criminal record and being wrongly accused of a crime. They both have years of successfully defending their clients in court – and are always keeping up-to-speed with the latest changes to Ontario driving legislations.

Eric says many of their clients are in dire straits. For instance, some people get caught driving without insurance. In many cases, these are low income families who just can't afford the expense. But the resulting fine can reach upwards of \$5,000 – and take a big bite out of their finances.

"We serve clients from all walks of life," Eric says. "That includes doctors, pharmacists, lawyers. But we treat everyone the same and get them the best deal possible."

The Street Justice commitment to defending Niagara's drivers didn't start overnight. Eric launched his company back in February of 2015 as "Traffic Ticket Defender." Later that same year, an opportunity came along and he decided to take over the office of "Road Warriors Paralegal Services."

Originally based in St. Catharines, Eric moved the firm to 438 East Main Street in Welland two years ago so he could be closer to the Welland Provincial Offences Courthouse. Although Eric initially dealt with province-wide law cases, the company rebranded itself as "Street Justice Paralegal Services" in 2018 and is now focused solely on the Niagara Region.

A former traffic officer of the Niagara Regional Police Service, Eric is well acquainted with local law enforcement and Justices of the Peace and how they operate. And that familiarity with the Niagara

area gives Street Justice a big leg up when they're trying to fight a client's case.

"We have a good network with insurance brokers in the region," Eric adds. "We are fully aware of what it takes to keep your insurance premiums low."

In addition to traffic and speeding tickets, the Street Justice team can take on several other types of cases. With the Cannabis Act coming into force recently for instance, some drivers don't realize how big an impact it can have on their future.

"You need to put it in your trunk," Eric says of cannabis. "If you're caught, it can reflect on your driving record, just like alcohol."

When it comes to Ministry of Transportation offences, Street Justice provides information and guidance to several local trucking firms so their drivers know what to look for. Street Justice can even help clients fight fire code fines which can run anywhere from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

Eric says the success of Street Justice all comes down to their determination to stand up for their clients' best interests.

"We provide custom representation and generally get desirable client results," he says. "People don't realize that it's possible to fight tickets like following too closely. They're really surprised. While some people think they can obtain the same results if they attend in person, knowledge of relevant case law and law enforcement training gives us a definite advantage. Our online reviews speak for themselves." **BL**

*Street Justice Paralegal Services is located on 438 East Main Street in Welland. For more information, please call 905.732.9890, email [help@streetjustice.ca](mailto:help@streetjustice.ca) or go to [streetjustice.ca](http://streetjustice.ca).*



# Increased Risk Factors for Stroke in Women

**PROVIDED BY HAMILTON HEALTH SCIENCES FOUNDATION**

Women experience half of all strokes in Canada, but they are more likely to die from their stroke than men. The clinical and research teams at Hamilton Health Sciences are trying to change that outcome.

"Of all stroke deaths each year, 59% are women," says Dr. Sashi Perera, stroke neurologist at Hamilton General Hospital, which is home to the largest Integrated Stroke Program in Ontario. "One of the main reasons is that women on average are older when they have their stroke. Women tend to live longer than their male spouses, so they are more likely to suffer from additional health complications due to advanced age."

A correlation between specific types of migraines and stroke has been identified, and young women are more likely to have migraines than men. Atrial fibrillation, which is an abnormal heart rhythm more commonly experienced by women, is another significant risk factor for stroke.

"Women living with the effects of stroke face more physical and mental challenges as they recover," says Lisa Fronzi, clinical nurse specialist in the Stroke Prevention Clinic at Hamilton General Hospital. "They are nearly twice as likely to require long-term care than men."

As well, women are at a greater risk of stroke at certain stages in their life, such as pregnancy and menopause. Taking oral contraceptives and hormone replacement therapy also increase the risk.

"Recently, we are seeing a spike in younger women below the age of 45 who are suffering a stroke," says Dr. Perera. "Since time is of the essence, it is important that these young women are identified as having a stroke and are treated as quickly as possible. People often think that only older people experience strokes, but this is not the case."

Knowledge is key when it comes to stroke prevention. Women should be aware of their personal risk for stroke, taking into account such factors as lifestyle, diet and family history.

"Studies indicate that about 70% of women are not aware of risk factors for stroke," says Lisa. "It is important that women become better informed about risk factors so they can take action early on to reduce their risk. Some risk factors that can be controlled include high blood pressure, smoking and diabetes."

Knowing the signs of stroke and taking immediate action can significantly improve outcomes.

