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Federal, state officials meet in Wilson to discuss COVID-19 impacts

Pandemic, continued bridge closures affecting lakeshore businesses

BY TERRY DUFFY
Editor-in-Chief

As summer 2020 moves into fall amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the northern Niagara County region continues its struggles with the residual impacts.

On Monday, Village of Wilson Mayor Arthur Lawson met with a number of federal, state and local officials in an attempt to shed some light on what has been a difficult year up on the northern Niagara shores. Attendees at the session held at the Wilson firehall included U.S. Rep. Chris Jacobs, Assemblyman Mike Norris, John Percy of Destination Niagara USA, representatives of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission, representatives of the Army Corps of Engineers Buffalo Dis-



Above: From left, Congressman Chris Jacobs, Assemblyman Mike Norris and Village of Wilson Mayor Arthur Lawson. Below, Norris speaks to visitors at the Village of Wilson meeting. (Submitted photos)

trict, and roughly 20 business interests representing the core of the Wilson-Olcott-Newfane areas.

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NT artist's Ad Age cover submission a window to future success

BY MICHAEL DEPIETRO
Interim Tribune Editor

North Tonawanda native and (now) Buffalo State College graduate Crista Sukennik was recently a finalist for Ad Age magazine's "Young Creatives Cover Competition." Sukennik was one of nine finalists selected out of over 350 submissions from professional artists and industry professionals all over the globe.

This year, the competition tasked artists with creating a cover that would highlight how creativity and ingenuity can help inspire and empower people through the coronavirus pandemic. Sukennik described her design as "the difficulty of not seeing others face to face, but staying creative, humorous and optimistic, nonetheless."

Her submission was simple, striking and immediately recognizable to anyone who's experienced a Zoom meeting since the pandemic began. Using the individual panes of a window to create what she calls the "Brady Bunch" look of a Zoom call, she drew different human figures, each dealing with quarantine life in a different way. Backdropped against an inviting outdoor backdrop, Sukennik's photo is a poignant encapsulation of the period in which it was created.

The finalists were announced in June via livestream. During the announcement, Ad Age representatives had a lot of praise for Sukennik's work. Creative Director Ann-Christine Diaz noted that Sukennik's use of photography helped her work stand out amongst the applicants.

Creative Director Erik Spooner said he and other judges were taken with how much work she had put into really thinking about her concept and story.

"Was she demonstrating, like, a Zoom



Crista Sukennik

call or was she using this as a storyboard herself to tell a different story, or to tell a series of stories? It was just really fun to kind of look at it in any number of different ways – and we all came away with a slightly different take on it. But I thought being able to see through (the window) and see the outside and, you know, looking past it to a day when maybe we could all go back out again. ... It was a nice, sorta take on the moment." Spooner said

Although this year's honors ultimately went to Arnel Villanueva, an associate

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Cuomo advising local health departments to prepare for COVID-19, seasonal flu double-teaming people this fall

Speaking to reporters on a conference call Wednesday, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said New York is in "the second half of the game" – hopefully – with regard to fighting the coronavirus. He said local health departments need to prepare for flu season while not detracting from COVID-19 testing and tracing. Moreover, he said schools need to have a plan to mitigate a possible spread of the virus once campus doors reopen.

"We need to prepare for the second wave. Now the second wave is not the second wave that they originally talked about," Cuomo said. "When they said 'second wave' originally, they were referring to the 1918 pandemic, which had one wave and then a second wave, quote unquote. The second

wave was a mutated virus. The virus mutated and came back as a second virus. Once it mutates, it's technically a second virus. When we started talking about COVID, we talked about a second wave: Could COVID mutate and come back in a second wave?"

"We're still in the first wave. The virus hasn't mutated, but we do have in effect a second wave, which is the flu season is starting. You put the flu season on top of COVID – this is a very difficult situation to deal with and that is going to be the second wave. Dr. (Anthony) Fauci talks about a terrible fall; that's what he's talking about. The CDC says we're going to have a terrible fall. Why? It poses a host of complexities.

"Schools are doing tempera-

ture checks on the way in and they're looking for symptomatic children. First of all, symptomatic children. You don't have to be symptomatic, as we've learned; it can be asymptomatic. But second of all, symptomatic children. You're in flu season – who doesn't have sniffles or a cough? I mean, to pick symptomatic children out of a line is going to be very, very hard. Second, all across the board, you're going to have the same complexity.

"How do you do the flu tests and the COVID tests at the same time? Meaning, we have deployed almost all our lab capacity to do COVID tests. You know what our lab capacity normally did? HIV tests and flu tests. We now have everybody deployed doing CO-

VID tests. They're going to now need to reduce their COVID tests to do flu tests. We were so effective at commandeering testing capacity for COVID tests that there is no flex in the system.

"Department of Health, state Department of Health, is going to send out a letter today to every county health department asking just this question: 'What plans have you made to perform the necessary flu tests, which commence basically in September, and COVID tests simultaneously?' That letter's going to go out today.

"This is going to be difficult and challenging. It will require a reduction in the number of COVID tests or in the turnaround time on COVID tests, and we already had issues on the turnaround time

on COVID tests. So, we want to get ahead of this and that letter from the Department of Health is going to do that, and that letter goes out today. But I'm telling you, there's going to be no easy answer to that riddle.

"No. 2, I want the schools that are doing their plans to reopen to take into consideration what we've seen in other schools, K to 12, what we've seen most recently in UNC, Notre Dame, 130 infected in one week, and they closed. The lesson to learn there is, yes, when you bring back a lot of people and put them in a congregate setting, you can have an increase. 'Well, we told the students, socially distance.' Yeah, I know. We've been telling young people to socially

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