

# The Crier

Giving Issues A Voice

Serving Port Hope + Northumberland County

August 21, 1999

## Sky Walker Extra

### THE GREAT FARINI: His Debut, His Life

By Shane Peacock



William Leonard Hunt's debut on October 1, 1859 on the north side of Walton Street Bridge and over the Ganaraska River was typical of everything he did during his life. It was bold and daring, and a little outrageous. When you watch Jay Cochrane's beautiful re-creation, let your mind drift back

140 years: imagine a looping rope hanging there, borrowed from a schooner in the Port Hope harbour; imagine it strung from the very building on the west side that sits there today; imagine it tied under cross beams and sent across to another building on the east side, now long gone; imagine it tightened by farm friends but still sagging like a skipping rope that swayed when the winds picked up; imagine a teeming crowd below, horses and buggies in the background, everyone wondering what in God's name they were about to see; then try to imagine him up there, scared but adamant,

walking a high rope in public for the very first time in his life; imagine his ad in *The Guide* challenging the great French aerialist, Blondin to a duel above the mighty Niagara; imagine The Great Farini about to leave Port Hope and embark on a life more amazing than any Canadian in history.

His heritage was classically Canadian, a British and American mixture of striving, middle-class Londoners on his father's side and strict, self-important United Empire Loyalists on his mother's. Born in Lockport, New York June 10, 1838, a morning's carriage ride from Niagara Falls, he spent his childhood in the Protestant small-town and country atmosphere of south-central Ontario, living in Bowmanville and near Port Hope. In those days Canadians were building characteristics that would become integral parts of the national personality: hard-working, emotionally repressed folks who cherished church going, social status and frowned on anything loud or sensational.

Little Willie Hunt, passionate and congenitally in search of adventure, was born to be a rebel in any society, but he was like a devil in Victorian Ontario. Right from the beginning he was often in trouble, mortifying his

parents, especially his dour father, a store owner, town mayor and "gentleman," who was anxious to be perceived as an upstanding citizen. So, despite William's excellent grades and athletic prowess, his wayward ways constantly had him in disgrace. He had dangerous dreams.

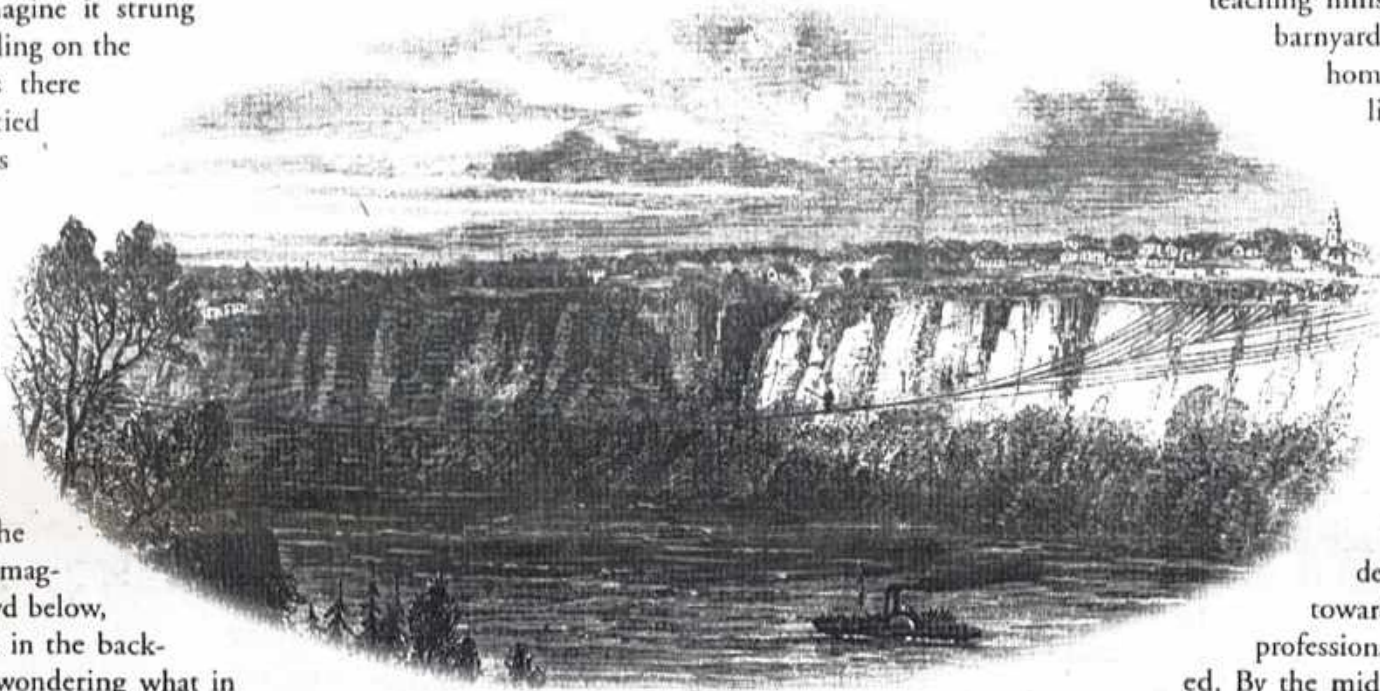
When the circus first entered his burgeoning imagination, during a street parade in the late 1840s in Bowmanville, he was instantly in love. He immediately began teaching himself to swing from a barnyard trapeze and walk a homemade high wire. He lifted weigh-scale weights to build his muscles and set his sights on one day leaving Ontario for a life of adventure. His father, who considered circus performers to be morally depraved, pushed him towards more respectable professions and almost succeeded. By the mid 1850's William had been apprenticed to a doctor. But chance intervened and the Great Farini was born.

