



ONTARIO

Festivals Visited

Festival Notes

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Ontario Fairs...
- 1 Festival Nomad's Report...
- 2 **THE INSIDE SCOOP...**
- 3 **INSIDE** with the *Festival Nomad*
- 4 Festival Tips - Observations (Part Two)



"Judging Time"
Kinmount Fair



"Spring Flowers"
Canada Blooms Show

Ontario Fairs...

By Gary McWilliams, *the Festival Nomad*

One of the most enduring and beloved institutions in Ontario, especially rural Ontario, is the country agricultural fair. Judi and I, throughout the years, have visited a number of them, some very large, like the *Royal Winter Agricultural Fair* held in Toronto and some quite small, like the *Kinmount Fair*. They all have one thing in common. They all have been around for a long time! Some, even longer than *Confederation*! Country fairs represent a way of life that sustains our *towns*, our *province*, our *country* and, in fact, the *world*! Unfortunately, country fairs also represent a way of life that is becoming smaller and smaller. The truth is, "*farms and farmers are more important than ever*"! With growing food costs and higher transportation costs, local produce is becoming, once again, an important source of local foods. The signs that we often see, *Farmers feed Us*, should be a wake up call to all of us!

Please see *Ontario Fairs...* on page 2

Festival Nomad's Report...

As I have often said before, "*I love spring*"! I think it all started when I was a kid. I was a student at *Appleby College* in Oakville and I was a "*boarder*" there. Each spring when the clocks "*sprung forward*", we were allowed one hour of "free" time in the evening. The "HOUR" was a time when we could do whatever we wanted (*well, within reason!*). I would head to the school's wooded area and play for the whole hour. It was that sense of "*freedom*" that I still carry with me today! Now, rather than running into the woods, Judi and I take leisurely strolls along Cobourg's beautiful waterfront. Spring also means that it's time to shine up our "*festival shoes*" and begin planning for a season of traveling Ontario to discover and sometimes, re-discover, some of the province's wonderful festivals and events! It started slowly in *March*. My friend Doogie and I headed for Toronto and the *Toronto Golf and Travel Show*. We even got a "*persona*" golf lesson from *Tiger Woods'* swing coach, *Sean Foley*! Okay, so we were only two of the crowd of many to receive the lesson! We still were there, weren't we!?

Please see *Festival Nomad's Report* on page 2

Ontario Fairs... from page 1

With the above in mind, and with the success of *Ontario Festivals Visited*, we have created and added *Ontario Fairs Visited* to our growing group of *Ontario Visited* websites. We hope that you will visit our new website and enjoy all of its features, *articles* about *Fairs* that we have visited, *Fair Headline News* and our *Fair Event Calendar*. As with *Festivals and Events Visited*, we welcome input from our website visitors. Also, if you love to visit and explore *Country Fairs*, why not join our team of "*Ontario Visited Correspondents*". Our "TEAM" motto is, "*Have Camera, Will Visit!*"

Festival Nomad's Report... from page 1

The next weekend our friend and fellow festival visitor, Kevin Stuart and his family, visited the *Warkworth Maple Syrup Festival*. It was a re-visit and they enjoyed the festival as much as Judi and I had a few year's earlier. Our final event of the month was once again traveling to Toronto for the Canada Blooms show. We visited the show with our friends, Barb and Lawrence Stevenson. Barb is an avid gardener and her insight was both amazing and helpful. Because of she and Lawrence, we enjoyed the show that much more!

April is lining up to be another busy month. Here is a list of festivals and events we hope to visit during the month.

April 2 - Elmira Maple Syrup Festival
 April 15 - Eat & Drink Norfolk (Simcoe)
 April 16 - Lifestyle Show (Lindsay)
 April 30 - Brockville Multicultural Festival

The Inside Scoop...

