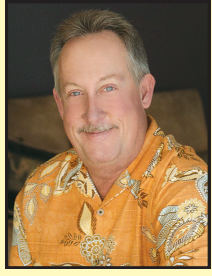


# KIDS FIRST



## Allergies

It's the season for coughing, blowing, wheezin', an' sneezin'. Or is it?

Thousands of children (and their parents) in our community seem to be affected by this allergy thing. For those of you who have not been, you are looked upon with envy at this time of year. Millions of hard earned dollars are spent on over-the-counter drugs, weekly shots and physician visits. Then there is time-off from school (or work) and the effect of little Miss Sneezzy on the family. The

toll from allergies is immense.

Why is that? What is it that makes one child allergic and another not? After all, we all live on the same planet! The difference is most often seen in how one child's body is able to adapt and another not. Very simply put, an allergy is the inability of your child's body to handle something which is in their immediate environment: Pollen from trees, grasses, flowers, etc. (There are also allergies to drugs, harsh detergents and other agents. These allergies are seen as a protective reaction and are not the type I am discussing today). In other words, your child seems to be very sensitive to the pollen in the air. This is called being **hypersensitive**. Think about this for a moment. Something is making your child's body

hypersensitive to a perfectly normal part of the environment! So is the solution to get rid of all the flowers, trees, grasses, etc.? Or is it make more sense to make your child's body function normally so it can handle its environment in a normal fashion?

You may not realize that the thing that runs your child's body in a perfect manner is the nervous system. As long as it is able to control all functions of the body with **no interference**, your child should have the best health possible. If however, there is interference to the normal function of the nervous system, your child's body will not function properly and will react poorly to pollens, etc. Chiropractors call this interference a **Vertebral Subluxation**. It can be a serious health hazard! By correcting these

vertebral subluxations, your child will have a better chance to successfully deal with allergies. If your child is suffering, call us. We can help!

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*Dr. Scott Plath has practiced in Yankton for 32 years. He is a Certified Industrial Consultant, Certified Med X Rehab technician and a fellow of Applied Spinal Biomechanical Engineering and is a member of their advisory board.*

# Niagara Falls Considers A Return To Its Daredevil Past

BY TINA SUSMAN  
Los Angeles Times  
(MCT)

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. — There is no shortage of legends surrounding the cat that went over Niagara Falls in a barrel.

Some say it survived, proving the barrel was sturdy enough to carry humans down the falls. Some say it died. Some say it rode shotgun with Annie Edson Taylor when she became the first person to survive a barrel roll over the falls in 1901.

Mark DiFrancesco of Niagara Falls' Daredevil Museum offers another twist on the tale.

"Legend has it the cat was black going over the falls but came out of the barrel white" from fright, he said, straight-faced, as Independence Day visitors eyed the museum's yellowed newspaper clippings, old photographs, bashed-up barrels, tattered life vests and a dented jet ski.

That the legend of the cat lives on 110 years later says something about Niagara Falls' passion for its daredevil past, which seemed as dead as its economy until state lawmakers latched onto the idea of using that death-defying spirit to try to boost the city's finances.

High-wire artist Nik Wallenda approached officials recently with a plan to cross the cataract on a wire the width of a nickel. The performance would be featured in "Life on a Wire," a Discovery Channel show expected to begin airing later this year. To clear the way for the spectacle, legislators last month approved a one-time exemption from a 50-year-old ban on daredevil acts at the falls.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has not indicated whether he will sign the bill, which has won support from local tourism officials and most city leaders. Backers say that even though the city would not profit directly, visitors who come to watch Wallenda would spend money in its restaurants

and other businesses, and the television show could trigger a long-term surge in tourism.

But not everyone is sold on a made-for-reality-TV event as the solution to the city's economic problems, especially one that could end in tragedy.

"Are we that desperate?" local historian Paul Gromosiak asked the Niagara Falls City Council this month.

Some think so. Council members voted 4-1 to endorse the wire walk.

Once synonymous with romantic honeymoons, burgeoning industry (Nabisco made Shredded Wheat here) and Hollywood glamour (Marilyn Monroe played a murderous wife in the 1953 hit "Niagara"), the Rust Belt city has struggled for decades.

A few blocks from the shady parkland surrounding the falls, dilapidated neighborhoods speak to the city's decline. Crumbling brick and boarded-up windows mar streets lined with once-gracious homes. Derelict storefronts haunt Main Street. Low-slung motels and vacant lots stand in sharp contrast to the high-rises, colorful cafes and manicured gardens across the Rainbow Bridge in Niagara Falls' Canadian sister city.

There, officials spent decades building a bustling tourist industry while their New York counterparts banked on factories and plants — now gone — to pay the bills.