During one of his father's trips to England in the late summer of 1859, Bill Hunt was approached by the local agricultural fair committee to walk a high rope in Port Hope for a fee, a fee the young man brashly pushed upwards. On October 1st he made his debut, astonishing a large crowd on a deadly, 70-foot-high rope, strung between two buildings and over a rocky river. The following week a throng of 8,000 (twice the town's population) saw headstands, leg hangs and other daring high-rope feats, as well as a strongman act at town hall in which he employed his medical knowledge to display the health benefits of weight lifting and proper nutrition. To protect the family's good name, he called himself Signor Farini, the title of a contemporary Italian war hero and physician.

But a week later, about the time of his medical exam, his father returned from England. Thomas Hunt and his 21-year-old son's reunion was so explosive that Farini vanished the next day, heading out into the world to begin one of the most remarkable lives in history.

At first he was a roving high-wire walker and strongman, spending some

Continued on page 2 ...

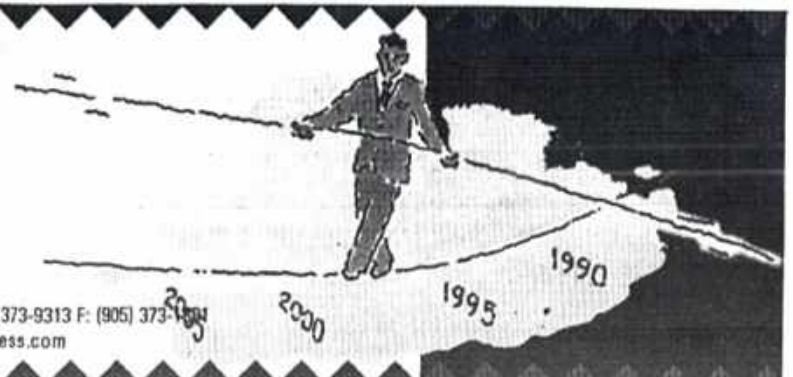


Farini, with a man on his back, crossing the Niagara on a tightrope. (From a sketch by H. Ingram, in *The London Illustrated News*, October 6, 1860.)

The Crier and the Town of Port Hope welcome  
**JAY COCHRANE: "The Prince of the Air" and Great North Productions**  
Saturday, August 21, (Rain Date Sunday, August 22) on the Main Street of Port Hope - See inside for details.

## Still Working Without A Net?

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# Farini

Continued from page 1 ... of his wanderlust by traveling throughout South America and the United States. For a few months he may have worked on a Mississippi riverboat for the legendary Dan Rice, famous



clown, model for Uncle Sam and creator of the "one-man show."

In 1860 Farini appeared at Niagara Falls and experienced perhaps his greatest moment of fame. Blondin the Magnificent, the 36-year-old French god of the high wire had walked above the gorge the previous year, stunning huge crowds so expertly that they thought his feat superhuman. Almost personally offended by this, Farini, still young despite his growing black whiskers, and just 10 months a professional, challenged the great man to a high-wire duel. Though Blondin at first ignored him, thinking him like other pretenders who had made challenges but no appearances, Farini put up a much longer and perilously slacker rope, and commenced performing in August. Slowly their competition grew, Farini often making fun of the grand Frenchman by mimicking some of his most "terrifying" feats. When Blondin carried a stove out and cooked eggs at centre rope, Farini traversed with a washing machine and did his laundry (in drag no less), and when Blondin carried a man on his back, Farini transported a taller and heavier one. In the end Blondin proved a more elegant walker, but Farini drew larger crowds, better terrified his audiences, made more money, and gained notoriety as the daring young iconoclast who had proved that Blondin was human after all.

His wire walking career continued in the early six-

ties, taking him throughout North America, drawing large crowds, including 12,000 at Ottawa. He began diversifying, doing trapeze and gymnastic feats and employing a boy protege.

With the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 Farini enlisted and may have been wounded in action in Virginia. Ever restless, he quit after a year and headed for Cuba with Mary Osborne, a daring friend from home he had carried on his back at recent ascensions and whom he appears to have married. In December 1862, while they performed high above a bull ring in Havana, she turned to wave to the crowd and fell. Farini dropped with her, gripped the rope with a leg and seized her dress. But it tore and she plummeted to her death.

Recovering from that loss as he would from others, he took his show on the road, throughout the United States and Canada. In Ottawa he walked a wire over the Chaudiere Falls in

**But it tore and  
she plummeted to  
her death.**

front of 15,000, at Quebec City he threatened to carry the Governor General across the Montmorency Falls, in New York City he performed such a myriad of feats on stage that he billed himself as "The Farini Brothers" and a "pangymnastikonaerostationist." Back at Niagara in 1864 he actually walked along the near-brink of the American Falls on stilts.

Eventually he travelled to Asia and Europe, where he made London his headquarters. Cleverly, he began shifting attention away from himself and onto a remarkable young protege he called El Nino ("the son"), who walked the wire and performed in his trapeze troupe The Flying Farinis. This was during the earliest days of the flying trapeze and Farini, now with a thickly muscular build and black goatee and moustache, made his show a

London sensation, flying above the heads of patrons in such notable venues as the massive and gorgeous Royal Alhambra Palace. He mixed with English popular society and other showmen, as well as magicians, with whom he felt an affinity, given his inventiveness.

