



Festival Notes

January 2010
Volume 3 Issue 2

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Happy New Year!!!

Thank You...

By Gary McWilliams, *the Festival Nomad*

Judi and I would like to wish everyone a very happy and healthy 2010. As we reflect on the past year, we would like to take this opportunity to "thank" everyone who has contributed to this year's success of **Ontario Festivals Visited**, to the readers of this newsletter, to all of the festival organizers and volunteers who greeted us so graciously over the past year and to our **Banner Advertisers** whose faith in us has allowed us to continue visiting and promoting Ontario's sensational festivals and events! We are proud to display many of their Banner Ads throughout this month's issue of *Festival Notes*.

Some of our accomplishments this year include:

- At the beginning of 2009 the **Ontario Festivals Visited** website attracted an average of 4,500 visitors per month. Now, at the end of the year we are attracting an average of over 8,500 per month.

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Our Third Season – Planning for the Future...

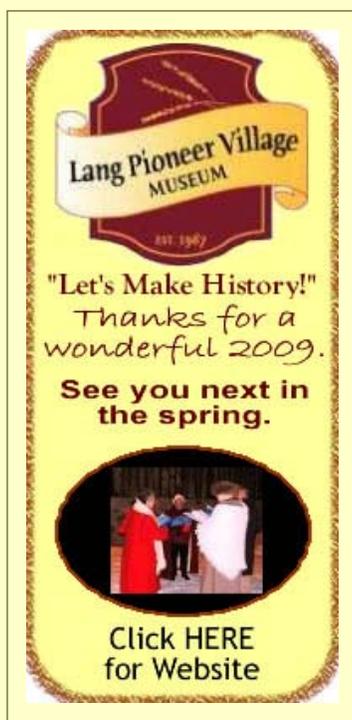
It's hard to believe that we are now about to enter our 4th year of visiting and writing about Ontario festivals and events. A lot has happened in the past three years and I feel that we have accomplished quite a bit over that period! However, I realize that there is still much to be done! Since we are entering into a new year and decade, I thought I would share some of our hopes and dreams with you.

FESTIVAL NEWS - Last year we introduced our **Festival News** section. This section features recent festival and event related **Headline News** plus articles and ideas about festivals and their organizers. Any Ontario festival or event can submit articles and announcements for the **Headline News** page.

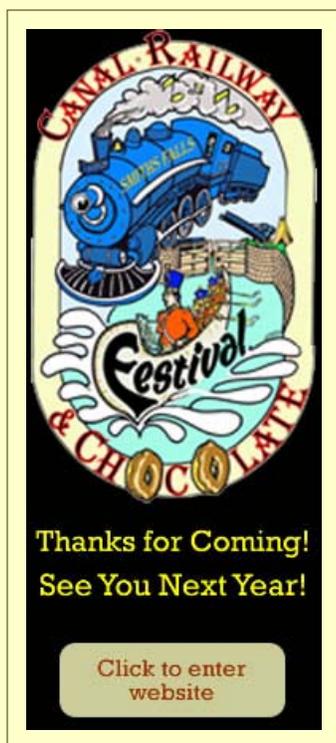
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IlluminAqua
Welland



Lang Pioneer Village
Keene



Canal, Railway and Chocolate Festival
Smiths Falls

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- The addition of our **Festival News** section has contributed over 1,000 visitors per month and it continues to grow in popularity each month.
- I believe once we have added our **Festival Finder** search engine that these numbers will increase substantially.
- Over the past year we visited almost 40 **Ontario festivals and events**. This was a little less than what we had hoped for, but close to our yearly average of 45 events visited.
- Two other features added this past year, "**Visitor's Forum**" and "**Rate This Festival**", each allowing festival and website visitors to voice their opinions about the events they have visited.
- We have now written and published 120 "The Adventures of the Festival Nomad" Blogs and 110 "Gary's Blogs".
- And finally, I am now considered a "**Festival Expert Author**" by the Ezine Articles website. This is a great honor and I hope to add several new articles to it during this new year.

Once again, thank you all for helping us in 2009 and we look forward seeing and hearing from you in 2010.

