



Festival Notes

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Spring...

By Gary McWilliams, *the Festival Nomad*

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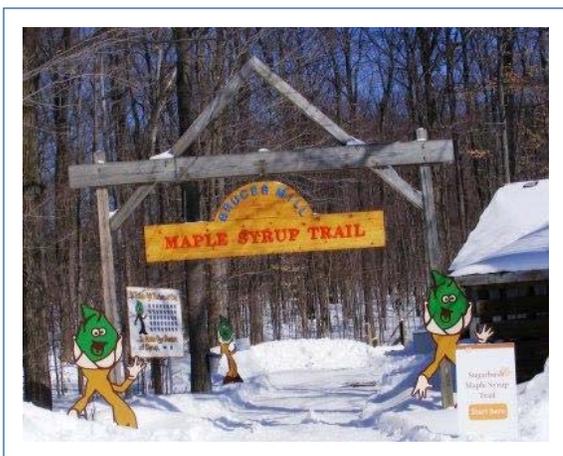
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"... 4 nifty "Nomad Prizes" awarded to the winners!"

Spring is finally here and festivals and events are starting to come fast and furious! Sometimes it's hard to keep up with what events occur when! But that's the fun of being the Festival Nomad, figuring out where to go and what to see. Speaking of that, last month I announced that I would be holding a **Nomad Contest**. Information about the contest is now posted on the Ontario Festivals Visited website (www.ontariofestivalsvisited.ca). There are two web pages devoted to the contest. The first page, entitled "Nomad Contest" lists all the festivals who have asked us to visit their event. This list is divided into four months, June, July, August and September and there is a link to each event's website. There will be four chances to win, one for each month! We would really appreciate your input, so enter the contest and let us know who you think we should visit! The other web page, entitled "Nomad Contest Description", contains, as the name suggests, all the information you need to know to enter. The contest is open to everyone, except Judi and me, and there will be four (4) nifty "Nomad Prizes" awarded to the winners! So jump on the bandwagon and help us decide which festivals and events to visit!

Maple Syrup Festivals and More

You can always tell the season by the type of festivals being held. Take spring for instance. There are maple syrup festivals, garden shows, flower festivals and home improvement shows. In the summer it's waterfront festivals, music festivals and historical re-enactments. So when I tell you that we visited a number of maple syrup festivals this year, you won't be surprised! Our first maple festival was the Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival held in Bruce's Mill Conservation Area near Stouffville. This was followed by Maple in the County (Prince Edward County) and then the Festival of Maples in Perth. This coming weekend we are visiting the Bowmanville Maple Festival and All That Jazz. They are holding it this year even though they have just experienced a major downtown fire that gutted a number of main street buildings.

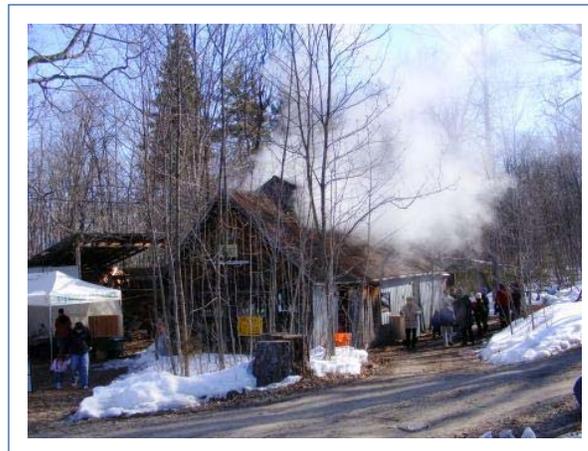


*"Bruce's Mill Maple Syrup Trail ..."
Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival*

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MAPLE SYRUP ... from page 1

Talk about community spirit and determination! There were plenty of other maple festivals we could have visited if we had more time and could have cloned ourselves! For the remainder of the month we plan on visiting Keswick for the "Rise to Rebellion" historical re-enactment, and then it is on to Barrie for their Waterfront Festival. The next day there is the Toronto International Circus Festival. Wow and it's not even the end of May. The last two weeks include a trip to the Kitchener-Waterloo area to visit an event at the Doon Heritage Crossroads and then on the final day of the month to Chatham for the Gregor's Crossing Medieval Faire! And, for a finishing touch for the month, we might just visit a few attractions along the way!



"Making Maple Syrup..."
Maple in the County – Prince Edward County

"I met author Shane Peacock..."

The Book Launch

We are always looking for unique, non mainstream, events to visit when our schedule permits. We visited one such event a few weeks ago. Here is an excerpt from our website article.

The Great Farini...