Before El Nino became old news Farini removed him from public attention and presented the beautiful young girl "Lulu, the Eighth Wonder of the World," a gymnast who could jump 30 feet high, from solid stage boards to a trapeze. She was soon a star, drawn in "Punch," feted in society, and the toast of theatres in Berlin, Paris and St. Petersburg. But after an accident in Dublin in 1876, Farini revealed her to be ... a man, in fact his adopted son "El Nino." The many gentlemen who had expressed their love for "her" were outraged.

Farini, the master of illusion and sensation, had no time for those who were ignorantly deceived. Driven by a desire to try nearly everything, repressed in his youth but now uncoiled like a spring, he went on in life. He grew a long black beard and masterminded some of the most spine-tingling shows ever seen. Soon his reputation grew as a mysterious genius who could get proteges to do almost anything, despite apparent extreme danger. A rumour circulated that he was the model for duMaurier's evil character Svengali.

By the late 1870's he was the power behind the Royal Westminster Aquarium in central London near Westminster Abbey where he presented trapezists who ignited cannons while hanging upside down, beluga whales, Laplanders, more magicians and other bizarre acts, many discovered during his global wanderings. Government authorities grew concerned and even passed legislation to ban his more dangerous acts. Blondin, occasionally financially wobbly, appeared at the Aq as an employee, likely amusing his erstwhile rival. In 1877 Farini presented the world's first true human cannonball act, firing young Zazel out to great fright and applause. She too became a star, songs were written about her and P.T. Barnum tried to steal her away. The legendary

American would succeed only on Farini's terms, and took to calling the Canadian the cleverest showman he knew.

In the 1880s, Farini the father of "the big thrill" in circus arts, toured with The Greatest Show on Earth in America, created his own show to rival it and became known as a freak-show promoter, with such exhibits as "Krao the Missing Link" and "The World's Most Tattooed Man." Then he turned his attention to Africa: a few "ethnological" exhibitions of native peoples soon evolved into a notorious expedition.

In 1885 Farini and Lulu, who had become a Connecticut photographer, explored the Kalahari Desert. They spent as much as six months in the hot sands and when they returned Farini wrote an account of their adventure which was published in the U.S., England and Germany. He would go on to write several more books as well as poetry, essays and short stories. But "Through the Kalahari Desert" is his most significant, since it created an

African legend. He wrote of finding the ruins of an advanced civilization deep in the wilderness. And after he left, it vanished. Despite many celebrated searches, some late into the 20th century, it remains a mystery, a ghost in the African sands.

Farini continued in show business into the 1890's, becoming a partner in one of the largest and most respected theatrical agencies in the world, growing wealthy and living on an estate south of London. He painted and devoted energy to inventing, patenting hundreds of items worldwide. In earlier days he may have been responsible for creating the circus safety net, as well as other show-business innovations; now he came up with such ingenuities as folding theatre seats, fireproof curtains, efficient guns and unique watering cans. The latter helped further his work as a botanist - he grew thousands of begonias, hybridized new ones, named some after himself and his family, and wrote a book called "How To Grow Begonias."

As the 1890's grew longer he essentially retired from show business, content as an author, inventor and painter, though he tried his hand at writing musical lyrics and

managing minstrel troupes. In 1886 he had married musician Anna Muller, daughter of Kaiser Wilhelm's aide-de-camp and former pupil of Franz Liszt. Farini had two sons from a previous marriage (which ended in public divorce), though one died at age 20 while training to be a doctor, the career Farini's father had almost pushed him into many years before.

Near the turn of the century Signor and Madame Farini moved back to Canada, to Toronto, where he continued to paint and sculpt, studied with masters and showed his work with the elite of Canadian artists. He played the stock market, became vice-president of a B.C. gold mining company and listed himself as an "engineer" in the city directory, when not a whip company owner. He continued inventing, and was involved in an eccentric Canadian creation called the "roller boat," a long steel cylindrical vessel that looked like a mammoth rolling pin and moved sideways in the water, spinning as it went. Though featured in noted publications, it never truly succeeded and may have cost Farini a great deal of money.

Just before the First World War he and Anna went to live in Dresden, Germany where, in his seventies, he continued to study painting, producing a great quantity of canvases. Behind enemy lines when the war began, he was required to regularly report to authorities. Making the best of his time, he wrote, and translated from newspapers, a 36-volume history of the war from the German perspective. Linguistic dexterity was not a chore for him since he was fluent in seven languages.

Returning finally to Port Hope in 1921 in his 83rd year, he worked in the fields in his many country holdings, rode his strange bicycle about town, told bizarre tales, often to fascinated children, and ignored the whispers of respectable citizens who thought him decidedly unusual.

In 1929, in his 91st year, he died of the flu. He was buried under a small stone in the Port Hope cemetery, a tiny memorial to an incredibly huge life.