Interview with Greg Berrea (Part One)

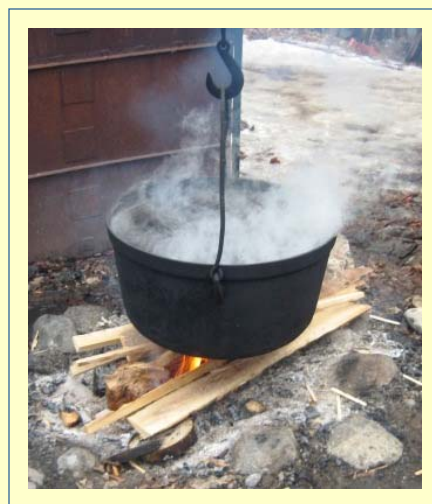
Marketing Director, St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival

Greg is starting his third season as *Marketing Director* of the *St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival*. Getting **THE INSIDE SCOOP**, I wondered how he got involved! Greg tells me that "*I was looking for meaningful employment when I answered an ad in my local paper for a bookkeeper/marketing representative position with a local Registered Charity*". It is no wonder that he is a good fit for this job, he has a two year college diploma in Business-Accounting from St. Lawrence College, a degree in Economics from University of Ottawa and three years in sales! Although Greg is "*just the marketing guy*", I find him to be interesting to talk with and I'm sure he has some **INSIDE SCOOP** to share with us all! With the kindness of the folks at the *St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival*, we have been fortunate to join in on a couple of occasions for their "*Gala*" evenings held on the first evening of the first performance of the season, *opening night* as it were! We have seen Greg "*tending bar*" after some of the performances over the years and I was wondering if he had any opportunities to enjoy watching the performances?

Please see *The Inside Scoop* on page 3



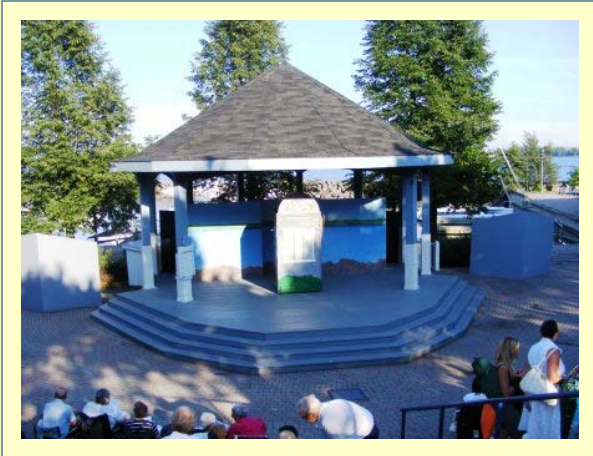
"Doogie getting out of the sand trap!"
 Toronto Golf & Travel Show



"The Boiling Pot - Maple Syrup"
 Warkworth Maple Syrup Festival



"Serenity"
 Canada Blooms Show



"Outdoor Theatre"
St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival



"Trouble on Dibble Street"
St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival



"SEWE Logo"
Southeastern Wildlife Exposition

The Inside Scoop... from page 2

He does actually watching the performances 2-3 times each season. This led me to wonder if Greg had a favourite production. Greg replays ... *"That's a tough question. My favourite Shakespearean play was As You Like It. The music and feel of the 1960's along with the language of Shakespeare and the outdoor venue blew me away; it was also my first show. My other favourite was a SLSF commissioned play called Trouble on Dibble St., it was just too funny"*. Both Gary and I enjoyed this play immensely! It was too funny and the actors/actresses were top notch! Getting Greg to share who his favourite performer was difficult to obtain as he is a true *"politician"* with his answer ... stating *"Any past and present member of the SLSF ensemble!"*

NOTE - The remainder of the interview can be read by visiting **THE INSIDE SCOOP** at <http://judisinsidescoop.blogspot.com/>.

INSIDE with the Festival Nomad...

