



Festival Notes

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In The Thick Of It...

By Gary McWilliams, *the Festival Nomad*

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“... **BOOM**, the weather would turn...”

We are now at the beginning of July and, boy, are we in the thick of it! Last month we were very busy traveling to Ontario festival and events. This month looks like it will be even busier! We have to be careful, though, with the cost of gas rising so high. We want to make every visit meaningful. We do try to make festivals and events who contact us a priority, but it is difficult in the summer months to see them all. We do like to check out any potential visit on the internet. This research is important because it gives us a better idea which festivals we should include on our visiting schedule (content and timing). It's not that we want to preclude any event, but with so many festivals and events to choose from, we want to balance our choices so that we vary the types and locations of the festivals we visit and write about. If you know of a festival or event you think we should consider visiting, please let us know. You can e-mail us at gary@ontariofestivalsvisited.ca.

Sizzling Hot (and Cold)!

The last few festivals we have visited have had “Jekyll and Hyde” weather! We would leave our home in sunshine, spend time at the event and, **BOOM**, the weather would turn cloudy, rain would come and the temperature would drop! It has been hard to know what “festival gear” to bring and whether to stay or go home early. Two such events, happening on the same weekend, were the **Marine Heritage Festival** in Port Dover and the **Canadian Aviation Expo** in Oshawa. In both events the day started out well and was then interrupted with thunder storms. Fortunately we waited out the storms and saw the completion of each event. The first festival visited during the month of June was to the **Dundas International Buskerfest**. It was extremely hot that day but the Buskers still performed brilliantly. The next weekend, due to illness, we missed visiting the **Richmond Hill Heritage Festival**. We hope to include it in our schedule next year.



Dundas International Buskerfest

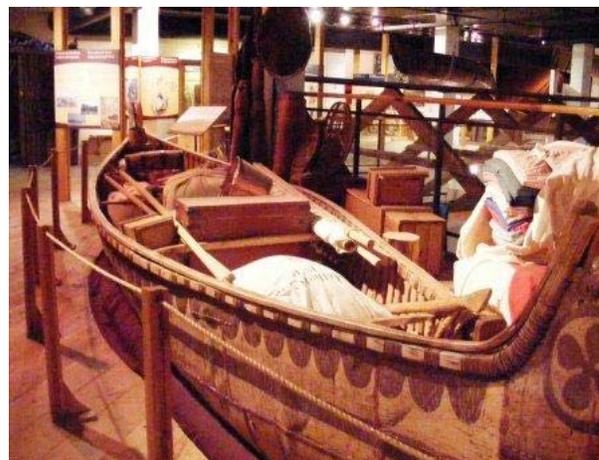
Please see *Sizzling Hot...* on page 2

Sizzling Hot ... from page 1

Our next visit was to the **Canadian Canoe Museum** in Peterborough. I had heard about the museum from a friend years before, but never found the time to visit it. I am very glad we found the time this month! The museum and its displays are awesome. As mentioned before, we visited the **Marine Heritage Festival** in Port Dover. The two re-enactments that were held during the festival were fantastic and well worth the 3 hour drive to get there! The next day we traveled to the Oshawa Airport for the **Canadian Aviation Expo**. An exciting Air Show was part of the event. On the last weekend of the June we were scheduled to visit the **Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame**, but visitors from out-of-town asked us to accompany them to the **Cobourg Waterfront Festival**, so we postponed our visit to the Hall until July or August.

Our plans for July include the **Peterborough Festival of Lights**, a re-enactment at **Upper Canada Village** (Morrisburg), **Fiesta Buckhorn** (food and wine tasting), the **Farmerville Exhibition - "Steam Fair"** (Athens), the **Collingwood Elvis Festival**, **Fort Henry's Tattoo** (Kingston) and the **Gemboree** (Bancroft). A VERY busy month!

"... our desire to inform and entertain our visitors..."



Canadian Canoe Museum

Stay Tuned...

