



Photo by Nic Adam

Mississauga-based dance troupe Reign Yash Dance Academy performed at the Diwali celebration at Zwick's Park last Saturday. The energetic performance delighted spectators.

# Diwali lights up the city's skyline

By Nic Adam

Zwick's Park was busy Saturday afternoon for Belleville's annual Diwali celebration. Hundreds of people gathered at the Lions Club Pavilion around 3 p.m. for the opening ceremony.

The music was upbeat and energetic. Reign Yash Dance Academy, a dance troupe from Mississauga, performed alongside students from Loyalist College. "Diwali, it means festival of lights," said Jacob Sabu, a Loyalist student, describing it as a Hindu festival that celebrates good over evil.

"In our houses, we light diyas. It's kind of [like] a small lamp and wick, and we decorate [it] with the earth and enjoy with firecrackers and all," added Loyalist student Shyam Menon.

After the massive success of last year's celebrations, members of the Diwali Celebration Committee were looking forward to this year.

Hardik Patel, Loyalist College graduate and member of the Diwali Celebration Committee, said in an interview with Lindsey Harren at 91X on Friday that "we got approximately 7,000 people throughout the day last year."

This year's turnout was massive. The Diwali Celebration Committee was expecting over 7,000 people to come and go over the course of the day.

"Our goal was just to involve local community, local people, local organizations, and also explain to them how we celebrate Diwali and why we celebrate Diwali. Cultural exchange," continued Patel.

Last year, Discover Belleville awarded

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Diwali Belleville's best new festival of 2022. The Reign Yash Dance Academy put

on multiple performances throughout the day. They danced along to high energy mashups of Bollywood, hip-hop and traditional folk music interlaced with performances from various Loyalist College students with DJ RP Singh and MC-ing by Patel.

This event was the perfect opportunity for local community members from India to celebrate at least part of the festival while away from family and loved ones. Two such people were students and friends Shyam Menon and Jacob Sabu.

"We are from Kerala, India. We moved here for school," said Sabu. "We are actually looking to see the fireworks. We are really fond of fireworks!"

"And some kind of food we can enjoy, Indian food," added Menon.

Eight food vendors set up shop in the

park during the event, serving authentic Indian cuisine from all around the country. There were tents set up near the south-west corner of the park, offering colouring activities and crafts for children. Free face painting and henna art were also available.

Around 5 p.m., Patel invited all the children in the audience up onto the stage to dance their hearts out. Parents, alongside their kids, shuffled up to the stage for their big moment. The DJ played a mashup of various popular music. Loyalist College's mascot, Sharkie, also joined in on the fun and danced with the kids up on stage.

Belleville's 2022 Diwali Celebration was recognized at Festival & Events Ontario's annual conference as Best New Festival for 2023, gaining recognition as a one of 100 top festivals in Ontario.

# Band continues comeback with new album

*Lowest of the Low regroups as performers*

By Aidan Aaltonen

Canadian alternative rock legends Lowest of the Low played an almost sold-out release show for their new album, *Welcome To The Plunderdome* at the Danforth Music Hall in downtown Toronto last Friday.

This is the third album they've released since reforming back in 2017 with a cemented lineup after years of prior splits and regroupings. The current lineup consists of lead signer/songwriter Ron Hawkins, guitarist Michael McKenzie, bassist Greg Smith, multi-instrumentalist Lawrence Nichols (who also happens to be this writer's uncle), and drummer David Alexander.

Formed in 1991, Lowest Of The Low has gone through many changes to reach where they are today. Originally just the trio of Ron (originally on bass), David and then guitarist Stephen Stanley, the Low began when the three grew tired of playing straight edge and politicized punk songs.

They began playing acoustic open mic nights and writing new songs, mostly based on sketches and writings in Ron's journal that he carried with him everywhere. After releasing their debut album at the end of 1991, the Low would spend the next few years touring across Canada, mostly in col-

lege pubs and downtown bars.

By the end of 1993, the Low signed a deal to LSD (London Smith Discs) and began working on their second album.

In early 1994, they would release their second album, *Hallucigenia*. After spending most of the recording period butting heads with their recording producer, Don Smith, and dealing with internal issues mostly centred around substance abuse and burnout, the Low would call it quits in autumn of 1994.