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This service is offered to organizers free of charge! As I mentioned in my previous article, the Festival News section attracts in excess of 1,000 visitors per month and is growing steadily. We hope that all festivals and events will take advantage of this service!

FESTIVAL FINDER (Search Engine) - We will soon be introducing our new festival search engine. It is long overdo, but it should be up and running before the end of the month. All that is left to do is to load as much festival and event information onto it as possible. This is quite an undertaking when you considered the amount of information required and the fact that there are over 5,000 festivals and events in Ontario! It is our intention to have the search engine go live once we have 1,000 festivals and events "*loaded*". If you know of any festival or event that should be included, please let us know. As with the **Festival News** section, this is a free (with a few exceptions) service offered to all Ontario festivals and events.

FESTIVAL CORRESPONDENTS - In the past Judi and I have tried to visit as many festivals and events as possible. As dedicated as we are, the best we have been able to do in any given year is to visit about 45 events. In 2010 we hope to expand the number of visits by partnering with other similar-minded festival "*lovers*". We are calling our new "*partnership*" the **Festival Nomad Correspondents' Program**. We will be asking our "*Nomad Correspondents*" to visit festivals and events in their area and then to report back to us with festival information and digital photographs. If you or anyone you know might be interested in participating in this new program, please let us know.

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Our Third Season ... from page 2

COMMUNITIES VISITED - In the course of our travels Judi and I visited numerous interesting communities. Some we past through on our way to an event and most are hosting the event. The one thing that they all have in common is that they are interesting and have a story or two to tell. Initially, we will be telling our **Ontario Communities Visited** stories via "*The Adventures of the Festival Nomad*" Blog but eventually we will add a new "*Ontario Communities Visited*" section and will add facts and photographs to our articles. To date we have written about 5 communities, *Bobcaygeon, Bracebridge, Brockville, Buckhorn* and *Campbellford*.

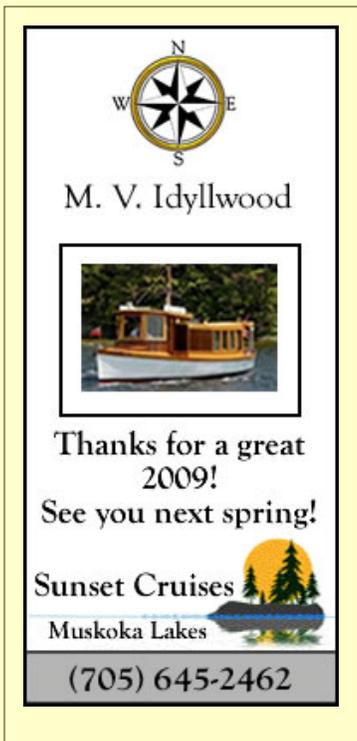
WAR OF 1812 CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS - 2010 is the 200th anniversary of the start of the war between Canada (the British) and the Americans. The war, now called the War of 1812, lasted until 1814. Plans are now underway to celebrate this centennial as a tribute to the friendship and peace that now exists between our two countries. The celebrations will include numerous festival, events and re-enactments. Many of these events will take place in Ontario, especially along the shores of the St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. It is our intention to devote a new section to these celebrations and to write numerous articles about the proportion to the celebrations and about the festivals and events themselves. These celebrations will be a wonderful opportunity for all Canadians (new and old) to learn more about our amazing past history. Judi and I look forward to being part of this historic occasion!

As you can see we have many exciting challenges ahead of us but we look forward to attaching them with enthusiasm and dedication.

Please see *Top Ten 2009 Festival Highlights...* on page 4



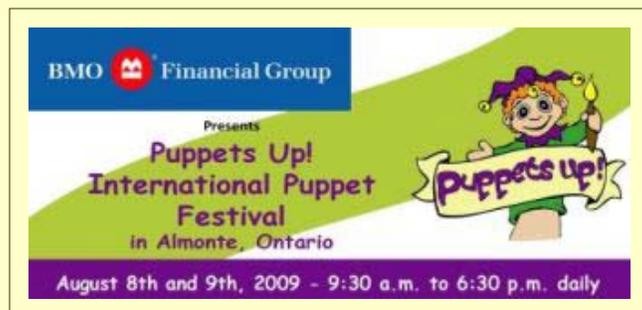
McLean Berry Farm
Buckhorn



Sunset Cruises
Bracebridge



Mississauga Waterfront Festival



Puppets Up!
Almonte

Festival Ideas...

