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Erie Times-News

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Status of Niagara captain, crew murky

Unclear if fired or left early after signal flag message

Jim Martin
Erie Times-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Richard P. Bailey, an experienced tall ships captain hired to bring the U.S. Brig Niagara back to Erie from Maine, says he makes no secret of his politics. That's something he had in common with some others in the 16-person crew that guided the historic recreation of the Niagara through the Saint Lawrence

Seaway and back to its home port in Erie.

"The boat was populated by non-Trump enthusiasts," said the 75-year-old Bailey, who makes his home in Massachusetts.

But Bailey said he wasn't trying to force his politics on anyone else.

Others reached a different conclusion.

See **NIAGARA**, Page 7A



The U.S. Brig Niagara returns to port in Erie on July 2.
GREG WOHLFORD/ERIE TIMES-NEWS

Recent layoffs leave Erie radio stations without a local voice



MoJo McKay, left, and Natalie Massing, shown in a 2011 photo, are two of the dozens of local on-air personalities who worked at the radio stations located on the first floor of the Boston Store Place in downtown Erie.
ERIE TIMES-NEWS FILE PHOTOS

HOMETOWN SOUND GOES SILENT

David Bruce
Erie Times-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Rick Rambaldo carried out a bold idea in late 2001 when he moved his company's six radio stations to the Boston Store Place in downtown Erie.

He built new broadcast studios that either faced State Street or the former department store's main lobby. Passersby could watch local disc jockeys as they bantered and played music.

"We even set up bleachers for people to sit and watch," Rambaldo said. "We wanted our on-air personalities to be connected to the life of downtown Erie."

Twenty-five years later, the studios remain but the DJs are all gone. iHeartMedia, which now owns Rambaldo's former stations, laid off its last two full-



A downtown Erie pedestrian is pictured walking past the Rocket 101 studio at the Boston Store Place, just before the station began broadcasting there in 2001.

time, local on-air personalities — Allan Carpenter and Jessica Curry — in late June.

The layoffs were part of a massive, nationwide purge of on-air talent that iHeart made to slash up to \$150 million in operating costs in recent months, according to industry publication RadioInsight.

It has left the broadcast studios empty of people and the stations' programming schedules full of syndicated shows from across the country.

"You ask what message does this send to listeners and I ask, what message are listeners sending to these radio stations? Is anyone up in arms?" said Chet LaPrice, operations manager of Gannon University's WERG-FM 90.5. "I can't remember the last time a local radio station did something compelling."

See **RADIO**, Page 5A

GOP governor candidate holds veterans roundtable in Erie County

Nicholas Sorensen
Erie Times-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

On July 6, Stacy Garity, the Republican nominee for governor of Pennsylvania, and current Pennsylvania treasurer, made an appearance in North East at the Mellon Heritage Veteran's Outreach Center at 2142 Freeport Road.

During this campaign stop, Garity held a roundtable discussion with local officials and veterans to hear about the needs of the veteran community.

The discussion panel included community members and veterans Joe Benacci, the director of Erie County Veterans Services; Brian Shank, former Erie County Council member; Steve Oler, a Harborcreek Township supervisor; Stacy Pancoast, a United States Airforce veteran and state representative Jake Banta, R-4th Dist.

Garity served 30 years in the U.S. Army Reserve, attaining the rank of colonel.

What topics did Garity discuss during the roundtable?

During the roundtable discussion, Garity talked about getting quality healthcare for veterans, an amendment to the Pennsylvania constitution addressing property tax relief for disabled veterans, expanded access to healthcare for rural veterans and Pennsylvanians, non-profit housing partnerships to address veteran homelessness and helping veterans enter the workforce.

See **ROUNDTABLE**, Page 5A

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