

Defying the falls - and logic

Locals seldom seem surprised or amused by attractions in their own locale. Niagara Falls is therefore exceptional, for this and many other reasons.

Yesterday I stood near the crest of the Horseshoe Falls, wet with the spray from its thunderous plunge, mesmerized by its 164' fall, deafened by the plunge of 212,000 cubic feet of water per second and staggered by the advances in modern technology that now has completely surrounded it by a 40' wall of Japanese tourists.

I couldn't believe it. I jogged along the walkway beside the Falls for fifteen minutes and I'm now starring in at least thirty Japanese home videos. You may remember from your history books that Niagara Falls (then

William J. Thomas

All The World's A Circus

pronounced Nee-agra) was discovered by a tribe of Neutral Indians and its name meant "mighty thunder". Today, in modern *Mohawk* usage it's pronounced "Nigh-agra" Falls and means "mighty tough place to barricade."

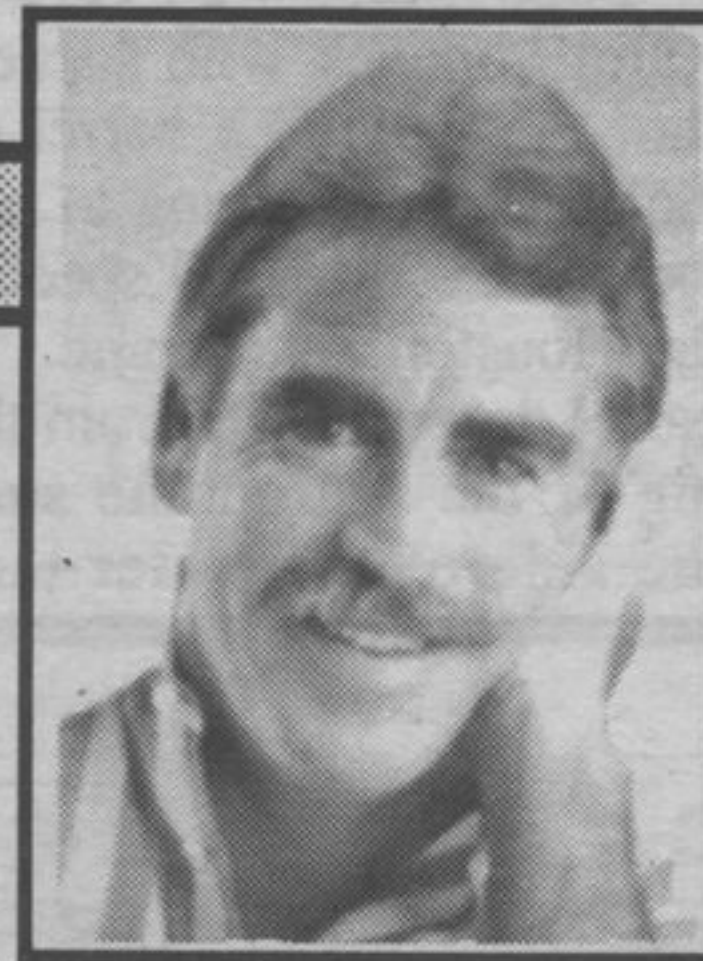
Tragically, for many courageous men of questionable intelligence, Niagara Falls is a death trap. They get married and they go there on their honeymoon. (Just kidding)

Besides being the Canadian headquarters for the Jimmy Swaggart Ministries and the resting place for the world's longest

zucchini at the Guinness World of Records Museum (two true but unrelated facts) - Niagara Falls is the Home of the Amazingly Stupid Stuntman.

Surviving several seconds of natural hell can get you ten minutes on the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson. Nowadays daredevils are lining up to die.

The first person to go over Niagara Falls in a barrel and live was Annie Edson Taylor in 1901. Although she lived through a harrowing, end-over-end ride down the cataracts she quickly ended her career as a stuntperson when she learned Johnny Carson would



not take over the Tonight Show for at least another sixty four years.

The last person to go over Niagara Falls and not live was Jessie Sharp, a whitewater kayakist from Ocoee, Tennessee. Mr. Sharp claimed he planned the stunt for ten years. The trip over

the cataract last June took less than four seconds and Park Police are still looking for the body. Experts believe he may have overplanned this project.

Last September 27, Peter deBernardi became one of the few daredevils to defy the Horseshoe Falls and live when he went over in a two-seater barrel with Jeffrey Petkovich. Later when asked why he did it, Peter said he wanted to show children there were better things to do than drugs.