Top Ten 2009 Festival Highlights...

Each month this section features ideas gained from attending so many festivals. For the January issue we want to talk about the "Top Ten 2009 Festival Highlights". A few weeks ago, I wrote an article on the "Nomad's Blog" about the top ten festivals we visited in 2009. We are republishing it for your enjoyment/information?

All of the festivals and events that Judi and I have visited this year have been excellent, but there are a few that have really stood out. The following is our 2009 Top Ten Highlight list.

1. **FESTIVAL OF TEXTILES AT LANG PIONEER VILLAGE** - This past year Judi and I were invited to visit the new Festival of Textiles and to participate in the textile fashion show. Judi and both enjoyed "dressing up" and meeting so many wonderful people!
2. **CANAL, RAILWAY AND CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL** - This event takes place annually in the charming town of Smiths Falls. Judi and I were invited to "re-visit" the festival by festival chair, **Jim McPherson**. At the festival we were treated to a Voyageur Canoe trip up the Rideau Canal into the Smith Falls' "Swale". This was a wonderful opportunity to visit and enjoy Smiths Falls' conservation area. This amazing area is home to many unique animals, fish and flowers. We also attended the Festival's opening ceremonies and were presented with a commemorative print. The event was further highlighted when Judi and I, along with Deputy Minister, **Jim Brownell, M.P.**, judged the "Chocolate" contest! A fitting end to a terrific day!
3. **ST. LAWRENCE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL** - In July we had the pleasure to travel to Prescott for the opening of the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival. The opening play they were presenting was Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew". This was our first visit to Prescott and their Shakespeare Festival. Not only was the play wonderful, so was our reception by the people of Prescott! Fate seated us directly in front of Prescott's Mayor, Suzanne Dodge. After Judi and I found out that the Mayor was seated behind us, we introduced ourselves. From then on we were treated like "long lost friends"! After the play the Mayor insisted that we come to the Opening Night Gala! We did, and had a great time. Its Prescott's bi-centennial in 2010 and the town has plans for many bi-centennial celebrations. I know that Judi and I will go back to help our "friends" celebrate!
4. **ILLUMINAQUA** - Every second Friday the City of Welland hosts a concert at their new amphitheatre in Merritt Park. This new facility is absolutely amazing as was the opening night of IlluminAqua! The theme of the concert series is **FIRE-MUSIC-WATER** and the festival followed the theme in "spades"! Flames from the floating "fire pits" glistened and danced on the rippling waters of the old Welland Canal while the "Destino Tenors" entertained an enthusiastic audience! This was definitely a "night to remember"!

Please see *Top Ten 2009 Festival Highlights...* on page 5



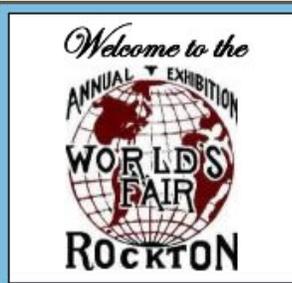
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Welcome to the
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WORLD'S FAIR
ROCKTON