"It is important to call 911 immediately if you are experiencing symptoms of stroke so you can access potentially lifesaving treatment as quickly as possible," says Lisa.

In addition to her work as a stroke neurologist, Dr. Perera is a researcher who is involved in an international study that is investigating the lack of female representation in stroke studies and how that might be impacting the care of women.

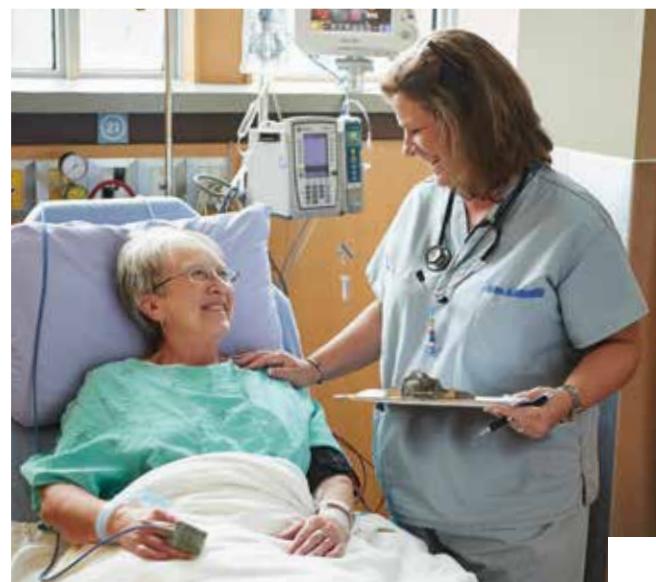
"Approximately two-thirds of participants in stroke studies are male," she explains. "We need to understand why this is the case and encourage more women to participate in stroke research."

The genders differ from each other biologically in many ways, and understanding how these differences relate to stroke might lead to specific treatments that lead to better outcomes for women.

Donor support plays a vital role in ensuring that important research projects like this are possible, and donors also help to ensure that the best possible stroke care is available at Hamilton General Hospital.

"We are passionate about helping patients through their stroke and seeing them recover," says Dr. Perera. "It's extremely rewarding to know that we are making a difference in the lives of women throughout the region." **BL**

*For more information on Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation or to make a donation, please go to [hamiltonhealth.ca](http://hamiltonhealth.ca).*



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### WISE GIRLS 3 ON 3 BASKETBALL TOURNEY

FRIDAY, JUNE 21st, 2019 AT 12:00 PM

MARKET SQUARE, DOWNTOWN ST. CATHARINES

### 6th ANNUAL "CHUCK SMITH" PUB NIGHT

FRIDAY, JULY 12th, 2019 AT 8:00 PM

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### 29th ANNUAL WISE GUYS CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17th, 2019 AT 7:15 AM

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### 13th ANNUAL BOXING NIGHT HONORING THE BOXING LEGENDS

FRIDAY, JULY 19th, 2019 AT 6:00 PM

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### 5th ANNUAL WISE GIRLS TEE PARTY

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## Investing \$250 for a \$43,000 Return

Researchers at the University of Waterloo's Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation say homeowners can protect themselves against the increasing risk of basement flooding with the right information and often less than \$250. Given that the average cost of repairing damage from a basement flood reached \$43,000 in 2018, this is a pretty good return on investment.

From 2016 to 2018, the Intact Centre developed a flood risk assessment tool and completed it with 500 homeowners in Southern Ontario and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. It determined that many people simply don't know the steps to take to prevent basement flooding. It then went on to identify the top risks and list the steps to take for prevention, many of which cost no or very little money.

It determined that basement flooding is on the rise due to a combination of extreme rainfall events, aging municipal infrastructure, lack of flood protection measures at the household level and more hard surfaces and less green space as urban areas develop.

The top flood risks identified also formed the list of prevention measures as follows:

**Inside the home:** No backup sump pump or power source; furniture and electronics at risk of water damage; backwater valves that were not maintained (where one was installed); sump pumps that were not maintained or inspected.

**Outside the home:** Window wells less than 10 - 15 cm above the ground; downspouts that extended less than two metres from the house; grading around the home that did not direct water away from the foundation; cracks or gaps in basement walls, windows and frames.

The report went on to say that 60% of prevention actions were less than \$500 in cost and could be mostly completed by homeowners such as testing your sump pump, cleaning eaves troughs, extending down spouts and even storing items in your basement off the floor or in water proof containers. Other actions might be a little more expensive but still worth the investment such as installing a backup sump pump, installing a backflow valve or replacing basement windows.