## Port Hope's Latest Equal Opportunity



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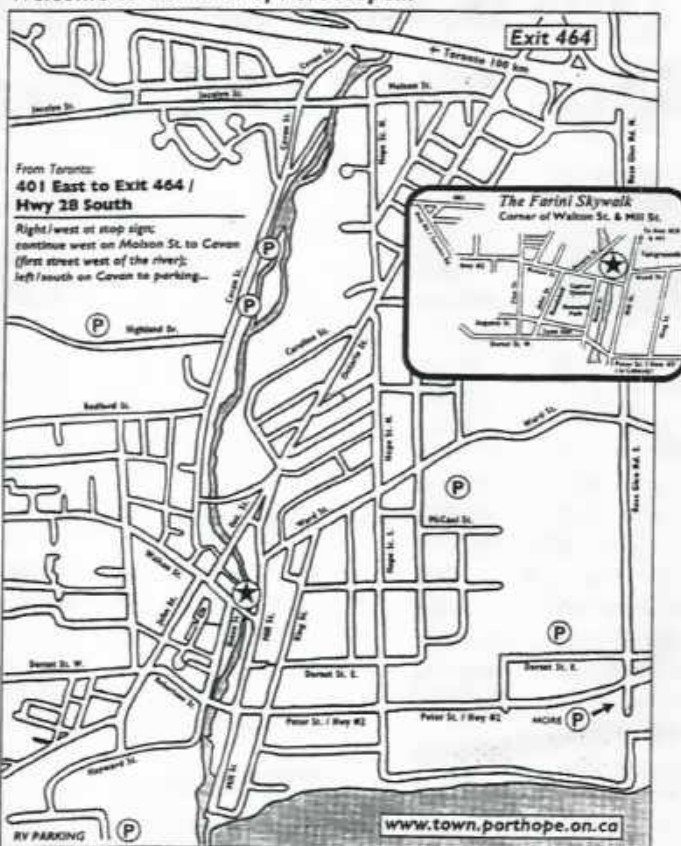
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### Welcome to the Town of Port Hope...



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this special issue possible.

## The Great Farini Heritage Festival

October 9th and 10th

Live Circus Performances  
featuring Circus Jonathan  
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Heritage Market & Food Fair  
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This announcement courtesy of the  
Port Hope HBIA

## Jay Cochrane-Skywalker

"This is my profession, I enjoy it. There are two kinds of people in this world - the doers and the ones who watch and wish they could do it - I prefer to be one of the doers."

- Holder of the world record for the highest and longest tight wire walk in the world 1,350 (110-stories) high and nearly 1/4 mile long performed above China's raging Yangtse River.
- Holder of the world record for the longest nighttime building-to-building Skywalk ever performed between two skyscrapers in Shanghai, China - a span of 600 feet, 400-feet above the city streets.
- Jay Cochrane has been Skywalking for more than 20 years, and is known as "The Prince of the Air."
- Performed his first Skywalk in 1971 between two 40-story skyscrapers in downtown Toronto, Canada.
- In 1975, Cochrane Skywalked 2.5 miles back and forth on a 300-foot wires strong across the Canadian National Exhibition.
- In 1983 Cochrane walked on a wire over the archway in St. Louis for Independence Day.
- Holds the world record for living on a wire for 21 days and nights while performing six shows a day in San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- Performed at Walt Disney World, EPCOT Center, Universal Studios Florida, Knott's Berry Farm, Hershey Park, Busch Stadium St. Louis, New Orleans, World's Fair, and the state fairs of Ohio, Minnesota, Alabama & Louisiana among others.
- Skywalking is different from high wire walking: high wire walking is performed indoors in arenas or large tents. Skywalking is done outdoors - in the weather ... challenged by wind, rain or blinding sun.
- Cochrane performs without a net or safety harness, carrying only a 40-foot long (60lb) titanium balancing pole.



# "Life Is Like a Tightrope.... Never Look Back." - Jay Cochrane, Skywalker.



Most people nowadays think 'risk-taking' has something to do with self-directed RRSP's. Not so with Jay Cochrane, professional Skywalker, who's spent the better part of a lifetime walking a thin line between hard-won success and certain death. The Port Hope Crier spoke to Mr. Cochrane this week as he prepared to re-create The Great Farini's walk above the Ganaraska River for The History Channel.

Crier: First off, you call yourself a skywalker - not a wire-walker. Could you explain the difference?



Jay Cochrane & Jr.

Jay Cochrane: It's the environment. A wire-walker - those who work mostly under controlled circumstances such as circuses - have the luxury of not having to deal with weather and terrain. The length of their wire is determined by the size of the venue. And a wire-walker's backdrop is the inside of the tent. Mine is the sky. I'm a skywalker.

Crier: So the longer the wire...

Jay Cochrane: The wire is a living, breathing thing. It reacts exactly to every thing you do. The tempo of every step you take, each breath you breathe is sent ahead like a telegraph and then returns. You can see it coming. The longer the wire the more difficult it is to control the undulations. From the ground - especially at the heights I work - no one sees the adjustments I make to



Rising above the crowd - Jay at the office.

the oscillations in the wire. Heavier step, lighter step. Longer, shorter. It's about anticipation.

Crier: Anticipation at great height...

Jay Cochrane: True. But the wire is my office. And my office has a great view!

Crier: Speaking of offices, one of the big business buzzwords we hear these days is 'teamwork'. Yet your success seems to do with being all alone a thousand feet up. What about teamwork?

Jay Cochrane: On the contrary. My job is one-thousand per cent teamwork. Whether it's the hundreds of people in Port Hope who'll be there to see me walk the Ganaraska or the millions of Chinese who saw my walk across the Yangtse River - all they saw was me. What they didn't see was the hundreds - and in the case of China - thousands of highly skilled people who, sometimes in the dead of night, make all this possible.

Crier: And all those people watching you from down below - are you aware of them? Do you get a sense of the crowd? Or are you too busy concentrating on the job at hand?

Jay Cochrane: I look at photos of me on the wire taken from below and I see myself from the perspective of the crowd. New technology such as 'lipstick' cameras - I'll be wearing one over the Ganaraska - will allow me to see the crowd, albeit after the walk, from the wire. But yes, like all performers - actors, singers - I have a rapport with the audience it's

just that it's more 'peripheral' than an actor on a stage because I'm watching the wire, the rigging, the wind and the sky above me. It's very much a 3-D picture.

Crier: Do you feel an affinity with high-wire artists of the past? Farini or Blondin?

