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Barrie Arts Awards

Read about Barrie's own amazing drummer, Jim Blackley



**Sinterklaas and
 Zwarte Piet**

Dutch Christmas tradition

**THIS KINDA
 LIFE**



This Kinda Life surprisingly refreshing, very funny



Sarah Lajeunesse, left, and Apryl Munro, right, get together, go crazy and put on their old wedding dresses

I stumbled across a story on *This Kinda Life* on *The Barrie Examiner's* website. Former, local Rogers TV personalities go online with a lifestyle show. Ugh. The one picture of the two hosts had them in the kitchen, smiling, holding mugs. The same silly props from their Rogers days. Great, they're going to do the same material on the internet, holding mugs. I went to their website to survey the damage. "Just visit once," I told myself.

The home page of their website has them hanging around back alleys in our downtown...with their kids. The only thing they're going to find in those alleys is cigarette butts and people either pissing on a wall, or asking for spare change. Unintentional comedy, I thought, and went on to the videos.

They're funny! The production is top notch. The editing is sharp. I watched them all. They make a new one every few days, a week, at the most.

The show is produced and hosted by Sarah Lajeunesse and Apryl Munro.

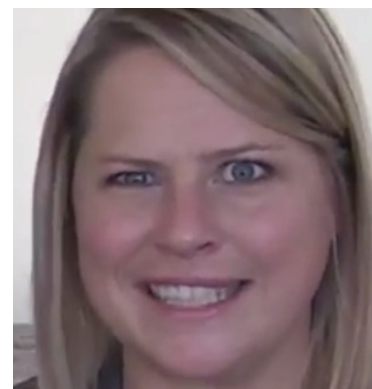
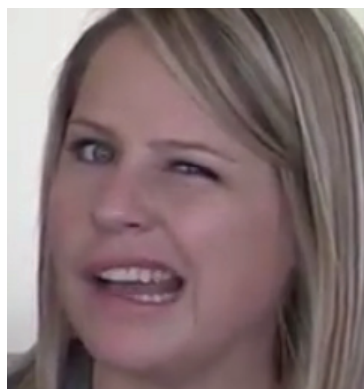
You might remember Munro from Rogers as the short, blond cutie with big tits. Well, at least I remember her that way. And that's okay to say, because she talks about her boobs, and her friend and co-host, Lajeunesse, talks about them, too. They grab each other's boobs, and Lajeunesse got put down for having smaller ones. And that, is just the tip of the iceberg. Watch their videos, for more. I don't mean it's porn, I mean they have boob stories for you, if you want them.

Lajeunesse's advice to parents with young kids, trying to run a business from home? "Good fucking luck!"

Hearing a responsible mother with a house blurt out a curse is funny, because the characters, or rather, the personalities, are otherwise nice. It's sorta like when *South Park* first got popular,

with the cartoon characters of all those cute kids, swearing. That got old when the writing for that show went bad.

These two are best friends, they're both likable, and the chemistry they have together is real. There is no straight man, so to speak, in this team. They're both on, at the same time, with years and years of pro television experience behind them. Right out of the box, they know what they're doing. If they weren't funny, it would be professional boredom, looking for an audience. What they do, cannot be done on the local Rogers or CTV affiliates, anyway. They both refer to themselves, from time to time, as "bitches." If they had a politically-correct woman for a boss in the mainstream media, she probably



Apryl Munro's world-class mugging skills

wouldn't allow it, either. Making videos on the internet allows you to do whatever you want, and these two are ready to use that freedom, and not just produce the same material that they would have done, at Rogers. This show is a local production, they involve local people and businesses, and the two local

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The feature they call, The Drink. You're almost there, ladies. The next time, don't just mix one, each. Finish the whole bottle, and leave the camera running for two hours, after. Then we'll have comedy, on steroids

mainstream media outlets could not run a show such as this. That is their loss. Jayne Pritchard has been on CTV for thirty years, and I can't recall one, spontaneous and unscripted moment. I know, she's a bingo caller (news reader), and not called upon to be real, but what other voices are there, at CTV, that aren't carefully scripted? None. As for Rogers, their *Daytime* program is not bad, it's just not as good, as *This Kinda Life*. The future of television is not coming from boardrooms and people playing it safe. They have had it their way for decades, and enjoyed managing their empires. They are not the gatekeepers, anymore. Folks with talent and a camera can take their shot now, on their own terms, too.