Next Year's Dates



October 8, 9, 10 & 11, 2010

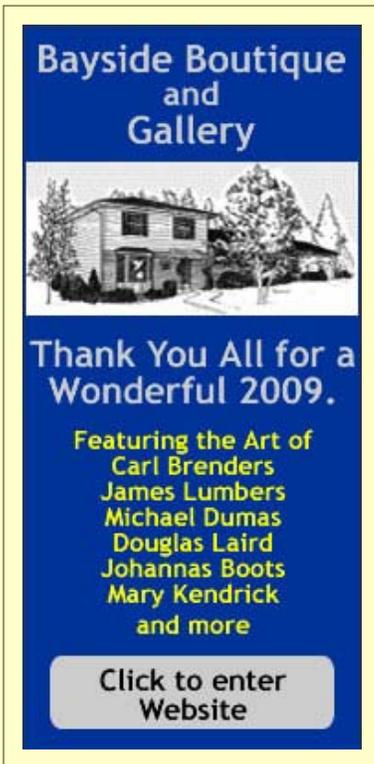
Click **HERE** to enter Website

Rockton World's Fair

Rockton World's Fair



Kempfest
Barrie



Bayside Boutique
Buckhorn

Top Ten 2009 Festival Highlights ... from page 4

5. **WASAGA UNDER SIEGE** - If you enjoy historic battle re-enactment (which Judi and I do), Wasaga Beach was the place to be during the Wasaga Under Siege re-enactment. The re-enactment included both a naval battle and a land battle, each depicting the challenges of war. After the battles were over, we all marched to the Nancy Island Historic Site where battle participants had set up their re-enactment encampment.
6. **NORWOOD FALL FAIR** - I'm not sure why I was so surprised, but I was, pleasantly! The Norwood Fall Fair gets top marks! I guess I should have known the event would be great when I visited their website. It was very informative and well designed. The fair grounds and events were even better! Judi and I really enjoyed our visit to Norwood. For anyone who likes to visit fall fairs, Norwood is a "must see"!
7. **FORT FRIGHT** - In late fall Fort Henry in Kingston transforms itself into "Fort Fright" and frightening it is! So much so that Judi refused to go with me. That was okay because I invited my son-in-law, Eddy, who loves to be "frightened"! The "Texas Chainsaw Massacre" is his favourite movie! Our first "adventure" was the famous "ghost walk" tour. Here we learned of the many "ghostly" sightings that have been experienced over the years! After the ghost walk we ventured down to the lower fort where all of the "frightening" activities were taking place. The whole lower fort had been "transformed"! Eddy and I explored each of the rooms and walkways and enjoyed the "frightening" displays and performances! Eddy was in his element and, judging by the amount and volume of screams around us, I would say so were many other visitors!
8. **BOBCAYGEON WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL** - The Kawartha Settlers Village hosts the Bobcaygeon Wine & Food Festival each year. This year's event was of particular interest to Judi and I because of their featured chef, Chef Corbin Tomaszeski. We had seen the Chef several times on the TV show, Restaurant Makeover and had even seen him live at the Norfolk County Fair, so we knew what to expect and we certainly were not disappointed with his performance in Bobcaygeon! As an added bonus for Judi, she met her new "BFF", retired CTV weatherman, Dave Devall. Dave was at the festival acting as MC for the festival's events. Judi, who has admired Dave for some time, quickly introduced herself and then proceeded to have several photos taken with him! Yes, I was the unwitting photographer!

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Trenton Scottish Irish Festival

Top Ten 2009 Festival Highlights ... from page 5

9. **FANSHAWE PIONEER VILLAGE** - We had traveled to the village for their *Harvest Festival* and as a result experienced one of the best pioneer villages we had ever visited! Not only were the village and its buildings very interesting, but the village interpreters were exceptional! They were both knowledgeable and enthusiastic! When I expressed an interest in the farm animals to one of the interpreters, she immediately asked if I would like a personal tour of the barn where the animals were housed. This was a special treat because she was not specifically assigned to the barnyard area. Dressed in her period costume she led me back to the barn area to show me the "restricted" inside. The pride that she showed in her knowledge of the animals was catching. As we walk back to her village "station" she explained to me that the village management had entrusted her with the feeding of the livestock! Fanshawe's attention to detail was very interesting. Even their "modern day" conveniences, "wheelchair ramps" and "recycling containers" blended in with period construction of the buildings!
10. **WARKWORTH CANADA DAY CELEBRATIONS** - The Warkworth Canada Day Celebrations were held in Warkworth's local park. When we arrived it seemed like the whole town was there preparing for the day's events! They had gathered together and were offering park visitors everything from games to cake and popcorn to concerts! There was so much to do and to eat and, it was all **FREE!** Our thanks go out to the residents of Warkworth who truly know how to celebrate the spirit of Canada and its birthday!



Mill Race Folk Festival
Cambridge

Festival Tips

Nomad's Top Ten Festival Tips...

