



# Festival Notes

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## Ontario's Festivals and Events...

By Gary McWilliams, *the Festival Nomad*

For the last month or so Judi has been collecting information about Ontario's festivals and events for our new **Festival Finder** search engine. Along the way Judi has visited hundreds of festival and event websites! I recently asked her to tell me about some of the more interesting websites she has visited and about some of the website problems she has encountered.

FN - Which festival website impressed you the most?

JMcW - *The Alliston Potato Festival* (Link:

<http://www.allistonpotatofestival.com/>) *website was very good! Not only was it up-to-date with 2010 dates (the festival had just been held in August and the 2010 dates were already posted) but it was set up so that it could easily be navigated even by the most novice internet user. All the information categories were clearly marked and easy to find on tabs located at the top of the page. A "New Attractions" tab was included to tell visitors all about their new attractions! The information given on their website was clear and informative. It was a great website to visit.*

FN - Were there any other websites that impressed you?

JMcW - *Yes, the Wings of Paradise Butterfly Conservatory* (Link: <http://www.wingsofparadise.com>) *website was great! This website was beautifully designed and was packed full of information both about the conservatory and about the various events held year round. Their "Visitor Information" page was excellent and very informative!*

Please see *Ontario's Festivals and Events...* on page 2

## Where Did It Go?!

Summer is now all but over! Where the heck did it go?! It seems like only yesterday I was planning our spring and summer visit schedule! I guess one of the reasons that time seemed to pass so quickly was because of the number of events we visited! Although we didn't get to visit all of the events we had planned to in **August**, we did make it to six. At the beginning of the month we traveled to Cambridge to the **Mill Race (Folk) Festival**. This was a wonderful event that took place in historic Old Galt. The next week we traveled north to **Lang Pioneer Village** where Judi and I participated in the **Festival of Textiles** fashion show.

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"Playing at Mill Race"  
Mill Race Folk Festival



"Dressing Up!"  
Festival of Textiles  
Lang Pioneer Village

*Ontario's Festivals and Events ... from page 1*

FN - Can you give us an idea of some of the things that you didn't like?

JMcW - *There were a few things that I found frustrating. I will give you three examples. The first is NO CONTACT information. I couldn't believe how many websites didn't include this information. I feel this is a real mistake on the part of festivals. Visitors to their website should be able to contact organizers for information! The second frustration is when a website doesn't include the cost of the event, even if the cost is zero. Today's families are trying to budget their entertainment dollars. Festivals and events that don't include pricing are likely going to miss out on a lot of visitors! The third and most frustrating thing is when cancelled festivals and events continue to post their website. If an event is cancelled forever, the website should be deleted from the internet! If a festival is temporarily cancelled and going to return, a notice to that effect should be prominently displayed on the website!*

FN - Have you seen any difficulties with municipal event websites?

JMcW - *Definitely! My biggest complaint about municipal event websites is that information about special events, including contact information, is usually hard to find. Since special events are so important to municipalities, I don't understand why they don't place more importance on having detailed and up-to-date information!*

FN - Finally, was there anything that you discovered that really surprised you?

JMcW - *I think that the biggest surprise was how many great pricing deals there were for facilities that held multiple events! Some examples include Ontario Place, Lang Pioneer Village and the Toronto Zoo. If you find a facility that you really enjoy and are likely to revisit, look at their website for special pricing or membership deals. This is especially true for families!*

*Where Did It Go?! ... from page 1*

The following week was extremely busy as we visited three events in three consecutive days. Our first stop was on Friday to the **Buckhorn Fine Art Festival**. On Saturday we traveled west to London to the **Fanshawe Pioneer Village** for their **Harvest Fest**. Finally, Sunday took us to the **Toronto Zoo** for their **35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**. The month was topped off with a visit to the **Bobcaygeon Wine and Food Festival** held at the **Kawartha Settlers' Village**. I think that this was a highlight event for Judi. She was able to meet and talk with her "hero", Dave Devall, long-time Weather Specialist (now retired) at CTV. Meeting Dave was a real treat for both of us!

September is shaping up to be another great month. Here are the visits currently planned.