I have personally had a backup sump pump installed in my basement. A recent test of the system determined that the float switch for the backup was inoperative and the battery needed replacing. Both have been done. I have also installed a backflow valve and recently cleaned out the valve. It was as simple as cleaning a toilet. **BL**

For more information, go to [www.homefloodprotect.ca](http://www.homefloodprotect.ca). An ounce of protection can be your best insurance!



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## Race For An Amazing Cause

PROVIDED BY THE KRISTEN FRENCH CHILD ADVOCACY CENTRE NIAGARA

Have you heard about "The Amazing Race"? Of course, you have – but have you heard about "The Amazing Race Niagara"? This is Niagara's very own amazing event run by amazing volunteers for an amazing cause...to help, heal and end child abuse. The Kristen French Child Advocacy Centre Niagara is running its 4th Annual Amazing Race Niagara car rally, scavenger hunt and team competition. As Niagara's regional Child Advocacy Centre, we invite you to enter your corporate team in this friendly competition with other teams from the business community.

Support our awareness and outreach to children, youth and their families and show your support for the professionals who undertake specialized interviews at our Centre with children and youth who have experienced abuse.

Be a local hero for children. At \$25 per person for a four-person team (\$100) and a minimum total of \$400 raised in team pledges, this is a fantastic company teambuilding event, loads of fun – and a great way to give back to your community. Add a day of physical and brain exercise into the mix and you have a healthier staff to boot. To enter, just go to [amazingraceniagara.ca](http://amazingraceniagara.ca) and help us win the race against child abuse. **BL**

For more information about the Kristen French Child Advocacy Centre Niagara, go to [www.kristenfrenchcacn.org](http://www.kristenfrenchcacn.org).

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- Builds a stronger corporate team



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# How To Bounce Back From Failure

BY BRETT MEADOWS

The fear of failure can ruin your life. It will limit your happiness, wealth and success. It holds most people back from living to their full potential and living out their dream life. If you want to be successful you can't be most people. The fear of failure forces people to play it safe and settle for a life they never wanted. But that's not going to happen to you in 2019.

If you want to become and live the life you intended in any area of your life, you can't be afraid to fail. Failure is integral to success. You have to understand that failure doesn't mean you should quit something. It's simply the world's way of saying that one way didn't work.

Here's how you can overcome failure and come back better than ever:

**Take 100% Responsibility for You** - The first step to dealing with failure is to take 100% responsibility. As Kevin Ngo said, "When you start to accept responsibility for the results you get in life, you also take back the power to change your future outcome." Don't blame anyone else but yourself. Pushing fail-

ure to someone else or something else externally takes away your power. Instead, think of what that failure taught you, what went wrong and what work do you need to put in so that next time you'll be successful.

## Understand That You're Not a Failure

- Your failures do not define who you are. If you fail, especially if you fail big, you are not a failure. You are a warrior. "I tried and failed" has 10 times the heart of "I never tried." and only a warrior picks themselves up time and time again. You must keep going. Dwelling on your failure will only make the failure gain more power in your life. Instead, acknowledge what happened, learn from it, make a new game plan and move forward. Don't look back. You're not going that way. There's a reason why rearview mirrors are so small.

**Reframe Failures** - Failures are just showing you a way that didn't work. It's not a good enough reason to quit something entirely. It's simply saying this approach didn't work, find another way. Failure can be painful, and that pain will only last for a period of time. Quitting, however, lasts forever! Eric Thomas says it best: "Pain is temporary. It may last for

a minute, or an hour or a day, or even a year. But eventually, it will subside and something else takes its place. If you quit, however, it will last forever."

The more you can learn from your past failures, the more you can take those lessons into future endeavors. Just because something didn't work the first time doesn't mean you're a failure or your idea didn't work. It just means you need to find new solutions, and try, try again.

Always ask for advice, learn from defeat, and keep at it until you reach your goal. Find a way. If you keep knocking on the door for success, eventually it will open and welcome you in. Stay relentless in your pursuit of greatness. Remember, your failures are preparing you for massive success. **BL**

*Brett Meadows trains, coaches, and speaks to salespeople all over the country. For more information on seminars and training, please call Meadows Performance Sales and Strategy at 289.696.3605, email info@brettmeadows.com or go to www.brettmeadows.com.*



# Congratulations Scott Plugers

The KPMG Niagara team are proud to announce that Scott Plugers, Senior Manager, is a 40 Under Forty Business Achievement Award Recipient. Scott works tirelessly to assist his clients in all matters of accounting and assurance while also serving his community as a Director for Welland Minor Hockey and a board member for The RAFT.