All of what I am praising is the their videos which are episodes of what they call *The Chat*. There are others, such as when they split up, and one of them will bring in a real estate agent, for a segment that is boring as could be asked for, and not anything you would share with your friends. Ditto for when one of them will talk to their hair stylist. Full stop; that material is the same that would normally be done in the mainstream media, just now, being done by two women who are producing it online. Who cares? After you mix alcoholic drinks and burn down *The Elf on the Shelf*, that is what I want more, of.

Munro is 36, has been married for eleven years, and has a son. Lajeunesse is 34, has been married for nine years, and has two girls. They don't say at which house they shoot the show, however, they shot a few episodes this past summer, when the show, or should I say, the website with the videos, debuted, in a backyard, with a nice wooden fence lined with perfectly manicured trees. And an in-ground pool. At least one of these two women is living in a castle. Good for them. As long as they



Lajeunesse, seething with anger at *The Elf on the Shelf*. "The damn, damn, damn, goddamn elf!" Cripes, and I thought only I did angry consumer product reviews in Barrie. There's a new sheriff in town

share it with the world when they are drinking in the middle of the day. Their advice to parents who work at home with their



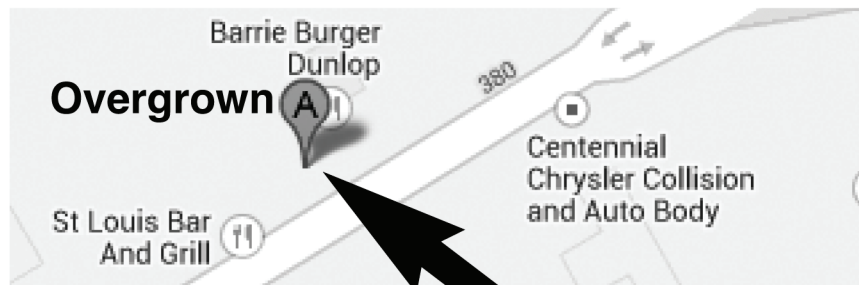
The castle

kids and want to be successful is to have: "coffee, alcohol, more alcohol," and "shot glasses." Lajeunesse herself, has moved from wine to vodka, to help her sleep at night. Yeah!

Munro refers to her husband as a "boob man," and Lajeunesse refers to hers, as an "ass man." When was the last time anybody got to talk like that on television? Glad to have it back, at least on the internet, anyway. It is refreshing that two straight, responsible, married mothers can allow themselves to be funny, sexy, silly, outrageous, explicit, crazy and honest on internet television, with their own website and *YouTube* channel.

My advice to them, whether they want it or not, is to let the other material slide, and to focus their energy on making as many episodes of *The Chat* as they can, build up a body of work and get somebody with big pockets to give them the push to the next level. And get drunk on camera. Often.





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Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet



The traditional Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet



Dutch people don't hate blacks, they just love Zwarte Piet. Are they hurting anybody?



Fisher Price Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet, no longer in production as of 2014



Barrie's Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet with a white Piet and "coal smudges" on his face

Look at the name, "Santa Claus." Does it look familiar to "Sinterklaas?" You bet it does. Sinterklaas is based on Saint Nicholas. Here is a little something from Wikipedia:

Saint Nicholas (Greek: Άγιος Νικόλαος, Hágios Nikólaos, Latin: Sanctus Nicolaus); (15 March 270 – 6 December 343), also called Nikolaos of Myra, was a historic 4th-century Christian saint and Greek Bishop of Myra, in Asia Minor (modern-day Demre, Turkey). Because of the many miracles attributed to his intercession, he is also known as Nikolaos the Wonderworker (Νικόλαος ὁ Θαυματουργός, Nikólaos ho Thaumaturgós). His reputation evolved among the faithful, as was common for early Christian saints, and his legendary habit of secret gift-giving gave rise to the traditional model of Santa Claus through Sinterklaas.

Thanks, Wikipedia. Yes, Virginia, there really is a Sinterklaas. And according to folklore, Sinterklaas had a helper, Zwarte Piet, which, in English, is Black Pete or Black Peter. Zwarte Piet is said to be black because he is a Moor from Spain.

Zwarte Piet is not portrayed as a slave. He is Sinterklaas' helper, who might also, if they are bad, take children away in a sack, back with him, to Spain. And so, if anything, Zwarte Piet is somebody with a little power behind him. He can get you in trouble, and not the other way around.

Those portraying Zwarte Piet put on blackface make-up and colourful Renaissance clothes, in addition to curly wigs, red lipstick, and big, gold earrings. And there you go.