Jay Cochrane: I didn't really realize why I took on this project until I arrived in Port Hope. My staff did not want me to do this walk because of other commitments we'd already made, some of them very important. A minor injury, a twisted ankle for instance, could set back a lot of plans for a lot of people counting on Jay Cochrane. In 1976, at the Columbus, Ohio, State Fair - remember, I was just a young whippersnapper-circus performer - a man by the name of Karl Wallenda - The Flying Wallenda's - took the time to take me aside and tell me that I - not a member of his family - would be the next Karl Wallenda. I didn't realize what he meant at the time but later I realized that somehow I managed to do every walk Karl Wallenda did - and the Yangtse River. This is hard to explain but when I visited Farini's home, and I'd never been there before, I felt something. It was like a warm, heavy coat being placed over my shoulders. I felt it as I stood outside the door looking in. I don't have the slightest idea what it means. I'm sure it's good, though.

Crier: William Leonard Hunt - The Great Farini - said "I courted peril because I loved it. The thoughts of it fired my very ardour." Jay Cochrane said, "What I do

is an art form. It's not thrill seeking." But you both do the same thing. Can your reasons for doing it really be all that different even though you're separated by more than a century?

Jay Cochrane: Times and life have changed. Back then what was thought of as thrill seeking was quite primitive. Imagine paying money to see someone go over Niagara Falls in a barrel? Where's the skill in that? Watch closely what I do. You'll see the art.

Crier: Is there a percentage of the crowd that wants to see you fall?

Jay Cochrane: Sure. In North America it's about 85%. Even higher maybe in Las Vegas. But not so in Asia. The Chinese for instance, they revere circus and ballet. The two are seen as near-equal art forms. They're there to see the grace and the balance. And the balance of art and the elements. It's different and hard to describe. I suppose they're not as jaded as we are. Not yet anyway and I certainly hope they never lose their appreciation.

Crier: Statistics Canada says most accidents happen in the home - specifically the bathroom. With that in mind do you feel safer a thousand feet up on the wire or in your bathroom?

Jay Cochrane: On the wire, definitely. I always cross with the light and I wear my seat-belt. I'm not a man who takes chances. I'm in control on the wire and years of perfecting my craft have led me to believe I'm safer up there than anywhere on the ground - including my bathroom.

Crier: Finally, Jay, and at the risk of inviting the same answer Sir Edmund Hillary gave when asked why he climbed Everest, why?

Jay Cochrane: Why not!

(Mr. Cochrane was kind enough to talk to The Crier's Dan Christie at length on Aug. 17. What appears here amounts to less than a scratching of the surface of what Mr. Cochrane had to say. Mr. Cochrane is passionate in his love of his craft and its history, of Canada, Dr. Norman Bethune, China and its people, and the world and all it has to offer. The usually verbose Daniel J. Christie was uncharacteristically awed by Mr. Cochrane's adventures both past and future and hopes to present a less truncated picture of Mr. Cochrane in the near future if he can manage to slip it past the editor. The Crier thanks Mr. Cochrane for his patience with Mr. Christie.)



Just a pleasant day practicing - Yikes!



# Great North Productions: And What They Are Bringing You

**T**he Farini Skywalk is taking place because of the initiative of a thriving Edmonton-based film and television production company, Great North Productions. In existence for 12 years they have grown to the point where they are now the most successful regional-based company in the country.

Appearing in our midst here on Walton Street, their cameras pointed at the sky, they are about to take on the amazing story of "The Great Farini." Their past successes indicate they will do him justice.

Among their credits are the popular TV drama "Jake and the Kid," which won the Silver World Medal for Family Programming at the 1997 New York Festivals, the intriguing and also award-winning "Life After Hockey," and "In Search of the Dragon," a documentary special about the Canada-China Dinosaur Project, sold in more than 30 countries. They have created for the CBC, Life Network, Discovery Channel and others, several hundred hours of programming.

It is in association with History Television, for whom they have produced many documentaries, that they come to Port Hope this week. The network's commitment to the Farini project is such that they are the sponsor of this event. By the end of January William Hunt will take his place on prime time television, like Louis Cyr, Jacques Plante, Grey Owl and Sam Steele before him, in a full-hour episode of the documentary series "The Canadians." History Television and Great North Productions have given Canada entertaining and intriguing looks at some amazing people. But just wait 'til they get a load of Farini.

Not only will this documentary display more photos and illustrations of the Great Farini than have ever been seen in one project, it will take viewers behind the scenes of one of his great inventions, a live Human Cannonball Act, and swing them above the safety net with flying trapeze artists. There will be interviews with people who saw Farini in the flesh and even spoke to him, others who are experts in his fields and on his life. And Port Hope and Hope Township will play prominent roles. The area will be often mentioned, photographed both in history and today, and filmed from angles perhaps never seen before. Several Port Hoppers will be featured on screen. His homes, his father's old barn, his land in the nearby countryside will make their TV debuts; his art, his inventions, his explorations, his many accomplishments will finally be seen by a nationwide audience.

But the project's centre-piece will undoubtedly be the extraordinary moment in time this August weekend, 1999 when Jay Cochrane, the world's greatest skywire walker, appears in the air above us, treading in a lofty place where only Farini has gone before. No one alive saw Bill Hunt on his rope in 1859; only the viewers who come to Port Hope this weekend will be able to boast that they saw Jay Cochrane do the same. There were two high-wire walks in Port Hope in the 19th century (Farini also performed in 1861 on the south side of the bridge); there will be but one in the 20th.