The Low would spend the next almost two decades occasionally playing reunion shows, but with no plans of any more work, the members focused on their own individual projects.

In 2017, however, they would announce a more permanent return and record one final album with founding guitarist Stephen Stanley, before moving over to the current lineup once they started touring.

"We are having a blast playing together," emphasized Nichols. "This might be the best functioning version of the Low that has ever existed."

Despite splitting and reforming over multiple years, the Low has maintained an extremely dedicated fan base, still attached to their 1991 album *Shakespeare, My Butt*.

With this new album however, the Low is aiming beyond just their devoted fans.

"Our new album has gotten a lot of praise from the usual suspects. The question that remains is how far outside our die-hard fans this album can reach," Nichols added.



Photo by Aidan Aaltonen

(From left) Lawrence Nichols on the keyboard, Ron Hawkins sings and plays his guitar and Michael McKenzie plays his guitar. They are members of the band Lowest of the Low.

Throughout the show, the Low played a wide variety of their catalogue, mixing in the old with the new, which kept the audience thoroughly entertained and engaged the whole way through. During classics like

Rosy and Grey and Salesmen, Cheats and Liars, the audience couldn't help but sing along. Even though the band members are very happy about the overall reaction to their brand new album, they aren't planning on stop-

ping there.

"It's all systems go," stated Nichols. "We have eight or nine songs ready to go for our next record. If all goes well, we can start recording again in January."



# Cross-country team ready for upcoming championship

By Louis G. M. Oliver

As the season's third invitational race wraps up, the Loyalist Lancers cross-country team is looking decidedly well for all the hard work and practice they have put in.

"This is a good final season check of our fitness and where we stand against the other teams of Ontario before going into the provincial championships in two weeks," adds Coach Kevin Beatty.

For seven weeks now, the team has been training, together and on their own, both long distance and strength in varying terrain and weather conditions.

Compared to the previous locations the team has faced, this course was uncomplicated and overall decent conditions.

Coach Beatty says that "for our Loyalist runners, this was a chance to run a fast time. It's a faster course than what they've done in the past and I liked seeing the aggressiveness of some of the runners early on in the race..."

Going into the race, Connor Asuncion says he felt nervous and locked in. As the race carried on, Asuncion adds it got easier keeping with his pace and pushing through it.

Continuing in his progressive results, Asuncion reflects on the race, saying he's happy and he gave it his all.

Coming in 43 out of 75 runners at a pace of 3:57 with Brody Clarke following close behind, Asuncion adds, "Now I know my pace, I know where my position is and every race I just want to beat my previous time."

A bold and forward thinking claim that will be surely observed in weeks to come.

The next event is the provincial championships on Oct. 28 at Conestoga College. The Lancers will be facing off against the other 27 competing teams from across Ontario's colleges.

Three people set personal bests in this last race. Moving forward into provincials, it will be another chance to top their scores and possibly even win a medal for their efforts. Coach Beatty says the team will be aiming for a top 10 place in the upcoming weeks ahead.

#### Loyalist Results for the Centennial Cross Country Men's 8K Run:

Connor Asuncion - place: 43; score: 41; time: 31:40; pace: 3:58/km.

Brody Clarke - place: 44; score: 42; time: 31:52; pace: 3:59/km.

Isidore Champagne - place: 53; score: 51; time: 33:40; pace: 4:13/km.

Alexander Rettegi - place: 61; score: 57; time: 34:29; pace: 4:19/km.

Jessie Shaw - place: 64; score: 58; time: 35:22; pace: 4:25/km.



Photo by Louis G. M. Oliver

(Clockwise from bottom left) Mytchel Carson, Brody Clarke, Connor Asuncion, Isidore Champagne, Jesse Shaw, and Alexander Rettegi in a team huddle after the OCCA Men's 8-km race at Centennial College.



Photo by Jilly MacIver

Kathy Dickson, Olivia Quinney, Jennifer Dupuis, and Andrew Mason are out on an early morning row. The Quinte Rowing Club's members are trying to get out on the water as much as possible before the rowing season comes to an end.

