

ON A MISSION: Adirondack Creamery founder Paul Nasrani made a better ice cream. Now he wants to make a better community.

By Anthony F. Hall

Paul Nasrani, the founder of the Adirondack Creamery ice cream company, was scheduled to give a talk at the Watson Arts Center at Silver Bay earlier this week.

Asked what his topic was to be, Nasrani said, "It's the story of how my summers at Silver Bay inspired me to create the company and how the business actually began at Silver Bay. But it's also the story of how the company is promoting the idea that food – even or especially ice cream – can bridge the gaps in our cultures and in our knowledge and understanding of one another."

The first flavor to exemplify that mission was the company's Syrian Date & Walnut Ice Cream, released last year to aid the International Rescue Committee's efforts on behalf of Syrian refugees. Bearing a message of "Peace," in English, Arabic and Hebrew, the carton boldly states, "We are all immigrants."

Adirondack Creamery has also issued a purple Black Raspberry ice cream to remind us that our true community is neither red nor blue but the union of the two. "More unites us than divides us," proclaims the carton.

"Food is something we all can share; when you break bread with someone, even if you're at opposite ends of the political spectrum, you can talk about the food, and that's a beginning," said Nasrani.

And by exploring the food of other cultures, "we learn something about other people," Nasrani said.

The child of a South Asian father, a member of a Christian minority, and a mother who is a descendant



of the Mayflower Pilgrims, Nasrani understands himself as a typical American.

An American Tale

"My story is the American story," said Nasrani.

"My father always said he emigrated to America rather than to the UK, or some other country where he might have found success, because he knew that even if he was never fully accepted as an American, his kids would be, regardless of their skin color or religion," he said.

His story also holds one of the first American stories.

"My mother's family also came to America seeking something extraordinary: the freedom to practice their religion," he said.

The idea for the Syrian Date & Walnut Ice Cream emerged from reflections on this legacy, he said.

"The people who are coming here now are no different from my



Paul Nasrani with sons Kalil and Tayel at the Silver Bay Store.

parents," he said.

Silver Bay's Own Ice Cream

Nasrani's parents met at the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio, from which his father went on to become a Protestant minister and his mother a social worker.

Shortly after he and his sister were born, the family began taking annual vacations at Silver Bay.

"My mom came here with her mother from their home in Rochester at the suggestion of their church. My sister and I were raised here, seeing the same friends every

year. We were Robins, Crickets, Wee Wozzles, Wozzles, Chippies and whatever came next. Now my children will follow us. And one of the things I especially liked about summers at Silver Bay was that we were allowed ice cream every day," recalls Nasrani.

It was in the Silver Bay Store where ice cream was served that the idea for an ice cream company was born.

"I remember telling my friends when I was thirteen that someday I would open an ice cream company and sell its products here, bringing thousands of people to this little store," said Nasrani.

In fact, Adirondack Creamery's first commercial flavors were manufactured and sold at the Store.

And after a hiatus of some years, the products have returned to the store and are available for purchase in pints. Scoops of a few selected flavors are also served in cones or dishes.

The ice cream is now made in Lewis County, at the western edge of the Adirondacks, close to the source of the fresh milk and eggs

Nasrani says he's thrilled to see the ice cream back in its place of origin.

"The values of Silver Bay, its embrace of diversity, have influenced me as a person and my goals for the company," he said.

Lake George: the Great Unifier

For Nasrani, Lake George is the perfect metaphor for a common interest that unites different and sometimes competing perspectives

