



Festival Notes

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Spring Is Almost Here!

By Gary McWilliams, the Festival Nomad

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I know that spring is almost here! No, it's not warm yet. There's still snow on the lawns and streets and I haven't seen my first robin, but I still know that spring is almost here! Why? That's easy! First of all, the days are getting longer. That's one sure sign, but more than that, this is the time for sportsmen and home shows! As I write this article, the "Woodworking Show" is being held in Toronto. A few weeks after that, it's the Toronto Sportsmen's Show and then the National Home Show. All around the Greater Toronto Area home and home improvement shows are taking place. Then there are the garden shows and the maple syrup festivals! It's enough to make the heart sing! Spring is always a rebirth time for me! I am getting impatient just writing about it! I can't wait for spring to get here!

"It's hard to choose which one..."



Gathering the sap...

A New Season of Festivals...

Yesterday I decided that I would go through all the e-mails I have received from various festivals and events. I gathered them up and then sorted them into date order. I wanted to refresh my memory about these festivals and I wanted to prepare a preliminary 3 month schedule for the festivals and events that we wanted to visit. Believe me; it's hard to choose which ones to visit! They all sound so great! For me a lot depends on timing. Obviously I can't split myself in half (although I think Judi would like to sometimes!), so I have to make decisions on nothing but gut feelings. I do like to visit festivals that contact me requesting our help. I believe that if they take the time to contact us, we should consider them first. So here is a list of some of the festivals we hope to visit over the next few months. Hopefully we will see you there!

- Saturday, March 8th - Waterfowl Festival at Presqui'le Park
- Saturday, March 9th - Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival
- Saturday, March 15th - Toronto Sportsmen's Show
- Saturday, March 29th - Maple In The County
- Saturday, April 5th - Float Your Fanny Down The Ganny
- Saturday, April 26th - Festival of the Maples

What Volunteers Do...

Last weekend Judi and I attended the Festivals and Events Ontario (FEO) annual conference held in London. You can read my full article on the Ontario Festivals Visited website located in the "Winter Festivals" section.

This is the time of year when many people are either in or going to the "sunny south". So, it is with much admiration and pride that I tell you that over 200 festival and event organizers were NOT in the "sunny south" but were in the "frozen north" trying to improve themselves and their festivals! It's not surprising, when you see the list of the festivals they represent, that these are the very best organizers and events in Ontario. Organizing and managing a great event, year after year, does not happen by chance. It comes from dedication and learning! My hat is off to these dedicated festival professionals who took the time to attend this year's FEO Conference.

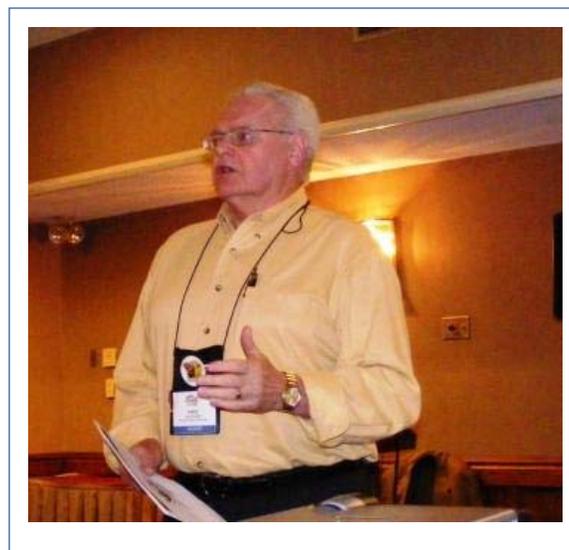


Conference delegates attending one of the many educational sessions

"My hat is off to these dedicated..."



The Honourable Peter Fonseca,
Ontario's Minister of Tourism after his
address to FEO delegates



Larry Blundell, Executive Director of the
Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest talks
about his festival and its future