September 5<sup>th</sup> - Canada's Largest Ribfest in Burlington

September 12<sup>th</sup> - Kettleby Fall Fair

September 13<sup>th</sup> - Trenton Scottish Irish Festival

September 19<sup>th</sup> - Kingston Fall Fair

September 26<sup>th</sup> - Harvest Festival at the Georgina Pioneer Village

October 4<sup>th</sup> - Applefest at Lang Pioneer Village



"Artist Julia Conlon"  
**Buckhorn Fine Art Festival**

*"...was there anything that you discovered..."*



"Ready for a game of Checkers?"  
**Harvest Fest**  
**Fanshawe Pioneer Village**



*"Up close and personal!"*  
**35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**  
**Toronto Zoo**



*"Chef Corbin Tomaszewski"*  
**Bobcaygeon Wine and Food Festival**



*"Recycling and Litter – When New Meets Old"*  
**Harvest Fest**  
**Fanshawe Pioneer Village**

## Canada's Largest Ribfest...

So you think you can eat a lot of ribs? How about 125,000 pounds! Okay so maybe one person didn't eat all those pounds! How about 145,000 people eating all that food! Well, that's what happened at the 13th annual **Canada's Largest Ribfest** held in **Burlington**. You would think that just eating delicious ribs prepared by North America's best Ribbers would be enough, but not to the **Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore** as they run the "Largest" with precision and flare! And, it's not just about ribs! There's the 22 musical acts offering 48 hours of musical entertainment. Plus, if you want more, you can visit the **Crafts-by-the Lake "Artisans Fair"**. This is food, fun and entertainment for the whole family! The organizing committee says that 50% of the Festival's visitors come from outside Burlington, mainly from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and southwestern Ontario. However, Judi and I plan to alter that trend by bringing visitors from the east (East of the Big smoke, Toronto, that is!). After all, we like ribs and entertainment too! Perhaps we'll see you there! I'll be the one with a plate full of ribs! Check out **Canada's Largest Ribfest's** website at <http://www.canadalargestribfest.com/>. The Festival dates are Friday, **September 4th, 2009** to Monday, **September 7th, 2009**

## Festival Ideas...

*Each month this section features ideas gained from attending so many festivals. For the September issue we want to talk about the "When New Meets Old". A few weeks ago, I wrote an article on the "Nomad's Blog" about incorporating modern realities with our pioneer heritage. We are republishing it for your enjoyment/information.*

### When New Meets Old...

Anyone who thinks that new can't compliment old and still maintain the integrity of old, has never been to **Fanshawe Pioneer Village**! Fanshawe is a wonderful heritage village that honors the "old" while conforming to modern realities! You will be able to read about our visit to the Fanshawe Harvest Fest in a few weeks, but until then I thought I would tell you about some of the ways they have handled difficult challenges.

**Challenge #1 - Disability Access:** It's not likely that our pioneer ancestors were too concerned with wheelchairs and disability access. So how does a "heritage settlement" handle this modern challenge? Since wheel chair ramps are a must in today's society, especially for a public facility, not having ramps was not an option! But what about the "modern" look? Fanshawe's solution was simply to use old distressed wood. As a result the ramps look like they not only belong there, but that they have been there forever!

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



"Modeling the past"  
Festival of Textiles  
Lang Pioneer Village



"Judi with her new pal, Dave Devall"  
Bobcaygeon Wine and Food Festival

*Festival Ideas...* from page 3

**Challenge #2 - Recycling and Litter:** Blue Boxes and metal garbage cans don't blend in with heritage buildings and gardens! Fanshawe handled this beautifully. They build old rustic "miniature sheds" and then placed them in strategic locations throughout the village. They have been made so well that they just blend into the "heritage atmosphere". Judi and I had explored most of the village by the time we realized how Fanshawe had disguised their litter and recycling receptacles!

It is amazing that simple solutions like these aren't used by all heritage facilities. A little imagination goes a long way. If you are in the London area, Fanshawe Pioneer Village is certainly worth the visit! The village, now 50 years old, is located in the Fanshawe Conservation Area. Their next big special event is their "*1812 Invasion of Upper Canada*" re-enactment on October 3-4, 2009. To find out more about this event and Fanshawe Pioneer Village, visit their website at

<http://www.fanshawepioneervillage.ca/>. If you do visit the village, tell them the "Festival Nomad" sent you!

## Festival Tips

### Drink Plenty of Water!

Even though summer is winding down, drinking plenty of water while walking an event or festival is still very important! Not drinking enough water can cause dehydration which at best can cause discomfort and at worst can be serious to your health. Wikipedia describes dehydration symptoms as follows, "*Symptoms of mild dehydration include thirst, decreased urine volume, abnormally dark urine, unexplained tiredness, irritability, lack of tears when crying, headache, dry mouth, dizziness when standing due to orthostatic hypotension, and in some cases can cause insomnia.*" These are the symptoms of mild dehydration. More severe dehydration can even cause death! These days most festivals and events either sell bottled water or potable water, however, as the Boy Scouts say, "*Be Prepared*". Bring your own water with you, along with an ice pack or two to keep your water cool.

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