



Festival Notes

February 2009
Volume 2 Issue 3

Ontario Festivals Visited, P.O. Box 272, Cobourg, ON, K9A 4K8, Canada
www.ontariofestivalsvisited.ca info@ontariofestivalsvited.ca (888) 818-0255

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 In the Depths of Winter...
- 1 Planning the Future...
- 2 Hills Trading Post
- 3 Festival Ideas – Family Heritage Day
- 4 Festival Tips – Choosing Where To Go!

In the Depths of Winter...

By Gary McWilliams, *the Festival Nomad*

We have just survived a major snow storm! I know, what else is new? A few weeks ago I was in Quebec City where it was -38°C in the sunshine! All this and Wharton Willie just declared six more weeks of winter! We are definitely "in the depths of winter"! The good news is that it will all be over soon (six weeks). Spring will come... eventually! In the meantime I have been able to catch up on all my writing and, I have been working on changes to the **Ontario Festivals Visited** website. As I mentioned in last month's newsletter we are in the process of making major changes to the website. The first of the changes should be up and running by the time you receive this newsletter. Here is an outline of the changes:

VISITOR FORUM

We want to hear from our visitors, especially those who have visited some of the same festivals and events we have visited and written about. So, we are installing a "*Visitor's Forum*" section at the bottom of each festival/event article. We are encouraging visitors to write about their own festival/event experiences. We hope that festival/event organizers will also take advantage of the free space and let everyone know what's new in upcoming events. A Forum for everyone!

FESTIVAL POLL

We are also adding a "*Festival Poll*" button at the bottom of each festival/event article. Festival visitors will now be able to rate the festivals and events they have visited. Hopefully the results will help festival/event organizers.

Well, this is the start! We hope you enjoy these and future changes. We will keep you up-to-date as we make them.

Planning the Future...

The time has come to start seriously looking at this spring's visit schedule. Over the next few months Judi and I will be exploring the internet to create a list of potential festivals and events to visit. We don't take this task lightly. We want to visit as wide an array of festivals and events as possible. Considerations include type of festival/event, size of festival/event, location of festival/event and cost of festival/event. If you have any suggestions, please let us know by e-mailing me at gary@ontariofestivalsvisited.ca.

Please see *Planning the Future...* on page 2



"Polar Bear Festival"
St. John's United Church
Campbellford

Planning the Future ... from page 1

January 2009 - As far as January was concerned, the visits or, I should say "the visit", was limited to the "Polar Bear Festival" in Campbellford. We met my brother, Chuck and his wife, Flo there, along with their friends, Win and Wilf. We had a fun time, especially when Wilf and Chuck volunteered to help with the auction. You will have to read my upcoming article to find out more!

February 2009 - Hopefully February will prove more productive. There are a number of events being held in February, especially on the "Family Day" holiday weekend. Below is a list of some of them. Hopefully the weather will be perfect for that weekend!

Family Holiday Festival/Event List (Monday, February 21st)

- Buckhorn Family Heritage Day (Buckhorn)
- Cardboard Derby on Fort Henry Hill (Fort Henry, Kingston)
- London Children's Museum (London)
- Family Heritage Day and Japanese Cultural Day (Rockton)
- Whitechurch-Stouffville Museum (Gormley)
- Guelph Civic Museum (Guelph)

Hills Trading Post – Teddy Bears and More...

The voice on the other end of the phone said "So, how was your weekend?" It was Tuesday night and the voice belonged to my friend Rolly. He had called to see how Judi's and my weekend had been. He knew we had been to an interesting festival that weekend. Rolly is like that, he likes to know what's happening in the world of festivals and craft shows. I am one of the people he calls to check things out, and I'm glad he does, because I get caught up too! Our friendship with Rolly and his wife Nancy began a few years ago. We were visiting the **Kleinburg Binder Twine Festival**. We had been exploring it for some time when we came to the Doctor's House Restaurant. Their parking lot was being used by several vendors. We walked down into the area and saw this lady stuffing a soft and cuddly Teddy Bear with an electronic stuffing machine. We watched her at work. I had never seen anything like it! It was fascinating to see the Bear become alive! Finally I asked the lady if I could take a photo. Her quick reply was "Only if I'm not in it!" She wasn't and I got a great photo!