This is a noble thought, but the logic's a little lopsided.

"Okay Jimmy, on the one hand you can smoke this joint of marijuana or on the other hand you can get in this barrel shoot down the river at 75 m.p.h. and go over

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Seniors thinking positively

Well, yer ole Baba sure got a pleasant surprise when she attended the seminar sponsored by the Council for Positive Aging and other groups, in Terrace Bay recently along with Pia Spoljarich and Mary Ann Oraszewski.

What was the surprise? To discover so many POSITIVE and positively-thinking Goldie-Oldies among all the wonderful representatives from Nipigon, Red Rock, Marathon, Nakina, Schreiber, Geraldton, Manitouwadge, Caramat, and Beardmore. What a delight! You'd have to go a long way to meet up with such a gung-ho group of people, and if this is the way Seniors are meeting and talking not only in Ye Faire Province of Ontario, but also across the country, then bully for them and cheers and beers!

They sure beat the socks off any younger group who sit mute and unresponsive during meetings, but go away to vent their unspoken feelings in the privacy of their homes, or the beer halls

Olga Landiak

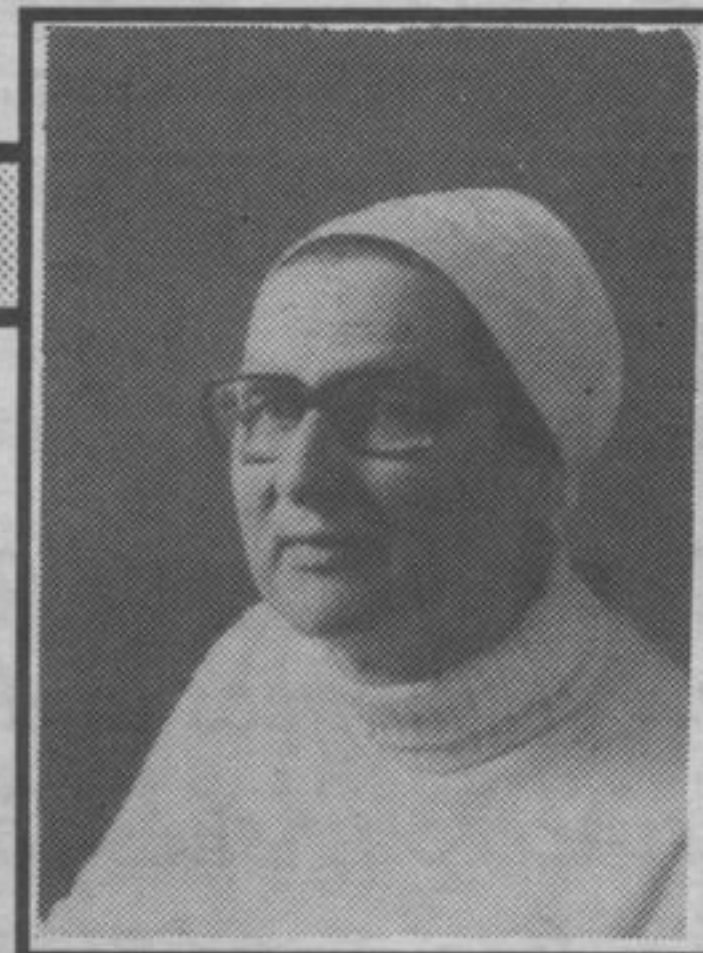
Life, According to Baba

of their choice. Why do they come in the first place, I often wonder, if they are so reluctant to speak out in public about those issues which are biting their rear ends in private?

No backwardness about this bunch, though. They spoke up vociferously and fearlessly. They were POSITIVE about what was on their individual and community minds, and they POSITIVELY stated them to the two speakers, Ruth Cunningham, ex-nurse, keynote speaker and connected to Professional Services to Agencies, and Elsie German with Long-Term Care Coalition and the Ontario Public Health Association. These two charming ladies have been diligently and patiently touring the province to explain the government's 'Proposed Reforms in the Long-Term Care Services', and also to

get feed-back from as many communities as possible.

And boy, did they ever! Get feed-back, I mean. If these reps. at Terrace Bay were any indication of the rest of the groups the ladies have met with, then they sure got an earful! But gratefully received. After all, as they said, we're talking about programs that are for YOUR benefit, so tell us what YOU want in the way of services, and we'll take it back to the Great-Listening-Ears-in-Toronto responsible for putting them in place. As Ruth Cunningham ended up her excellent talk entitled, "Alice in Wonderland", Alice (meaning us Goldie-Oldies) asks, "Where do we go from here?", and the Cheshire Cat (meaning the Government) answers, "That depends on where YOU want to go."