Several year's ago I was involved with the development of a new festival in the Town of Port Hope. The festival was going to feature one of Port Hope's most famous and intriguing residents, William Leonard Hunt, or as he preferred to be known, **The Great Farini!** Farini was a larger than life character that lived and prospered during the late 1800's and died, at the age of 90 on January 17th, 1928. He was, perhaps, best known for his high wire battles with Blondin "the Magnificent" over the Niagara gorge, but his true fame came later in life as an inventor, business man and adventurer. It was during the development stage of our "Farini Festival" that I met author Shane Peacock. Shane is an expert on Farini and wrote a wonderful book entitled "*The Great Farini - The Hire-Wire Life of William Hunt*". The book is about Farini's life and is a must read for any one interested in famous Canadians! I believe the book can be purchased at any of the major book stores in Canada. Over the years I have kept in touch with Shane and was intrigued when he told me he was writing a series of children's novels featuring Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "*Sherlock Holmes*" as a boy! I hadn't heard from Shane for several months, when I received an e-mail announcing that he had published the first "The Boy Sherlock Holmes" book, "*Eye of the Crow*" and was holding a book launch and reading. I quickly e-mailed back that Judi and I would attend. Imagine our disappointment when the event had to be cancelled due to the "Great Snow Storm". I had just about forgotten about my disappointment when I received another e-mail. This time it was from the Cobourg Public Library who was hosting the launch of Shane's second "The Boy Sherlock Holmes" book, "*Death in the Air*". Once again we quickly replied - yes, we would attend"! Fortunately, this time, there would be no problem with snow storms! The book launch was to start at 2:00 pm. Judi and I left our home with plenty of time to spare and arrived early for the event. The "Meet at 66 King East" Café was already filling with Shane Peacock enthusiasts, both young and old!



"...holding onto the wagon's bars for dear life!"
International Plowing Match - 2007



"...the driver pointed out areas of interest."
Bala Cranberry Festival



"... we were transported to the next farm..."
Elmvale Maple Syrup Festival

Festival Ideas...

Each month this section features ideas gained from attending so many festivals. For the May issue we want to talk about the wagon rides at events we have visited. A few weeks ago I wrote an article on "The Adventures of a Festival Nomad" blog about this subject. We are republishing it for your enjoyment/information?

A Role In The Hay...

I had never really thought about it before, but festivals and hay rides and wagons were made for each other! Of the 50 plus festivals we have visited, over 15 have had some sort of wagon transportation. Festivals used them for a variety of different reasons, shuttle service, entertainment, sight seeing and general transportation. Different modes of locomotion are used, horse power, tractors and trucks. All have one thing in common, fun! Perhaps the wagon takes us back to our roots, to gentler times, where transport was slow but the scenery was beautiful and the smells were intoxicating. I am sure you all have your own memories of "Hay Rides Past", but I thought I would tell you some of mine. Our first hay ride adventure was during our first Ontario Festivals Visited event, the Elmvale Maple Syrup Festival. After visiting the first maple sugar farm on the tour, we were transported to the next farm on one of two horse drawn hay wagons being used for that purpose. The air was crisp, so the mist from the horses' nostrils was visible. Although the trip was not very long, the joy of the open aired wagon ride was evident on the faces of our fellow travelers! The tractor pulled wagon ride at the International Plowing Match took us from the parking lot to the festival grounds. The ground was very uneven and we were all standing up, weaving back and forth and holding on the wagon's bars for dear life! I felt like a prisoner being transported to the gallows! The wagon ride at the Bala Cranberry Festival was much gentler. A tractor pulled two covered wagons around the ground of the cranberry marsh. As we traveled through the marsh, the tractor driver pointed out areas of interest. The Waterford Pumpkinfest wagon ride transported visitors from one festival venue to another. The wagon ride carried us through the Town of Waterford, giving us a wonderful opportunity to discover the charms of this beautiful little town! At the Lang Pioneer Village's "Christmas By Candlelight" I was able to watch my grandson climb onto the horse drawn wagon that was going to take them around the villages square.

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They all sang Christmas carols along the way! In Brighton, at the Brighton Winterfest, horse drawn wagons crossed the ice covered bay to take visitors to the “Tyke Pond” Hockey Tournament. The horse drawn wagon ride at the Bruce’s Mill “Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival” took us into the heart of their Sugarbush. On the ride back a father and his baby quietly slept to the rhythm of the turning wheels!

And finally, on our latest tractor pulled wagon ride at one of the Maple in the County Sugarbush participants, we traveled down a long lane from the parking area to the Sugarbush and Pancake Breakfast. During the trip the temperature was below zero and there was a chilling breeze. I think the attitude of the passenger next to me summarized all of our wagon adventures. Her comment to me as she first sat down next to me was “It’s great to have this many people so close, we will all keep warm.” and as we moved along, we all chatted comfortably as old friends.



*“...horse drawn wagons crossed the ice covered bay...”
Brighton Winterfest*

Festival Tips

Sunglasses, Hat and Sun Block...

This is the time of year when the sun comes out (we hope) and the weather becomes warmer. It’s also the time when the sun’s rays become more dangerous. With so much talk these days about skin cancer and the need to protect ourselves, I thought that it would be a good idea to remind all my festival friends to start thinking protection. So, like the Scouts say, “Be Prepared”. Here’s a list of items you might consider taking with you on your next festival visit.

- Sunglasses
- Hat
- Sun block
- Water
- Light long-sleeved shirt
- Umbrella
- Lip balm

“... we chatted comfortably as old friends.”



“Judi... ready for a day in the sun!”

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