# Rowing Club plays integral part in community

By Jilly MacIver

The Quinte Rowing Club was founded in 1985 by Scott Withers. Since its inception, the club has been a beacon of excellence in the Belleville community for nearly four decades. The club's rich history is steeped in commitment to developing both young and old rowing athletes.

The members are undeniably passionate about their sport and continue to exemplify unity and unwavering dedication. The club's rowing season runs from May to mid-October, with the best time to row being the peak of summer where temperature and season weld together - June. This schedule allows the members to enjoy the beauty of the water during the most favourable conditions.

A unique aspect of the Quinte Rowing Club that sets it apart from others is the diversity among its members. Many other clubs in the surrounding area focus on university-level students, whereas this club goes the extra mile with recreational rowers. The club fosters an environment where every member, regardless of age, background, or experience, can contribute to the shared passion for rowing.

To excel in this sport, the members of the Quinte Rowing Club spend numerous hours practising together. They divide their training sessions between the Bay of Quinte, the tank room (a swimming pool room with a built-in boat that helps you focus on technique instead of speed), and the conditioning/weight room.

"We have to row all at the same time; if somebody's off, it screws everything up, so that's why we practise upstairs and on the water," emphasizes Andrew Mason, a dedicated member of the club. Along with recreational rowing, the club also offers the opportunity for its members to be a part of its competitive team. The club's most recent (and last of the season) race on Oct. 1, just before Thanksgiving, was a remarkable moment of pride for all its members. They secured the fifth position in the competition; the club accomplished the unthinkable and completed the race with their best time of the year - a record-breaking 17.39 minutes in a challenging four-kilometre course. This conclusion showcases the immense progress and dedication of the club's members, and they couldn't be more proud.

For many, joining the Quinte Rowing Club has been a long-standing item on

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Member John Jackson

their bucket list. Janet Cowell, a club veteran, realized her dream when she saw the club offering a "learn to row" program.

"They're a great group of people - amazing," says Cowell.

Kathy Dickson, another one of the club's members, started her rowing journey alongside Cowell in 2018. Dickson embodies the essence of rowing as a lifelong sport that keeps you fit. They both commend the club for its welcoming atmosphere and urge anyone who is thinking about joining to "do it". John Jackson took the "learn to row" course this year on May 29 alongside six others, all of whom decided to join the club, reflecting the club's infectious enthusiasm that the sport of rowing fosters.

The Quinte Rowing Club practises two types of rowing: "sweep," where rowers use a single oar (paddle) on one side, and "sculling," which involves using two oars. These two styles provide variety and challenges that keep the sport engaging and rewarding for its members. Rowers are placed in their position in the boat according to their abilities, and the person in the "stroke position" sets the pace for the rest of the team. It's the coach's responsibility to decide the positions of the rowers, ensuring a balanced and effective team.

Many club members identified rowing to be "serene and elegant" - something that stands out compared to other, more gritty sports. As Dickson aptly describes, it's "very collaborative, but very supportive."

Member Jennifer Dupuis adds, "It can be miserable when you're doing it, but it looks cool!" The camaraderie among the members is striking.

"Everyone unifies and looks out for each other," Dickson says. Jackson emphasizes that "there are no prima donnas in rowing; once you're in the boat, everyone is equal, regardless of age."

The club president and head coach of the competitive team, Carol Greiner, is an embodiment of the sport's enduring spirit - along with her veteran counterpart Maxine Walker. At over 80 years of age and in exceptional physical shape, Greiner is often referred to as "what this is all about" by Jackson, who also recognized her as a master rower and an inspiration to all members.

The Quinte Rowing Club represents a testament to the power of passion, teamwork, and dedication. With a rich history, diverse and enthusiastic members, and a commitment to developing young and old athletes, the club continues to thrive. Rowing may be grueling at times with early mornings and physical challenges, but the unity, support, and elegance it brings to the lives of its members are immeasurable.

Rowing is truly a lifelong journey. It keeps participants fit and fulfilled, and the Quinte Rowing Club stands as a shining example of enduring spirit. The rowing season is almost over as the club's dock comes out within the next few weeks, but the members urge anyone who has interest in the sport to take a "Learn to Row" course next May.