Too true. Where do we, the people concerned, want to go in the way of services, information and funding? It's not just up to the few concerned to get interested, but up to ALL of us. Everybody's got to do their little bit even if it only means writing to your M.P.P. and your local paper. Politicians hate, positivley hate, public discussion of their failings and unresponsiveness. They know damned well where the voting power lies, so it behooves ALL of us to get up often our behinds and make a

concerted outcry for whatever we feel is lacking out there in that political desert to make these so-called 'Golden Years' a little easier and comfortable for those of us unfortunate enough to need care of some kind or other.

But while we're storming the barricades of unresponsiveness (and it may well be a barricade, indeed, now that we've been made aware of the most unpleasant surprise of the HUGE deficit in our province; thank you, Libs, one and all!) let us give a little, no, a lot, of thought as to how we can continue to make a contribution of some kind to the community in which we live. Just because our bodies are old and retired, doesn't necessarily mean that our brains are too. We can still put those to good use.

So, how's about it, Goldie-Oldies? How's about more POSITIVE thinking about how we can GIVE as well as take? That's what yer ole Baba would really call "Positive Aging".

Noses on the window pane

When you grow up in a large city, like I did, one of the biggest thrills in any kid's life is to be taken downtown in November for the Santa Claus Parade. After the parade, the next stop is the department store windows. The tinsel and glitter behind those massive panes of glass, with automated displays of fantasy, make any kid's eyes sparkle. Years later, I learned that the department store cleaning staff have to come out and clean the outside of the glass every morning, and remove marks left by thousands of little noses that had been flattened up against the panes.

The department store window divided the children from a fantasy land they could only look at, and not touch. It was very tempting consumerism - to want things, and ask Santa for them, and not really know if Santa was going to deliver.

This week, you will be hearing and reading about the transformation of East and West Germany into one. On October 3rd, East Germany ceases to exist. West Germany will complete the digestion of the East that began a year



NORTHERN INSIGHTS

by Larry Sanders



ago. We have all witnessed, through the magic of television, the destruction of the Berlin Wall, the celebrations and demonstrations that preceded and followed, and marvelled at the changes.

Recently, I had the pleasure of seeing those changes through the eyes of ordinary East Germans. In Rosspont, on the north shore of Lake Superior, two East Germans are making their very first visit to North America, to visit relatives. Gerhard and Inge Kruger are from a tiny agricultural hamlet in East Germany call Salow, in the northern province of Neubrandenburg. Gerhard is 65, Inge is 60. They have lived through it all - the economic demise of feudal landlords in the depression of the 30's, the rise of

Hitler, the horrors of the Second World War, and then over a generation after that under an infested Communist government.

With the help of translators, I asked them to tell me their perspective on the changes we have watched from afar. As they talked, I began to realize that the East Germans have lived for 50 years like those children with noses pressed up against the glass - only able to watch as a dazzling array of consumer goods passed by. But they were only able to look and marvel, not buy or enjoy. As they talked, I began to appreciate how strongly our western consumer culture had motivated change in eastern Europe.

Gerhard says "everyone had to sign a document that we would

not watch West German television, but of course everyone did." So they saw the western world every night in their living rooms - with all the commercials. The television was like the window glass in the department store for the kids at Christmas time.

Under Communism, Inge was employed for 20 years cleaning offices. Gerhard had an office job in a state enterprise that built roads, water and sewage systems. Gerhard describes the sewage systems as being more like piping systems - raw sewage was generally run, untreated, into rivers.

Their life was not uncomfortable. They always had more than enough to eat, their jobs guaranteed, and housing was cheap and comfortable. But consumer goods

- like clothes, shoes and especially cars - were impossible to get.

Inge says "when Gerhard told me he wanted to apply to buy a car, everyone rolled on the floor with laughter. It takes fifteen years to get a car after you order one. They laughed because by the time his car came, Gerhard would be too old to have a driver's licence."

But Gerhard's and Inge's generation was not the one pushing for change. They had learned to be passive, and hard working. Their children especially their son Thomas, were on the front lines of change.

Thomas took part in a major demonstration in the city of New Brandenburg, 24 kilometres from Salow. Inge says "the police weren't trying very hard to get everyone to stop, and be quiet. They couldn't make the young people stop."

But now that change has come, Inge and Gerhard are not so sure they like what they've found on the other side of the window glass. On July first, they were

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