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THE NIAGARA FALLS  
**REVIEW**  
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## To carry the Olympic flame

Posted 8 hours ago

Twenty years after carrying the Olympic torch through the streets of Niagara Falls, T.C. Mangoff can still remember how it felt.

"It's quite heavy, actually," he said. "You actually hold it pretty high."

When he was 20 years old, Mangoff was one of 27 local runners who carried the torch when Niagara Falls was part of the relay leading up to the Calgary Winter Games in 1988.

Mangoff said he'd do it again if he could - and he might have the chance. Niagara Falls is one of the Canadian communities approached by organizers of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games to take part in that torch relay, said Mayor Ted Salci, who coincidentally is Mangoff's uncle.

The torch's weight makes it difficult to hold it high and to wave at the crowd, said Mangoff, whose one-kilometre stretch was along Portage Road near O'Neil Street.

"It's not an easy distance to run, that length, with your arms up," said Mangoff, now a 40-year-old chiropractor.

He was picked as a torch-bearer after entering seven ballots in a raffle run by Petro Canada gas stations, one of the sponsors of the Calgary games.

It made Mangoff feel like he was part of the Olympic movement and made a connection between Niagara Falls and the world event in Calgary.

"It brings people closer to the Olympics itself. I feel I played a little bit more of a role," he said.

Niagara Falls has the chance to participate in the next relay, but details are "preliminary," said Salci, who received a letter from Olympic organizers Tuesday.

"I still don't know a lot of information," Salci said, adding he wasn't sure yet if there would be a cost to the city. But the mayor plans to set up a meeting in June to look at hosting it again.

"We'll look forward to that and see if, as a community, we'll get involved," Salci said Tuesday.

The Vancouver relay would take place between October 2009 and February 2010.

Organizers have approached 200 Canadian communities to participate, the Canadian Press reported Monday. They are among the 1,000 stops the torch is expected to make before the Vancouver Games.

They were chosen because they are population centres with the ability to draw support from surrounding areas, said Jim Richards, director of torch relays for Vancouver's Olympic organizing committee.

Events like an Olympic torch run are "an honour" for any community as long as the cost is reasonable, said regional Coun. Bill Smeaton, who was mayor of Niagara Falls in 1987. The torch came to town on Dec. 26, Boxing Day, about two months before the start of the Calgary Winter Games, an event for the performances by English ski jumper Eddie "the Eagle" Edwards and Canadian figure skater Elizabeth Manley.

"It's a very definite and honest indication of how important our image is to the rest of the world," Smeaton said.

He said he didn't recall the 1987 relay carrying a significant cost to the city: "We did have quite a celebration ...

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The whole celebration was part of what turned out to be a successful Olympics."

In 1987, the Niagara Falls stretch fell on Day 40 of the relay. The flame started in St. Davids at 5:26 p.m., according to Niagara Falls Review files. The procession came up St. Paul Avenue, wound its way to the Niagara Parkway and up to Kingsbridge Park before moving on to another ceremony at Fort Erie's Mather Arch.

For the 2010 relay, there will be two celebrations a day, one at noon and one in the evening. Names of the communities aren't being released until the fall, when the Vancouver organizers will publish the relay's route and details about applying to be torch bearers.

The torch is scheduled to cover 35,000 kilometres from Olympia, Greece to Vancouver. Richards said the cost of the celebrations will be borne both by VANOC and by the communities themselves.

"We've tried to put together a scope that allows every community, regardless of size, for them to host a celebration without going into great fiscal requirements," he said.

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