Please see *Hills Trading Post...* on page 3



"Polar Bear Festival"
Campbellford



"Nancy Hill"
Hills Trading Post
In Vineland



"Teddy Bears and More..."
Hills Trading Post
at the Kleinburg Binder Twine Festival



"The Ice Slid at Fort Cobourg"
Cobourg Winter Festival



"Buckhorn in the Fall"
Colours 'n' Crows Tour
in Buckhorn

Hills Trading Post ... from page 2

So, that was that, until I sent Rolly and Nancy a thank you note. Rolly responded. From there our communications have continued with an e-mail here and a telephone call there. Then we found out that the Hills were coming to Cobourg to participate in the annual Highland Games Festival. We had dinner with them the night they rolled into town. At dinner Judi offered to help the Hills in the morning with their booth set up. Morning came and so did torrential rains. Judi, always the trooper bundled up and I drove here to the park where the event was taking place. Judi bravely got out of the car and went off to help! Several hours later Judi called to ask if I would pick her up. By the time I had put my coat on and walked to the car, Judi was almost home! When I met here she looked like a "drowned rat"! She was happy to have helped and, after all, she learned the art of stuffing Teddy Bears and more! I have heard from Rolly several times since and we met the Hills at the **O'Shavings Country Craft Show** this past Thanksgiving in Vineland. Friendship is like that! Learn about Teddy Bears and more by visiting **Hills Trading Post** at <http://www.geocities.com/colakid4/crafts.html>.

Festival Ideas...

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

Ontario Family Day...

Last year the Ontario Government created a new holiday in February, the Ontario Family Day. A number of communities decided that this would be a great day and weekend to hold new festivals. One of those communities, last year, was Cobourg. It was great fun, with lots of activities for the whole family. I understand from organizer, Lara Scott, that this year's Winter Festival, February 21st and 22nd will be bigger and better! I just received word that one of my favourite communities, Buckhorn, is about to hold their first Family Day event, "Family Heritage Day". From the sound of it, this too will be another great event! The community of Buckhorn is renowned for creating and running awesome events. I know, because I have visited a number of them! Events such as the Buckhorn Fine Art Festival, Colours and Crows and Fiesta Buckhorn come to mind! The Annual Family Heritage Day will take place at the Buckhorn Community Centre on Saturday, February 21st.

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

Festival Ideas ... from page 3

The event will run from 9:00 am in the morning to 4:00 pm in the afternoon. A Pancake Breakfast starts at 9:00 am and will be served throughout the day. Activities include Sleigh Rides and Storytelling plus there will be traditional games such as Tomahawk Throwing, Winter Baseball, Skating and Tug-of-war. There will also be several demonstrations, including Quilting, Honey Collecting, Trapping, Wine Making, Spinning, Blacksmithing, Snowshoeing, Nail Driving and Sweed Saw Cutting. To find out more about the Buckhorn Family Heritage Day, go to <http://www.buckhorncommunitycentre.com>.

Festival Tips

Choosing Where To Go...

Going to a festival or event is very personal. Where you decide to go will depend on many factors, interests, location, costs, dates, etc. Finding out about festivals and events can be frustrating. Most people want to get value for money spent. Word of mouth is probably the best way to find out about a festival or event. It's also a great way to evaluate an event, especially if you trust the person who makes the recommendation. We hope that you use **Ontario Festivals Visited** as a source. We are always glad to share our experiences. Unfortunately we can't visit every festival or event in Ontario (we wish we could), but there are over 3,000 of them! So, to help you choose, I am going to give you some tips. These are some of the techniques Judi and I use to make our choices.

1. **Event Calendars** - There are a number of event calendars available on the internet. Here is where you can find three of them: **Ontario Festival Visited** (<http://www.ontariofestivalsvisited.ca/>); **Festivals and Events Ontario** (<http://www.festivalsandeventsontario.ca/>) and **Ontario Tourism** (<http://www.ontariotravel.net/>). We check these first to find festivals or events that we might be interested in visiting.
2. **Festival/Event Websites** - Most of these calendars have direct links to the different festivals/events that are displayed. If you find an event that you are interested in, you can go and check out their website.
3. **Review Website** - Most website will give you enough details to tell you what kind of festival or event it is. Information like costs, location, dates and activities. One note of caution, make sure that you are looking at a current site. Many festivals don't keep their sites up-to-date or have a different site for each year. Some festivals cancel their event but don't delete their website. Believe me, it can become very confusing if you don't pay attention to what you are reading.
4. **Bad Weather** - Check the website to see what there weather policy is. If it is an outdoor event, does it run, rain or shine? Many festivals include this information on their website. If not, you might want to check with the organizers. This was especially true last year with all the awful weather we experienced.
5. **Contact Organizers** - If you have any doubts, contact the organizers. Most websites include contact information, e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, etc. If they don't include this information, I would be very leery of going to the event. There may be nothing wrong, but...!
6. **Internet Articles** - Using the Search Engine, "Google" (<http://www.google.com/>), can be very helpful. If you go to "Google" and type in the name of the festival or event you are interested in, the list that Google gives you should not only include the festivals/events website, but will likely include a list of people who have visited the event and have written articles about it. These articles can give you a lot of information, good and bad, about the event you are researching. I always read the articles, especially the negative ones, with a "grain of salt". Anyway, they will at least give you a sense of what the festival or event is about.

Happy choosing!

Ontario Festivals Visited

P.O. Box 272
Cobourg, ON K9A 4K8 CANADA

Phone:

1-888-818-0255