Over the course of planning, developing and managing the **Ontario Festivals Visited** website, we have tried a number of things to attract and inform site visitors. As a result of our efforts we now attract an average of over 5,500 visitors per month, with the number of hits averaging 70,000 plus. We hope to increase these results in the future. A lot of what we have done has been successful and, of course, some of the things we have tried have not been a success. One of the successes was adding a "Festivals Visited List" page. According to our traffic count, this has been a very popular page. We tried a "Nomad Contest" in which we asked readers to help us choose the festivals we should visit. This idea was a bust, no-one entered! Perhaps the contest was just too complicated. Recently we added "Festival Video Clips" to each of our latest articles. We video portions of each of the festival we visit and then edit them into short video clips. We hope that it will give site visitors a better "feel" for each event we visit. It is too early to tell how this addition will be received. One idea, mentioned last issue, which we have been working on for some time is "Festival Radio Vignettes". Time will tell how successful this initiative will be. You can listen to the 14 that have been produced on our website. There is a list available. Just click and play! Please let Kevin and I know what you think! Our final "new" program is the offering of "Banner Ads" on the website. We are offering a limited number of web ad spaces to festivals, their suppliers and vendors and to community businesses. This program has just started and we are already having some success! We have not only had a number of inquires, but we have sold ad spaces to three different clients. We are very hopeful for the future. One thing that will not change is our desire to inform and entertain our website visitors of the great Ontario festivals and events that happen each and every week throughout the year!



Canadian Aviation Expo



Marine Heritage Festival – Port Dover
“Afternoon Military Re-enactment”



Marine Heritage Festival
“Evening Naval-Military Re-enactment”



Tillsonburg Ruffed Grouse Society Banquet
“Live Auction Items”

Festival Ideas...

Each month this section features ideas gained from attending so many festivals. For the July issue we want to talk about rural communities. 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 Sense of Community...

One of the great things about being a “Festival Nomad” is being able to visit unique rural communities! Over the past year or so, we have had the privilege of visiting a number of such communities. Our first festival took us to Elmvale. This is a small town located northwest of Barrie. They host a wonderful Maple Syrup Festival each spring and attract thousands of people to it! Colborne was our next rural experience. Colborne, located just east of Cobourg, is the home of the Old Tyme Apple Blossom Festival. Judi was able to find a few “treasured” books in the book sale that was held in their town park! Other great rural communities followed, Frankford (located on the Trent-Severn Waterway), Gravenhurst (in the heart of Muskoka), Warkworth (where we discover that Cowboys and Cowgirls do exist in Ontario!), Smith’s Falls (where chocolate filled the air), Buckhorn (twice!), Wellington (a great retirement community, plus my brother and his wife live there), Bala (where the street on a fall weekend are lined with Cranberry products) and Waterford (where the pumpkins glow in the dark and people’s homes are decorated to match the theme of their festival). There were, of course, more, many more, but I think you understand what I am trying to convey. While big cities may be the engine of our economy, rural communities and their residents are the “heart and soul” of our province. They represent what most of us would like to achieve in life, “peace, quiet and a sense of community”! My own town, Cobourg, gives me this sense of well being. I hope you find or have found your own “heart and soul”!

Festival Tip

A few weeks ago Judi and I were discussing wearing apparel and some of the mistakes we had made over the past year. I thought I would share some of our clothing "faux pas" with you. This month's Festival Tip is to "What Not To Wear..." Here is a re-print of a blog I wrote about our adventures!

What Not To Wear...

Judi and I were traveling from an event and started talking about clothing. The conversation was not about how each other looked. It was about how many times we had gone to a festival wearing inappropriate clothing! Over this past year or so, we have definitely had our share of "What not to wear"! There was time when we visited the **Shelter Valley Folk Festival**. We had parked our car in a farmer's field. The field had just been freshly cut so there were lots of sharp edges! For some reason Judi had decided to wear sandals (she never wears sandals!) and the sharp edges really cut into her feet! Lesson learned! Then there was the time that I visited the **Brighton Winterfest**. I decided to wear a pair of cotton pants and deck shoes. The weather was supposed to be sunny and reasonably warm for that time of year. It started off that way. Unfortunately it didn't continue that way, and once I had reached Brighton large flakes on snow were falling! One of the festival's events was snowmobile racing at the Brighton Speedway. This is where the snow really started to fall! There I was, the lowly "Festival Nomad" sitting in the stands with cotton pants and deck shoe, surrounded by "winter" people all dressed in heavy parkas and warm snowmobile boots! As the snow continued to fall, I am sure I started to look like a giant snowman!! You would have thought a reasonably intelligent man would have learned a valuable lesson, but not the "Nomad", lesson NOT learned! A few weeks later Judi and I visited the **Ajax Winterfest**. You guessed it; I was wearing the same cotton pants and deck shoes! Although it wasn't snowing, it was extremely cold and it had just snowed the night before. I am sure I must have posed quite the figure as we tramped through the snow following other festival visitors who were wearing snow boots or snowshoes! I had to follow in their tracks so that I wouldn't have to break a new path in the deep snow. As it was snow managed to sneak into my shoes causing a wet crunchy feeling next to my socks! Lesson **FINALLY** learned????!!!

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Canadian Aviation Expo
"Aspiring Pilots!"