Understandably, black people don't want to play Zwarte Piet, so when white people do it, they put on black makeup and join those playing Sinterklaas a few days a year, before December 6, St. Nicholas Day, with the gift-giving taking place on December 5.

And now, some people, who have nothing better to do, and who should be trying to save a whale or feed and clothe the poor, are after Zwarte Piet, because he's black, and they say it's a racist character. Saving a whale or feeding and clothing the world's poor, or, for that matter, getting countries out of debt slavery to the world's banking interests, is difficult to do. Pestering retail chains and organizing a demonstration is easy to do, thanks to the internet. There are plenty of otherwise useless people all over the world, who need a hobby, and consider themselves to be social justice warriors, for easy targets, such as Zwarte Piet. What happens, is a well-organized group are able to take tradition away from others, because most people, these days, are sheep. They roll over. Then after the tradition is gone, it is next to impossible to get it back. At left, is a picture of Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet at Continental Specialties, in downtown Barrie, on the 3rd of this month. A few years ago, they did have Zwarte Piet in blackface. Now, they pretend Zwarte Piet is white, and has smeared some coal on his face. Tradition gone.

That is the only Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet Barrie has, and it is not authentic any more. If I ran the store, I would have an adult in blackface. How would that hurt you or anyone else? How would it hurt anyone who is black? If you don't like Zwarte Piet portrayed correctly, then don't bother with those who do so. What comes next? If you are a black person, are you not allowed to like the rock band KISS and put on whiteface for fun? The Gene Simmons character is "The Demon." Are all whites, demons? Maybe I should organize a demonstration, while leaving all the world's larger and more important problems, ignored. Let's fight, over black and white greasepaint, shall we?

Who knows, maybe you feel that Zwarte Piet is racist, too. At least you know about Zwarte Piet now, and nobody got hurt. And I did my job, to share some Dutch culture with you. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, whether you like Zwarte Piet or not ☺

2016 City of Barrie Arts Awards



Jim Blackley, winner of The City of Barrie's 2016 Excellence in the Arts Award

The City of Barrie's Arts Awards were presented on Wednesday, November 16th at 6:30 pm at the Southshore Centre. Here are the short-listed nominees, and the winners:

Most Promising Youth: Tim Beattie; Tori Hathaway, MELINAH
Winner: **Tim Beattie**

Emerging Artist: Joshua Doerksen; Ryan LaPlante; Marcus Rodgers
Winner: **Joshua Doerksen**

Business Champion: Wendy Miller; Gerry Pilon; Amanda J Rodgers
Winner: **Wendy Miller**

Excellence in the Arts: Jim Blackley, James Harrison, John McEwan
Winner: **Jim Blackley**

Contribution to the Community: Art in House, Linda LaForge, Arkady Spivak
Winner: **Art in House**

The person who impressed me the most, and in my opinion, was the most deserving of an award, is Jim Blackley. At age 89, he is still vigorous, playing and teaching. I wanted to make a collage of photographs of him playing the drums, and unfortunately, there aren't a lot of pictures of him available, online. The one on this page was taken from the program of the Awards, themselves.

All that I can do, is copy and paste material from his official website, www.jimblackley.com. The picture on the other page is taken from that website, too. That is one of him accepting a different award, from 2012.

Sometimes, the best thing to do is not try to add to a story, and just stand back and list what somebody else has done. Here goes:

At 89 years young, Jim is one of the most sought after and respected drum teachers and authors in the music world today. His students have gone on to find success playing or recording with such world renowned artists as: Duke Ellington, Dizzie Gillespie, Count Basie, Woody Herman, Leonard Bernstein, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Herbie Hancock, Dexter Gordon, Oscar Peterson, Jim Hall, Clarke Terry, George Shearing, Frank Sinatra, Chick Corea, Mel Torme, Junior Mance, Joe Henderson, Zoot Sims, Kenny Wheeler, John Handy, Art Pepper, George Coleman, Herb Ellis, Fred Hersch, Norma Winstone, Sonny Rollins, Joe Williams, Helen Humes, George Benson, Charlie Hayden, Sonny Greenwich, Diana Krall, Don Thompson, Ed Bickert, Paul McCartney, The Beatles, Mick Jagger, Brian Ferry, Elton John, Marvin Gaye, The Temptations, Todd Rundgren, The Fifth Dimension, Linda Ronstadt, Hall and Oates, Elvis Costello, B.B. King, Diana Ross, The Supremes, Loreena McKennitt, Nellie Furtado, Michael Jackson, Quincy Jones, Gladys Knight, Roberta Flack, Smokey Robinson, The Four Tops, Boy George, George Michael, Patti Labelle, Sting, Feist, Stevie Wonder, The Tragically Hip, Peter Gabriel and Annie Lennox among others.