We were visiting the Prince Edward County Studio & Gallery Tour

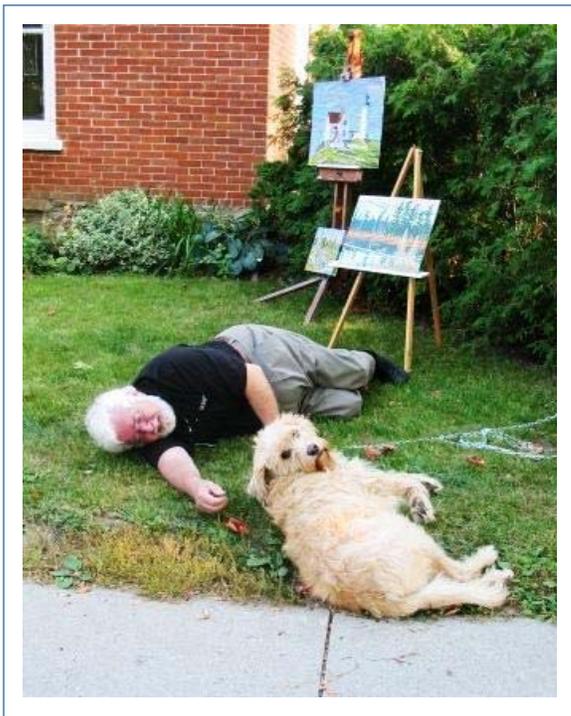
"She directed us upstairs..."

Festival Ideas...

Each month this section will feature ideas gained from attending so many festivals. For the March issue I want to talk about a "Studio Tour" we visited. A few weeks ago I wrote an article on "The Adventures of a Festival Nomad" blog about this subject. I am republishing it for your enjoyment/information?

A Dog Day Afternoon...

Every once in a while we come across a funny situation when we visit a festival or event. But, when we come across two at the same event, it's something to write about! This past fall we went on an artists' studio and gallery tour. We traveled all over scenic Prince Edward County. After much time and mileage, we reached our final destination, the Town of Picton. Picton is a picturesque town located in the southern part of Prince Edward County. It is especially busy during the summer and fall months. It was towards the end of the day and we had only a little viewing time left to see a few more participating artists. Many of the artists we visited during the tour had their studios in their homes. The artist (who's studio was in his home) we were about to visit was located in the south eastern residential section of Picton. After winding our way through a number of residential streets, we finally located his home. The artist was on the grass in front of his home sitting at his easel. He gave us a friendly welcome and showed us what he was working on. He then suggested that we enter his home to view his work. At the front door we were greeted by his wife. She directed us upstairs to the artist's studio/gallery. Upstairs we were met by their son who was in charge of the gallery. After looking around and admiring the works of art we took our leave and headed downstairs and out to the front lawn. We looked to say goodbye to our host and found that he and the family dog were fast asleep on the ground. It must have been a long day! Our last image was dog and master raising their heads bidding us a goodbye.



Our last image of dog and master!

Please see *Festival Ideas...* on page 4

Festival Ideas... from page 3

The next artist's (a carver) studio we wanted to visit was located on a nearby street. We found his home and parked our car. We walked up to the house and went in. We were greeted by the artist's wife who told us to take our time looking at the carvings that were placed around the living and dining rooms. As we were about to leave, our hostess suggested that if we wanted to see her husband at work we could go outside to the garage located at the side of the house. The garage had been converted into the carver's workshop. We love to see artists and artisans at work, so we took the trip up the side of the house to the workshop. The door was open so we walked in. **YOU GUESSED IT!** Here was the carver, chisel in hand, fast asleep in his rocking chair! We quietly backed out of the workshop so as not to disturb him. This was not the kind of working we were use to seeing! Judging by the last two artists, it must have been a very busy day!!



One of the numerous artists visited on our tour

"... they can be a pain!"

Festival Tips

Chairs...

Yes, that's what I said! **CHAIRS!** Before Judi and I leave to visit an event, we always go through a checklist of what to bring. One of the items on the list is "folding chairs". When we come to this item, we always discuss whether or not the chairs will be needed. It's not that the chairs are heavy to carry, it's just that they are awkward and they have to be constantly carried or guarded. In short, they can be a pain! So, bringing them needs a discussion, because they can be very inconvenient, especially if they are brought but not used! So here is what we do. We consider the type of festival we are about to visit, check their website and then make an educated guess. Unfortunately how to choose is not an exact science, but we have learned from experience that certain types of events need chairs more than others. Outdoor music or entertainment events usually need chairs. Even if they have bleachers, chairs are still a good idea. Bleacher seating can be very uncomfortable. So we take our chairs to these types of events. A good rule of thumb is that if you are going to need to sit down for any length of time, take chairs, otherwise, don't, they will just get in the way!



Chairs at the Oshawa Jazz and Blues Festival were a great idea!

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