"The lake provides everyone with

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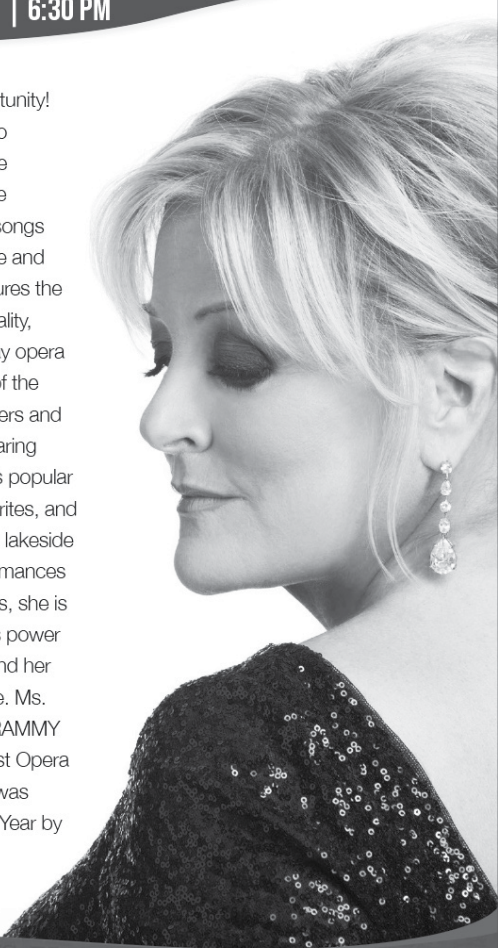



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something – a living, recreation, beauty. We may have different ways of looking at it, but we all agree it has to be preserved, he said.

Whoever comes here, and for whatever reason, leaves feeling renewed, refreshed and reminded of what's most important in life, he said.

Message on a Carton

The protection of the Adirondack Park was among the first causes to attract the support of Adirondack Creamery, and Nasrani can envision environmental issues inspiring a new socially-conscious flavor.

"It's hard to plan the next rendition. It could be the crisis of the moment. It could be the wall everyone talks about. Because wherever there's a wall, there's a door," said Nasrani.

Nasrani dismisses the notion that Adirondack Creamery has become "a mission oriented business," but, he says, "I'm not a millionaire, I'm



Paul Nasrani at the Silver Bay Store.

not a politician; I make ice cream. But ice cream has given me a way to talk to people about things I find important: Our country's values; the refugee crisis; the fact that we are more similar than not."

If your neighbors have displayed a political lawn sign that offends

you, bring them a pint of ice cream, says Nasrani.

"Different opinions are fine. Debate is healthy. You don't have to approve of everything someone says. Let's just stop painting each other as the villain," said Nasrani.

"Latin American Classics" at the Sembrich

The Sembrich will present "Latin American Classics" a concert featuring guitarist Humberto Flores, pianist Olga Gurevich, and the Silver Bay Quartet on Saturday, July 27 at 7:30 pm.

The evening performance offers a program of rarely-performed concert gems from Latin America, including music for classical guitar and string quartet by Mexican composer Ramón Noble, piano works by Manuel Ponce, and Astor Piazzolla's "Spring" for piano trio.

A native of Fortín de las Flores in Veracruz, Mexico, Humberto Flores is one of most



Humberto Flores.

accomplished Mexican musicians of his generation, completing his graduate studies in classical guitar at the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory of Milan, Italy. He has performed at prestigious venues around the world including Carnegie Hall, The Rudolfinum in Czech Republic, Sala Verdi in Milan, the Hermitage

Museum, Montreal Jazz Festival in Canada, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and Lincoln Center, among others. In addition to his career as a musician, arranger and composer, Flores serves as Artistic Director of the acclaimed Villalobos Brothers ensemble.

"Humberto Flores has performed at The Sembrich twice in recent years as guitarist with the Villalobos Brothers. We're delighted to showcase his talent as a solo artist in this unique program of rarely-heard works for guitar and string quartet", says Artistic Director Richard Wargo.

Olga Gurevich completed graduate studies in piano at the Gnesin Academy of Music and post-graduate studies at Maimonides State Academy in Moscow, Russia. Gurevich and The Silver Bay String Quartet are musicians in-residence at the nearby Silver Bay Association on Lake George, which has supported a residency for string quartet and piano since 1939. The ensemble includes Meredith Arksey and Padua Canty, violins; Susan Bengtson, viola; and Andrea Chandler, cello.

Tickets are \$40 and include a lakeside reception and an opportunity to meet the artists. Call for tickets at (518) 644-2431.

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