Southeastern Wildlife Exposition (SEWE)
(This is Part Three from a seven part series about my visit to Charleston, South Carolina and the best festival I've ever attended. You can read my full article in the Adventures of the Festival Nomad blog))

The *Southeastern Wildlife Exposition* is made up of a lot of events. Everything from art shows, to a Gala, to seminars and a huge BBQ. The perks for being a benefactor are that the benefactor show ready starts 2 days before the masses come. Sam, that's my business friend who attended with me, and I arrived on Wednesday afternoon. We were just in time for the first benefactor's event... an evening with the featured artist. The year we attended it was the internationally celebrated wildlife artist, *John Seerey-Lester*. If you have never seen his work, you really have certainly missed a lot! He is one of the best, if not the best wildlife artists in the world. Not only do you get to meet the featured artist, you get to mingle with and talk to most of the other attending artists. It certainly was exciting for me to meet all these great artists. Many of whom were from Canada. Although I have worked with a number of talented artists over the years, I am still in awe of the art process and the artists who work everyday to produce it. The talent gathered that evening was mind boggling. This event includes *"food and refreshments"* ... what a spread! It is a wonderful tribute to the organizers of *SEWE* that they *"DO IT RIGHT"* and this reception was proof positive.

Please see *INSIDE with the Festival Nomad...* on page 4

INSIDE with the Festival Nomad... from page 3

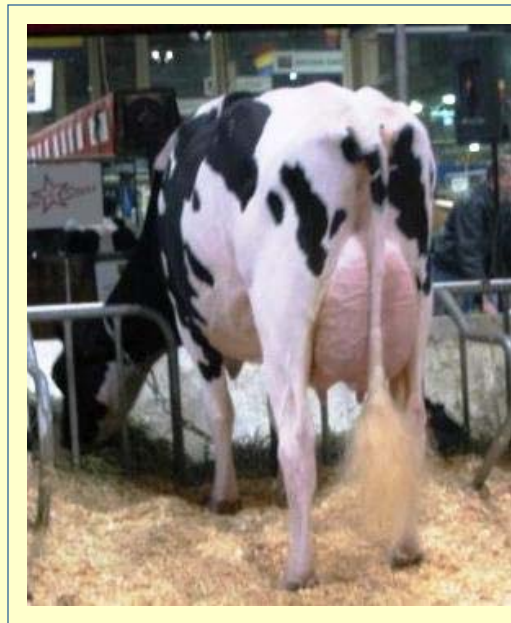
Since I had had a long day driving from Charlottesville, VA to Charleston, SC and Sam from Pittsburgh, we decided to leave early to get a good nights sleep for the following day's activities.

Festival Tips...

Observations (Part Two)

by Judi McWilliams

Reflections and final thoughts about Observations - We all perceive and observe things in different ways and capacities. Our observations varies depending on our perspective - age, roles (*Festival/Event organizer, volunteer*), caregiver while at event, family or individual experiences, etc. After reflecting on your *observations*, as a visitor yourself to your own festival/event, it is important to follow through by considering your observations and then implementing the ideas necessary that will make your event the best it can be. For example, you may want to focus on working on ideas that ensure consistent "*perceived value*" versus "*actual value*" given. If you took a visitor survey and asked questions about their experiences, you might find that the visitor's perceptions of the event may be polar opposite to what yours are. You may think that long line-ups as successful because of the financial gain from so many visitors. The visitors, however, might perceive the long line-ups as too exhausting and not stick around to enjoy, purchase, participate in the activities! The result could be lower attendance at your event, especially in future years! This would certainly be true if there were long wait times for activities for families with young children to do tend. The children would get bored and distracted and ultimately would make the event experience not worth the effort. In addition, they would likely tell their family and friends about their negative experience. While you are *observing*, notice if there is excitement in the air? Notice if visitors seem to be enjoying themselves or do they seem frustrated or bored. The worst advertizing and the best advertizing is, of course, "*word of mouth*". If you offer good quality and value it is more likely to resonate positively with your visitors, they are likely to return next year, pass their positive experience on to their friends and family or, as I said pass on their negative experience. In my newest blog column (*The Inside Scoop*), I like to ask the festival and event organizer how they "*keep it fresh?*" I believe strongly that if you take the time to *observe*, you will find out exactly what you need to do to make your festival and event the most successful it can be!



"Feeding Time"
Royal Winter Agricultural Fair



"The Winner"
Norfolk County Fair & Horse Show

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