Timeline

1927: Born in Edinburgh, Scotland.

1936-1942: Special gift for music emerged. Became a featured soloist with a famous children's choir and performed in major concert venues such as the Usher Hall in Edinburgh and the Mc Ewan Hall in Glasgow.

1946: Entered the S.P.B.A. College of Drumming.

1947: Graduated with the post graduate Diploma from the S.P.B.A. College of Drumming.

1948: Married his long time ballroom dancing partner, Aishah.

1949-1951: Took 4th, 3rd and 2nd in the World Solo Drumming Championships.

1952: Moved with his family to Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

1953 -1956: Became a drumming instructor with the R.C.A.F. Pipe Band in Ottawa (1953-56) and won practically every Solo Drum and Drum Corps Championship in North America. Met Max Roach and had a life-altering experience while hearing the Max Roach-Clifford Brown Quintet during a visit to Toronto. Dedicated his life to the art of jazz drumming performance.

1957-1967: Moved family to Vancouver, B.C. Opened Jim Blackley's Drum Village, a very successful retail store. Operated a school of modern drumming. At the encouragement of Danny Richmond, drummer for the Charles Mingus quintet, who was so impressed with Jim's approach to musical performance, wrote and published the now legendary books, *Syncopated Rolls for the Modern Drummer Vols. 1 & 2*. Performed with the C.B.C. Jazz Workshop. Led his own band in one of the local night clubs. Performed for an extended period with the late Wilf Wylie, one of Canada's most influential jazz pianists.

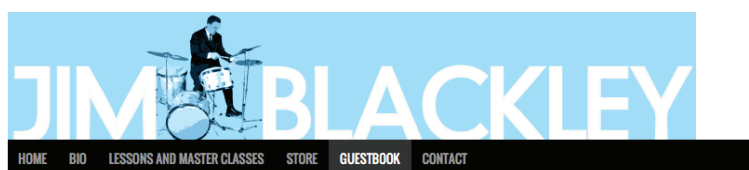
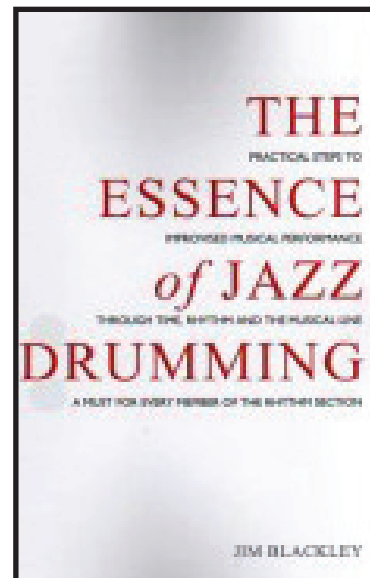
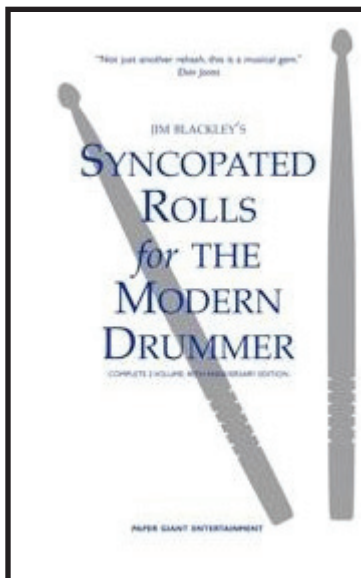
1967-1973: Moved family to New York City (Manhattan). Operated a drum studio and performed with a variety of musicians. Lectured at the Julliard School of Music. Was a guest clinician at the New York branch of the Percussive Arts Society.

1973 -1997: Jim and his family moved to Toronto. Operated a drum studio that attracted students from around the world.

1997 – Present: Lives in Barrie, Ontario, and has many international students. Published *The Essence of Jazz Drumming* and three volumes of *Rhythmical Explorations*.



The Metalworks Institute held their First Annual Drum Festival on September 22, 2012. Jim Blackley was presented with a lifetime achievement award from his former student, Dave Patel. Photograph by Richard Dukeshire



Guestbook

Please leave your comments and salutations for Jim here. Rest assured, he reads every one.





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