Since 1960, the city's population has fallen by more than half, to 50,000. Though tourism officials say more than 8 million people visit each year, they don't necessarily stay the night. The city's hotel occupancy rate this year is 51.7 percent, its best in years but still lagging behind the national average of 59 percent, according to Smith Travel Research. Hotel revenue last year was about \$76 million, compared with \$420 million for hotels on the Canadian side.

Last month, the city's school district announced a halt to night

games for varsity sports teams, to save money on stadium lighting.

"We're very depressed here," said tour guide Michele Brundidge as she led visitors through the Daredevil Museum — actually a convenience store whose heat-and-serve burritos, ice cream bars and cold drinks share space with artifacts left by those who tried to conquer the falls.

When tourists glimpse the Canadian skyline with its giant Ferris wheel and hotels overlooking the falls, they ask, "Can't we go over there?" Brundidge said.

If the prohibition against daredevil acts is eased, Wallenda would have one year to perform his feat, which would take him across the Niagara River in front of Horseshoe Falls. At more than 170 feet high and 2,200 feet wide, it is the biggest and most spectacular of the three cataracts that make up Niagara Falls. The wire would be attached to cranes on either side of the gorge; Wallenda's representatives say there would be no bolts or other damage to the environment.

Some key players — including parks commissions in New York and Ontario, Canada — have yet to embrace the idea. Skeptics such as Mayor Paul Dyster of Niagara Falls, N.Y., worry about copycats.

"We're concerned about that, but we're also concerned about our first responders who would have to go and rescue people," Dyster said.

Even on a hot summer day, gusty winds and sheets of cold spray wash over visitors on viewing platforms, hinting at the harsh conditions Wallenda would face. His path would begin on the U.S. side, take him across to Canada and then perhaps back again depending on conditions, said Winston Simone, a friend of Wallenda's and one of the producers of "Life on a Wire."

If sanctioning potentially deadly behavior to boost a moribund economy sounds ghoulish, Simone and state Sen. George D.

Maziarz, whose district abuts Niagara Falls, emphasize that it isn't an invitation to others to try their luck on the falls.

Maziarz drafted a bill after Wallenda and his representatives asked about bringing the high-wire act here.

"It has been many years since anyone has been able to follow in the footsteps of the Great Blondin," the legislation says, referring to Jean-Francois Gravelet, the first high-wire walker to cross the falls, in 1859. He made the trip several times, once stopping midway across to cook and eat an omelet. "In the meantime, tourism in Niagara Falls has declined ... (Wallenda's feat would) give the city a much-needed shot in the arm."

The Niagara Tourism and Convention Corp. agrees. "People today still come here and ask questions about the daredevils," said spokesman Nick Mattera. "They want to know about their history."

And if Wallenda falls? "It would certainly be a tragic end to an exciting attempt," Mattera said, before adding: "He's a pro. He's a seventh-generation wire walker, and we have all the confidence he'll be able to achieve this."

So does Simone, who refuses to use the word "daredevil" to describe Wallenda and says the 32-year-old is "in perfect physical condition."

"He takes the art form incredibly seriously," Simone said. Wallenda's great-grandfather, Karl Wallenda, fell to his death in 1978 while walking between two towers in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The family blamed the accident on poor rigging of ropes that were supposed to hold the wire taut.

But drama is part of the draw, said Bill Bradberry, a Niagara Falls civic leader. He has no desire to watch Wallenda's walk. "Are they crazy?" he said of the men and women who have gone over the falls and through the rapids in everything from huge

bouncy balls to pickle barrels.

But if it takes Wallenda to bring visitors back, so be it, he said as he showed a visitor Civil War graves at the city's Oakwood Cemetery.

"This area has a very, very rich history," said Bradberry, who is the local NAACP leader. Slaves fleeing to Canada via the Underground Railroad passed through the area, and the Niagara Movement, a precursor of the NAACP, was founded here. The cemetery also holds remains of some of the falls' stunters, including Annie Edson Taylor.

Like today's lawmakers, Taylor saw the falls as a way out of financial trouble, and on Oct. 24, 1901, she became the first person to successfully ride them in a barrel. But the fame and fortune she craved never came, and when Taylor died penniless 20 years later, the Oakwood Cemetery Association gave her a grave.

On a scorching Sunday, a small beer stein engraved with "Annie" and adorned with an arti-

ficial flower sat atop her grave. Beside Taylor lies Carlisle D. Graham, the first person to ride a barrel through the raging rapids below the falls, in 1886.

Down the row is Capt. Matthew Webb. He was the first person to swim the English Channel in 1875. He died eight years later trying to swim the Niagara rapids.

"This is where our history is. Right here," said local historian Michelle Kratts, adding that the city owes much to its daredevils. "These are the people who are going to bring us back."

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