When Jay steps out on the wire, 85 feet above concrete and the rocky river bottom, no safety devices attached or below, he will be filmed by at least four cameras. Some will catch him aloft in the distance, Port

Hope's historic townscape his backdrop. And one will be attached to his chest, shooting straight downward to the distant Ganaraska. Come January viewers will feel themselves stepping out into thin air, on a thrill ride only Messrs. Farini and Cochrane dare take in person.

Great North's approach to the Farini film has been to involve the people who know the most about the subject. So instead of employing distant "experts" to tell of our local folk hero,

they have come here to find the real story. Shane Peacock, Farini biographer and playwright, whose family settled near Canton about 200 years ago, is writing the script and providing research, and Sanford Haskill, who traces his Port Britain area heritage back even further, has co-ordinated The Farini Skywalk on the ground (thankfully, he says) in Port Hope. The Hunt family have been consulted and involved: you will see Ted on screen, Andrew has already had

lunch with Jay and may very well pipe him to his wire. The night before his daring recreation, Jay Cochrane will sleep at The Butternut Inn, the current bed-and-breakfast beauty that was Farini's home in the mid 1920s.

Great North Productions, History Television, numerous Farini-intrigued, home-turf folks, and the inimitable Jay Cochrane, bring you this daring, historic Skywalk. Farini was one of a kind. And so was his walk. You have never seen its like before.

## Limelight

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## A Letter from Port Hope's Mayor Welcome to the Farini Skywalk - the biggest event in Port Hope in 140 years!

It's hard to live in Port Hope and think history is boring! Upper Canada's seventh-oldest town is and has been home to many people who stand out from the crowd. Of these, the Great Farini is one of the most colourful.

In 1859, William Leonard Hunt, or, as the world knew him, the Great Guillermo Antonio Farini, gave his first high-wire performance, crossing 85 feet above the Ganaraska River on a rope strung from the rafters of the two buildings on either side of the river. He went on to become a famous circus performer and producer, explorer, inventor, botanist and artist.

140 years later, Port Hope is a busy community of 12,500 located along the shores of Lake Ontario and an hour's drive east of Toronto. The Ganaraska River (a fisherman's dream) winds through town and will form the backdrop for this historic walk. Magnificent Victorian homes, the best preserved 19th century main street in Ontario, public buildings and churches thrive in harmony with modern tastes and occupations.

The history of Port Hope and its citizens is very much alive by:

- the Farini Heritage Festival,
- the ACO's annual House Tour,
- the Town's antique stores and
- Port Hope's popularity as a movie set (Anne of Green Gables and the Road to Avonlea were filmed here).

The East Durham Historical Society, the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario and the Local Architectural Conservancy Association of Canada have been instrumental in this respect as well. Between them, they can tell stories about the people and places in Port Hope and area that would make your head spin!

And we're not too sophisticated to have fun, to be awed by an act of daring, or to appreciate the beauty of an aerial performance. We are honoured to have five-time world-record holding skywalker Jay Cochrane recreate the Great Farini's walk, so we, our children and grandchildren can know what it was like to watch a human being walk in the sky.

The key players in this drama - Great North Productions of Edmonton, Alberta, History Television, author Shane Peacock, the East Durham Historical Society, Sanford and Helen Anne Haskill, and Jay Cochrane have worked tirelessly to ensure the success of this event. Thank you, all.

Watching Jay walk the skies would be an historic event in any town; for Port Hope, the excitement is compounded by its historic significance. We welcome you on this beautiful and historic day, to one of Ontario's oldest and most appealing communities.

Ron Smith,  
Mayor



# GREAT THINGS TO do

## Show

**Antique Machinery Show:** August 21, 10 to 4, the Hope Agricultural Heritage Club's 8th annual show, at the Kellogg farm, 1 km west of Welcome on Road 2. Trophy winners, demonstrations, displays, crafts. Lunch available. Admission \$3, free under 13. (905-885-4010)

## 21st Annual

**Northumberland Arts, Crafts & Quilts Show:** August 21-22, Sat. 10 to 5 and Sun. 10 to 4, at Campbellford Community Centre, Front St. N. Draws every hour, lunch available, free parking, \$2 admission. (705-653-1250)

## Country Craft Show and Sale:

Aug. 28, 10 to 5, at Dorothy's House, #3632 County Road 9, Garden Hill. (905-797-1170)

## Museums

**Canadian Firefighters' Museum:** Displays telling the story of fire fighting in earlier times. Open 7 days a week to mid-September, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. SpaamFaa Muster on Sat., Aug. 21, display of firetrucks (1920's to 1970) from all over Ontario, a parade, alarm run, water display across the river, food. At 95 Mill St. S., Port Hope. (905-885-8985)

## General Interest

**Port Hope Fall Fair:** It's time to start planning your entries for this year's 168th annual fair Sept. 17-19, 1999. There are categories for everyone over two! Get an exhibitors' fair guide, buy a membership, and have some fun. Info: Jane London, Agricultural Society Secretary Treasurer, at 905-373-1950.

**Presquile Camping:** Reserve one of 394 campsites. 1-888-ONT-PARK (1-888-668-7275) toll-free 24 hours a day 365 days a year.

**Pancake Breakfast:** on August 21 from 8 a.m. on, at the Welcome Fire Hall, sponsored by the Hope Fire Department. Then go west down Road 2 to the nearby Antique Machinery Show.