Over the years Judi and I have discovered a number of festival tips. Many of these have been learned through the "School of Hard Knocks"! Although I have mentioned a number of these in various articles, I thought I would present them again in this "Top Ten" list.

1. **CHECK THE FESTIVAL'S WEBSITE** - Most festivals and events now maintain a website. If you are planning on visiting a festival or event, this is the best place to start. On the festival's website you should be able to find out important information such as festival dates and times, exact location, costs and activities.
2. **PRE-PLAN YOUR ROUTE** - Nothing can be more frustrating than getting held up on the highway because of a traffic jam! Having an alternative route plan can help eliminate or minimize "traffic frustration". The "Google Map" is the festival visitors' best friend. Judi and I use it all the time. By using their "Get Directions" feature, you can find and print plenty of alternative routes. And, who knows, the alternative route will likely be a lot more adventuresome and fun than the direct route!

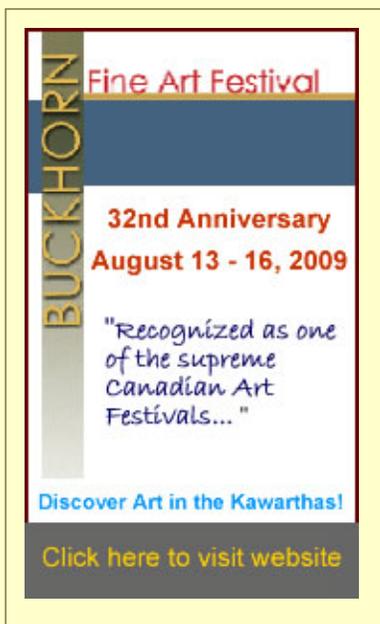


Migration Festival
Kingsville

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Canada's Largest Ribfest
Burlington



Buckhorn Fine Art Festival

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3. **DEVELOP A CHECKLIST** - Having a festival/event checklist can make visiting an event more enjoyable, especially if the visit includes children! Forgetting something important can be quite bothersome, if not downright annoying! No-one likes to have to turn back to retrieve an important item! Planning what you need, in advance, cuts down the chance of this happening. Once you have created your initial list, you can use it for all the festivals and events you plan to visit!
4. **BRING A FRIEND** - If you enjoy visiting festivals and events as much as Judi and I do, you'll likely want to share the experience with your family and friends! When you are deciding what festival or event you plan to visit, ask around to see who else would like to go with you. If not your family or friends, consider asking a "senior" to go with you. *"Spread the festival joy and fun!"*
5. **PACK A PICNIC LUNCH** - Not all festivals and events have a wide selection of nutritious food. If you are concerned about this, pack a picnic lunch. This way you can choose food that is appealing to the whole family and you'll likely save a little money in the process! As Judi keeps reminding me, *"Don't forget the sanitary wipes to clean your hands!"*
6. **WATER** - It is very important to bring water with you. Not all events have water available. This is particularly important in the hot summer months! Without enough water in your system, you can easily become dehydrated quickly! Using a refillable water bottle is best, especially for the environment!
7. **TAKE A PICTURE OR FIVE** - Capturing the memories of a great event is so easy and inexpensive these days because of digital cameras! You no longer have to worry about wasting "film"! A word of caution, though, make sure you have enough memory space on your "Memory Card" and that you have an extra set of batteries.
8. **CLOTHING** - Always plan your clothing for the event you are visiting! This goes for both clothing and footwear. If it's a summer event, remember to bring a hat and sun block. If it's the winter, "layer" your clothing so that you can "strip" down or up depending on how hot or cold you feel! As for footwear, make sure you wear your most comfortable walking shoes or boots.
9. **BRING CASH** - Many festivals and events only accept cash for their admittance fee. The same goes for food booths, amusement rides and parking. Make sure you bring enough cash to cover all contingencies! Some festivals and events do offer ATM machines, but most don't.
10. **WASHROOMS** - If you are like some of us (me), knowing the location of event washrooms is a must! Some events mark the location of their washrooms on their program and that's great! However, you can't always count on that convenience, so make sure you ask festival staff where they are located. If that's not possible you might want to reconnoiter the grounds while you still can!