

## A VIEW FROM THE BLEACHERS

Random Thoughts of Here & There #34

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By Kerry Grippen

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It was nice to see Niagara sophomore **Torrie Weber** featured in the “Neighbors” section of an area daily newspaper last week. The full-page article was highly complimentary about Torrie who is blessed with a beautiful voice. Her dedication to developing her gift has resulted in her receiving a number of awards. It will be interesting to see how far Torrie’s talent will take her in the future. It is also commendable that Iron Mountain High School has permitted Torrie to join their chorus since Niagara no longer offers chorus. Torrie is the daughter of **Sherryl** and **Tom Weber**, and her chorus teacher is **Gail Vornkahl** who highly praised this talented young lady. Congratulations Torrie...

It was upsetting to learn of the recent vandalism to the buildings at the Niagara boat landing. It was even more upsetting that some of the graffiti appears to be gang-related words and signs. About eight years ago many teachers were upset when a small number of gang “wannabees” sported gang-inspired apparel and gang symbols started showing up around school. School personnel, concerned about the safety of students and teachers, came down hard on those involved and I trust that our local police officers will deal similarly with those involved in the recent acts of vandalism...

After being off for nearly three weeks with back problems, Niagara’s **Anna DeForge** returned to action Saturday and led Krakow Wisla Can-Pack to a 100-56 win in the Polish League. DeForge made 8 of 11 shots and had a game high 19 points for Wisla which is now 10-0 in the league. Next weekend they host co-leader Lotos Gdynia, also 10-0, which features **Tamika Whitmore** and **Tan White** who are Anna’s WNBA teammates on the Indiana Fever. Anna will return to Niagara for the holidays and will run her seventh annual Anna DeForge Basketball Camp at Niagara High School on December 26<sup>th</sup>...

I noticed this week that the largest Wisconsin regional daily newspaper announced its All-Area football team and not a single player even received Honorable Mention from the Northern Lakes or M&O Conferences. There certainly were some who deserved some individual recognition but too often some of the fine athletes at the small schools in this part of the state are ignored. Last year even the Predators’ **Bret St. Arnauld** was overlooked even though he had led the entire state in rushing during the regular season and earned a football scholarship to Saginaw Valley State University...

The Niagara Area Historical Society will be unveiling their website sometime this month and the preview **Don Raboin** emailed me looks quite impressive and should draw a lot of local interest as well as much from Niagara natives scattered across the country and around the globe. Don, a 1955 NHS graduate, resides in retirement in Novato, California, and lists himself as “Chronicler” for NAHS, and Don’s monthly NAHS Newsletter currently is emailed to about 200 current and former residents of Niagara. If any readers want to be added to his newsletter list, let me know or contact Don directly at [draboin@cmc.net](mailto:draboin@cmc.net) **Tim Phillips** is the president of NAHS and serving as the Web Master of the new NAHS website is **Tom Duescher** of Denmark, WI. Tom is a descendent of **John Stoveken** who built the first pulp mill in 1889 in what later became Niagara...

Both the Niagara Badgers boys and girls basketball teams have gotten off to a good start. As of Sunday, both teams were unbeaten and both have wins over the Florence teams. In one game, all five of the girls' starters scored in double figures. According to **Nic Kadulski**, the boys' win over the Bobcats was "the first since I was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade!" The boys played at Peshtigo Monday night which features a 6'11" player. I still find it amazing how much bigger kids are getting today. Back in my senior year in 1964 I was the third heaviest player on our team and I played quarterback at 175 pounds. Our biggest guy was our center who weighed all of 183. If the boys are getting bigger, so are the girls. Little Mondovi High School near Eau Claire has a sophomore girl who stands 6'6 1/2". No question that a college basketball scholarship is in this young lady's future...

Sunday afternoon I drove to Norway to the Jake Menghini Museum where I had the opportunity to visit with Niagara native **Bill Gay** and his wife, **Susanne**. They summer at their cottage near Hamilton Lakes and were in Norway this weekend to show and speak about their collection of beautiful Nativity sets from around the world...

On a personal note, I was quite amazed at the reaction I got to my story last week about our cat "Shadow." One lady driving by even stopped and backed her truck up about 75 yards to inquire! I am sorry to say that Shadow had a relapse and will undergo surgery on Monday because of the ongoing bladder and kidney problems. Thank you for your thoughtfulness for all who wrote and asked.



**Bill & Susanne Gay**  
Bill Gay (NHS 1961)