**Rural Ramble '99:** August 28-29, two day self-guided car tour of Northumberland

County. Participate in a wide variety of activities at 31 host farms or agri-businesses. Enjoy the scenery, the animals, crafts, food, demonstrations, produce, shopping. Enter the photo competition. Passport and map available at CIBC branches for \$8 (over 13). A great way to end the summer! (Details and B&B bookings: 1-888-220-7799)

## Beat the Lake:

Win \$1000 and support the United Way by guessing the number of hours that it will take a three man canoe team to paddle the 60 km across Lake Ontario from Cobourg to Oak Orchard, New York. This fundraiser will take place at the end of August or beginning of September, depending upon weather conditions. Tickets (\$2 each or three for \$5) on sale at the United Way, Fleming Building, Cobourg, at the Jolly Farmer, Midtown Mall, and at Port Hope's Chamber of Commerce. (905-372-6955)

## Monarchs and Migrants Weekend:

Sept. 4-5, at Presquile Park, bird banding, Monarch tagging, nature walks to celebrate fall migration. (613-475-4324)

**Lang Pioneer Village:** daily and weekend events (slightly out of county to our north, off County Rd. 34 north of Keene). Perhaps combine with a visit to Serpent Mounds, just south of Keene which has a Tea Room for an enjoyable Lunch or Tea. (LPV: 705-295-6694 and SM: 905-295-6879)

## Gardens

**Heritage Flower Arrangement Show:** Aug. 21, 2 to 4 p.m., at Dorothy's House, #3632 Cty Rd 9, Garden Hill. (905-797-1170)

**Summer Flower Show and Tea:** on Aug. 21, at St. Peter's Church, Cobourg, from 1:30 to 4 p.m., by the Cobourg and District Horticultural Society. \$2 includes refreshment. (905-373-1328)

**An Artist's Garden & Studio:** in Welcome, open 10 to 6 each day by chance, at 4749 County Road 2. (Or by appointment, Kathryn McHolm: 905-753-2196)

**Schoolhouse Gardens:** gardens and shop, open first and third summer Sundays for garden tours at 1:30, \$5. North of Warkworth at #404 Third Concession, west of Road 25. (1-705-924-3255)

## Theatre

**The Capitol Theatre:** At 14 Queen Street, Port Hope, Alice in Wonderland on Aug. 20-21. (905-885-1071 or 1-800-434-5092)

**4th Line Theatre:** at the Winslow Farm, 4th Line, Millbrook. Two plays from July 7 to Aug. 29 (not Mon. or Tues.): Fair Play and The Devil and Joseph Scriven. Coming Summer 2000: the long awaited Batoche Project. 1885 Riel Resistance from the cultural perspectives of Euro-Canadians, First Nations, and Metis Peoples. (705) 876-6323 or (800) 814-0055

## Out-of-County Theatre

**Kawartha Lakes Summer Playhouse:** at Lindsay's Academy Theatre, A Bedfull of Foreigners Aug. 12 to 28. (705-324-9111)

**Pictou Summer Festival:** until Sept. 4, three plays in the Regent Theatre. Combine with a stay in one of Prince Edward's many B&B's for a great short holiday. (1-877-411-4761)

**Stirling Festival Theatre:** Suds from July 20 to Aug. 7 and The Foursome from Aug. 10 to 28. (613-395-2100)

## Live Music

**Broghan's Lane:** Live music every Friday at 54 John Street, Port Hope, from 8:30 to 11:30 p.m.; Aug. 20, Three Guys and Their Music; Sat. Aug. 21, the Bob Keyes Trio. Also an open mike every Thursday 9-11:30 p.m. hosted by Ian Town. (905-885-9557)

**The Ganaraska Hotel:** Country rock live, from 9:30 p.m. to 2 a.m., at 30 Ontario St., Port Hope. Aug. 26 to 28, Rattlesnake; other dates, local groups. (905-885-9254)

**The Oasis Bar and Grill:** Live music from 7:30 to 11 p.m., at 31 King St. E., Cobourg. Aug. 25, Rick Fines and Doug Cox; Aug. 29, Mark Haines and Tom Leighton, TBC (905-372-6634)

**Country Music Jamboree:** Aug. 19-22, in Havelock, 10th anniversary of one of Canada's top festivals; performers include Billy Ray Cyrus and Stompin' Tom Connors; over 80 vendors. (1-800-539-3353 or 705-778-3353)

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## Farmers' Market

**Cobourg:** 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays, parking lot behind Victoria Hall.

**Port Hope:** 8 a.m. to 12 noon Saturdays, parking lot behind Town Hall.

**Millbrook:** 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sundays, by the pond.

## Sporting Interests

**Racing:** at Speedway Park, Brighton, every Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; stock cars, go-karts, mini-golf, batting cages. Gates open at 6. (1-613-475-1102)

**Recreational Swimming:** Public times available every day at Jack Burger Sports Complex, 60 Highland Drive, Port Hope. Guide/info at 905-885-2474.

**Hiking, walking:** Try Spartan Ravine Walkway that begins behind Port Hope High School (Highland Drive) connecting at Cavan Street to the Ganaraska Trail (north) and to the Waterfront Trail (south). Or try the Waterfront Trail that runs through Port Hope and Cobourg. See the Waterfront Trail Mapbook for cycling and walking along Lake Ontario. (905-436-2525)

**Ganaraska Hiking Trail:** about 500 km from Port Hope to the Bruce Trail; Pine

Ridge Club: info or membership, call Nicole Corbell at 905-885-7376.