KPMG in Niagara is here to help you and your business succeed. Contact Scott and the KPMG Niagara team to help you navigate your next opportunity.

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Matt Mandziuk diving the shipwreck Forest City in Tobermory, ON



Diver Dan in the original dive store in Port Dalhousie 1970's

# Dan's Dive Shop

**Niagara's resident diving experts celebrate 45 years of serving the world's scuba diving instruction and equipment needs.**

By SCOTT LESLIE

It may be silent under water – but Dan's Dive Shop has been making a lot of noise on dry land since it officially opened its doors in 1974. Now celebrating its 45th year in business, Dan's has grown from Niagara's largest provider of scuba diving instruction and equipment to a country-wide resource that supports the recreational, cave and technical diving enthusiast.

It started simply enough. Back in 1971, local diving enthusiast Dan Mandziuk decided to become an ACUC scuba instructor and opened a modest storefront on 48 Lakeport Road in Port Dalhousie three years later. Dan was running his shop on a part-time basis until fate interceded.

"We used to be a mom and pop operation when we started out," says Matt Mandziuk, Dan's son and the present day owner. "My dad was working at GM at the time. A few years in, my mom convinced him to focus on the shop – and he decided to take a leap of faith."

A host of Niagara dive shops have fallen by the wayside over the years. Only Dan's Dive Shop has been able to outlast the competition – for several good reasons. When Dan started operating full-time in 1976 for instance, he was committed to stocking a large inventory so customers could try items on in-store before making a purchase or purchase it over the phone via mail order.

That philosophy stands to this very day.

Now located at 329 Welland Avenue in St. Catharines, Dan's Dive Shop boasts the largest selection of diving equipment in the country – running the gamut from snorkeling gear and exposure suits to metal detectors and swimwear. As well as offering scuba gear rentals, Dan's can service all manner of scuba-related equipment, whether it's repairing regulators or testing compressed gas cylinders.

The Dan's team offers some of the most competitive pricing around and is always looking after their customers' best interests.

"We encourage people to buy basic equipment to start," Matt explains. "Some dive shops will encourage people to purchase the same items repeatedly – not us. We want them to save money and provide them with a lifetime purchase by buying good – and buying once."

Matt takes great pride in pointing out that 35% of their customers are from the GTA.

"Year after year, we have many of the same clients," he says. "Recently,

we've had customers fly in all the way from New York City, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, just to pick up gear they couldn't find anywhere else."

Education has become the cornerstone of the family diving business. Back in the mid-1970s, Matt's father signed up with PADI – the largest international dive training agency in the world. Since that time, Dan's certified instructors have provided on-site and online PADI courses to thousands of students throughout Canada, the U.S. and worldwide.

"We prefer to run small groups with six divers or less," Matt says of their on-site classes. "Sometimes we might have eight or 10 if we have extra instructors."

During the diving season, Dan's also organizes regular scuba diving trips and expeditions. Although many of these take place around the Niagara area, Dan's has arranged diving excursions everywhere from Florida and Newfoundland to Brockville and Tobermory or to many tropical destinations.

"We started doing more formalized trips about five years ago now," Matt explains. "There's been a real boom in travel, and we've been able to capitalize on that."

Matt has been part of the diving field most of his life, having joined the family business in 1997 and purchased Dan's from his semi-retired father in 2014. Even though Matt has seen all kinds of improvements to their shop over the years, there's one thing that never changes at Dan's. It's something Matt and his experienced team are committed to providing – day after day, year after year.

Customer service excellence.

"We offer the Rolls-Royce approach here," he says. "With us, you get BMW performance but not at a BMW price." **BL**



*Dan's Dive Shop is located at 329 Welland Avenue in St. Catharines. For more information on Dan's Dive Shop, call 905.984.2160, email info@dansdiveshop.ca or go to [dansdiveshop.ca](http://dansdiveshop.ca).*

## TAKING “FAKE NEWS” TO THE NEXT LEVEL



BY SCOTT LESLIE

**N**EWS ANCHOR XIN XIAOMENG is a marvel in several ways. That's because she's never spent a day in journalism school. She doesn't have a lick of media experience. In fact, Xin has never taken a breath in her entire life.

That's because Xin is not alive.

Developed by China's state-run news outlet Xinhua and search engine Sogou, Xin

Xiaomeng is the world's first female artificial intelligence news anchor.

For the uninitiated, Xin appears on www.xinhuanet.com and has the ability to mimic a news presenter's voice and expressions while delivering the news in either English or Chinese. Xin had her official debut in early March, covering the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference – two of China's annual political events.