## Galleries & Museums

**Art Gallery of Northumberland (Cobourg):** National Paper Exhibition, Aug. 7 - Sept. 19, twenty Canadian artists exploring two and three dimensional applications of handmade paper. Open Tuesday to Friday 10 - 4, Saturday 1 - 5 p.m., at Victoria Hall, Cobourg. Artist-made items in Gallery Gift Shop. (905-372-0333)

**Art Gallery of Northumberland (Port Hope):** 3rd Exhibit contains fifty-five new pieces, various media, for sale or rent (\$10-40 per month). Thurs. to Sat. 1 - 5, at 38 Walton Street, Port Hope. Space available for shows. (905-885-2115)

**Colborne Art Gallery:** Continuing to Aug. 29, Group Showing presenting paintings, sculpture and pottery by sixteen artists including Barbara Brown, Betsy Downie and Frances Gage. Hours: Thurs., Friday, Sat. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sunday 12 - 5. (905-355-1798)

Continued on page 7...



# The Crier

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## Shane Peacock: The Farini Story Teller

**A**s a child  
Shane  
Peacock sat  
on his  
grandfa-  
ther's knee  
in their old

Hope Township farm house and heard wild tales of Farini Hunt, a boy from a few concession roads away who had gone to Niagara Falls and taken on the immortal Blondin. Peacock thought it a marvellous story, but impossibly dramatic, perhaps even fictional. But years later, in the mid 1980s, he heard much more of the story from former Port Hope mayor Michael Wladyka, backed up with that gentleman's solid research. Ten years later, in 1995, after

Peacock travelled throughout North America and Europe in search of Farini's amazing life, Penguin Books Canada published "The Great Farini: The High-Wire Life of William Hunt," first in hardcover and then in paperback. During the book's Toronto launch, Peacock even walked a little high wire, and survived. It was also launched in Port Hope at the Capitol Theatre before a full house, an event organized by Farini Skywalk coordinator Sanford Haskill.

The year before, the 4th Line Theatre of Millbrook produced Peacock's play about Farini to sold out crowds and featuring the amazing Nicky Dewhurst,

former Cirque du Soleil wire walker, on a wire 25 feet above the audience's heads.

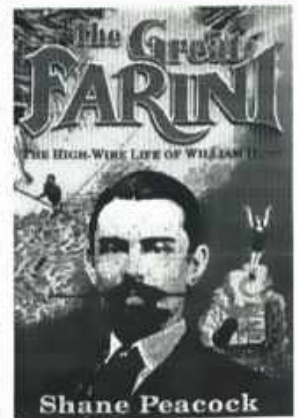
And now in 1999 Great North Productions of Edmonton has hired Peacock to write the Farini TV documentary for History Television. A feature film, dangled in front of Peacock's eyes by various producers, sometimes with big stars suggested for the lead, may be next.

Peacock is also a national-award-winning journalist, and novelist. In 1996 he saw Jay Cochrane walk a 200-foot skywire above a lake with the odd alligator at Silver Springs, Florida. The result was an article for "Equinox" magazine, one that featured beautiful

colour shots by photographer Kevin Kelly. Peacock even got on a practice wire with Cochrane and found himself amazed at the man's balancing powers. Since that day Peacock and Cochrane have kept in touch. When it came time to re-create the Ganaraska River crossing, a phone call was made and a request graciously accepted. The author would also love to see the performer realize his Niagara dream.

This year Peacock has also written the critically acclaimed and sold out "The Devil and Joseph Scriven," at the 4th Line Theatre, another unusual tale about a former Port Hope resident. "The Mystery of Ireland's Eye," his novel for young

adults that tells a ghost story and boy's adventure in one, but also a little about Canadian history, is currently in stores from Penguin Books.



## GREAT THINGS TO do CONTINUED

### Millbrook Gallery:

July 23 to Sept. 5, Bruce Lepper's paintings and bird carvings. Open Thurs., Fri., Sun. 11 - 5 and Sat. 10 - 5, at 19 King Street, Millbrook. (705-932-5482)

### Barnum House Museum:

An historical home filled with artifacts and furniture of the 1820-40's. Open Thursday to Monday 10 to 5 for guided tours. Adults \$2.50, Seniors /Youth \$2, under 12 free. (Group tours may be arranged.) Afternoon Tea on Sundays 1-4. #10568 County Road 2 on the west side of Grafton. (905-349-2656)

### Canadian Firefighters' Museum:

Displays telling the story of fire fighting in earlier times. Open 7 days a week to mid-September, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. SpaamFaa Muster on Sat., Aug. 21, display of firetrucks (1920's to 1970) from all over Ontario, a parade, alarm run, water display across the river, food. At 95 Mill St. S., Port Hope. (905-885-8985)

### Dorothy's House Museum:

Different displays or shows every week in a restored cottage of the late 1800's plus authentic barn/tools and Victorian garden. Bus tours and groups call Ona Gardener at 905-797-2625. Open weekends, 1:30-4, to the end of August. At #3632 County Road 9, Garden Hill. (905-797-1170)

### Dressler House:

Birthplace of 1931 Oscar winning star Marie Dressler, featuring a Memorabilia room and video presentation. 9-5 at 212 King St. W., Cobourg. (905-372-5831)

### Victoria Hall:

Tours during July and August at 2 p.m. daily of this fine building, a national historic monument and architectural gem, at 55 King Street West in Cobourg. See the Courtroom, the Grand Concert Hall and more. Group tours arranged at 1-888-COBURG.

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## from the editor

Welcome to the first "Extra" edition of *The Crier*. From time to time *The Crier* plans to bring you special publications pivotal to issues and events in and around Port Hope & Northumberland County.

*The Crier* hopes that you enjoy this souvenir issue. Please let us know what you think and what you would like to see covered in the paper. Its continued success depends on you.

## Where to reach us:

The Crier, P.O. Box 201, Port Hope L1A 3W3  
Or just drop in to our new office at Metcalfe Terrace,  
136 Walton St., second floor. Thanks to Paul Rumgay.

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