In the past few years, artificial intelligence technology has improved dramatically in China – and designers were able to develop the new computer-generated model based on the voice and appearance of Qu Meng – one of Xinhua's real-life broadcasters.

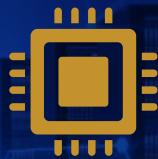
Xin isn't the only "artificial" member of the Xinhua news team. Back in November, Xinhua unveiled the first male artificial intelligence news anchor at the annual World Internet Conference in Wuzhen, China. Named Qiu Hao, their male anchor has been in constant use, racking up 3,400

reports and 10,000 minutes of screen time in its first five months alone.

If Xin and Qiu aren't enough, Xinhua and Sogou are currently developing an improved male artificial intelligence anchor named Xiaohao. This third version will be even more natural-looking than the previous anchors and has the ability to stand and move around like your average person.

One of the advantages of artificial intelligence news anchors is it's possible to display different stories simultaneously on multiple screens worldwide. And the ersatz news presenters never miss a cue.

Real-life news anchors don't have to worry anytime soon. Xinhua is still trying to develop an artificial intelligence news anchor that can mirror the lip movements and finer idiosyncrasies of their human counterparts. But at the very least, Xinhua has discovered how to take the concept of "fake news" to a whole new level. **BL**



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# Want To Be Your Own Boss?

LET WEE WATCH SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS SO YOU CAN DO WHAT YOU LOVE!

BY PAT SIMPSON

Making the decision to be an entrepreneur as a home care provider and being your own boss, earning an income and doing what you love can lead to a rewarding career!

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Best of all, Wee Watch is responsible for the collection of fees from parents and guarantees a bi-weekly pay including statutory holidays. Let Wee Watch support your business so you can do what you love, work with children and celebrate the teachable moments! **BL**

*Pat Simpson is a supervisor at Wee Watch Licensed Home Child Care. To find out more about Wee Watch, please call 905.371.2012 or go to [www.weewatch.com](http://www.weewatch.com).*

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# THE REASON WHY MOST TEAM BUILDING WORKSHOPS DON'T WORK (AND HOW TO ENSURE YOURS DOES)

BY TIM ARNOLD

Picture this... You are participating in a team building workshop and the facilitator challenges your group to get from one side of the conference room to the other, but no one can touch the floor along the way. You can only stand on a small number of placemats that he has provided.

Your team struggles, argues, tries, fails, plans, and slowly but surely, makes it to the other end of the room. Upon completion (and some high-fives), the facilitator asks your team, "What did you learn from that activity?"

Without even participating in this workshop, what do you think the answers will be? My guess is that they will go something like this:

- We needed to plan more!
- We should have selected a leader!
- We needed to hear from everyone in the group!
- We needed more trust!

Satisfied with your learnings, your group will commit to doing all these things back in the workplace. You will go back to work the next day...and nothing will change.

The reality is that most team building workshops don't work. Here's why: they provide simple solutions to complex problems and set people up for disappointment and cynicism.

Now picture this... You are participating in a team building workshop and the facilitator acknowledges that there are no easy answers or simple solutions to how teams work. Instead teams need to identify and manage some chronic issues and conflicting values that cause dysfunction and division. She asks the group to list some of the conflicting values that they commonly experience.

Without even participating in this workshop, what do you think the answers will be? My guess is that they will go something like this:

- Planning vs. action
- Centralized coordination vs. decentralized freedom
- Encouragement vs. critical analysis
- Embracing change vs. preserving stability

Then, your group will commit to keeping these tensions in mind and work hard to manage them in a healthy way. You will go back to work the next day and something amazing will happen. You'll take real steps forward in the path towards effective teamwork!

Most team building workshops don't work because they mistakenly diagnose every team challenge as a simple problem to solve and offer naive solutions that don't fit with the complexity of the real world. To ensure your next team building workshop is a success, you need an experience that helps your team realize that most of the challenges that hold them back are not problems that can be solved but instead, tensions that need to be managed. Then, provide your team with an opportunity to develop the skills required to manage tensions in a healthy way.

Team building workshops have a bad reputation, and for good reason. Ensure your next workshop achieves real results by moving beyond simple solution, and allowing your team to tap into the power of healthy tension. **BL**

*Tim Arnold is passionate about helping leaders get unstuck so they can unite their team, spark change and make a difference. He is the author of the book, *The Power of Healthy Tension*, and speaks to organizations around the globe on how they can overcome chronic issues and conflicting values. For more information, go to [www.leadersforleaders.ca](http://www.leadersforleaders.ca).*



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