



ONTARIO

Festivals Visited

Festival Notes

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Ontario Visited...

By Gary McWilliams, *the Festival Nomad*

It was a little over 4 years ago when Judi and I visited our first festival, the *Elmvale Maple Syrup Festival*. It was the start of an interesting and exciting journey! Since that first visit, we and our Festival Nomad Correspondents have visited and written about close to 200 festival and events. During those four years, we have met some very wonderful people, explored interesting and unique communities and have visited a wide range of festivals, events, fairs, historic sites and attractions. *Ontario* is a great place to live and to *visit!*

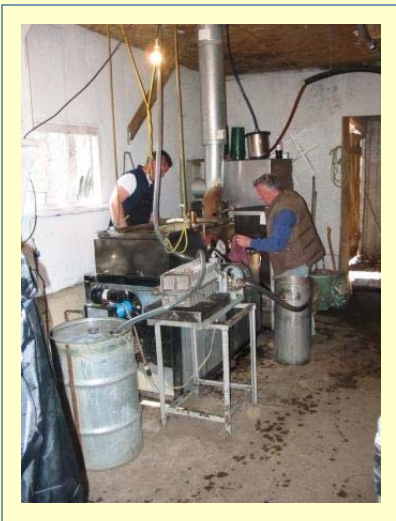
As we enter our fifth year, it seems appropriate to reflect on our past and to plan for the future. Part of our future includes expanding our network of websites. This process actually began two years ago when we introduced our "*Festival News*" website. Much to our satisfaction, the site has been a great success. Almost 3,000 festival web visitors enter this site each month and we receive approximately 50 requests per week from organizers to post their festival/event news! After the successful launch of *Festival News*, we decided to tackle another topic, the *War of 1812 Bicentennial*.

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Festival Nomad's Report...

April really lived up to its reputation. You know, "*April showers bring May Flowers!*" For us, April started out okay. Our trip to Elmira to the *Elmira Maple Syrup Festival* was great! It was warm and sunny. The next week, however, was a bit shaky! We were heading north to the *Lifestyle Show* in Lindsay. Halfway there we ran into a "*freak*" blizzard. We almost turned back. Fortunately the storm was only local and by the time we reached Lindsay, the skies had cleared and the temperature had risen. Both events were a lot of fun and well attended. Articles about our visits can now be found on our [Ontario Festivals Visited](#) website. Also in April the *Town of Cobourg* opened its new *Community Centre*. Unfortunately Judi and I were out of town that weekend. However, *Festival Nomad Correspondent Kevin Stuart* and his family attended the *Grand Opening*. You can read Kevin's article on our new [Ontario Communities Visited](#) website. Just click on the "*Cobourg*" page.

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



"Inside the Sugar Shack"
Elmvale Maple Syrup Festival



"Crowds at the Festival"
Elmvale Maple Syrup Festival

Ontario Visited... from page 1

We started our *War of 1812 Celebrations* website in September of last year. The responses to this website have been very encouraging. Re-enactors and organizers have contacted us to let us know how much they appreciate our efforts. Judi has been researching facts about the War and has written a number of Blog articles about her findings. She has also interviewed a number of War of 1812 leaders and has included these interviews in her articles.

In March of this year we launched our 4th website, *Ontario Fairs Visited*. This was the first of 5 additional "[ONTARIO VISITED](#)" websites. Topics for these new websites include - *Ontario Communities*, *Ontario Heritage* (heritage sites and historical museums), *Ontario Attractions* and finally, *Ontario Parks*. All but *Ontario Parks* are up and running now. We will be introducing *Ontario Parks Visited* later this year. To tie all of these websites together, and to make access to them easier for our web visitors, we have created and launched "[www.ontariovisited.ca](#)". This new website connects all of our websites and blogs together. An additional website service has also been added, [Ontario Event Finder](#). This web "*Event Finder*" service augments our already well visited *Festival/Event Calendars*. Organizers are encouraged to contact us with their festival/event information. Together, our websites attract over 18,000 festival/event visitors per month. This number continues to increase as new visitors discover *Ontario Visited!*

These are busy times for Judi and me, but we both feel very excited about the future! I think that this is best expressed in Judi's new Blog, *THE INSIDE SCOOP*. Her interviews with Ontario's tourism leaders has been an inspiration and has encouraged us to redouble our efforts to visit and promote *Ontario Communities*, their *festivals, events, fairs* and, most of all, *their people!*

Festival Nomad's Report... from page 1

On the first of May, Judi and I were invited to *Lang Pioneer Village's* volunteer "*Meet and Greet*". Part of the afternoon's event was to introduce the village's new *Weavers Shop*. The building is magnificent and will make a great addition to the village! I will be writing more about the *Weaver's Shop* later in the month. You will be able to find the article, plus photos, on our new [Ontario Heritage Visited](#) website. Just click on "*Lang Pioneer Village*" for the article.

With good weather settling in, it looks like May will be a great "*Visiting*" month, and we have a lot planned. Here is a list of some of the festivals/events we hope to visit.

May 14 - *Hamilton Museum of Steam & Technology*

May 21 - *Warkworth Lilac Festival*

May 28 - *Lindsay Lilac Festival*

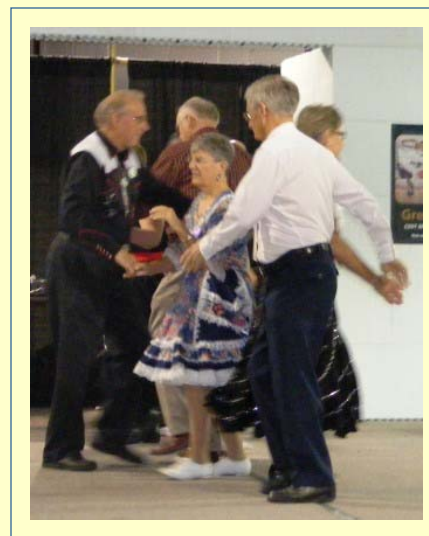
May 28 - *All About Horse* (Lindsay Fair Grounds)

June 4 - *Great Canadian Cheese Festival* (Picton)

June 5 - *Spencerville Mill Heritage Festival*



"Checking the Sap!"
Elmira Maple Syrup Festival



"Square Dancing Demonstration"
Lifestyle Show - Lindsay



"Lounge overlooking The Rink"
Cobourg Community Centre



"Sandra Lawn with Ian Farthing, Festival Artistic Director"
St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival



"Prescott's welcome sign"
St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival



"Freighter on the St. Lawrence"
St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival

The Inside Scoop...

Interview with Sandra S. Lawn (Part One)
Festival Chair, St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival

In one of the most beautiful settings along the *St. Lawrence River*, in the town of *Prescott*, you can visit the *Sandra S. Lawn Harbour & Marina*. It hosts a wonderful children's play area and a 148 slip Harbour. Sometimes in life you may not be curious as to "*what's in a name*". However, the name of this Harbour/Marina was clarified to Gary and me when we had the pleasure of meeting *Ms. Sandra S. Lawn* at a Gala evening in the Prescott Town Hall. This was right after the season's opening performance of the *St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival*. It turns out that Ms. Lawn was not only Chair of the Festival, but had been Mayor of Prescott for 15 years, until she retired in 1991. What an wonderful opportunity for me to get **THE INSIDE SCOOP** from Sandra about the *St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival*. Sandra was generous with her time and shares informative and interesting information that I will now share with you! One of Ms. Lawn's duties as Mayor of Prescott, was to facilitate the development of the Prescott waterfront into what is now, as I mentioned above, the *Sandra S. Lawn Harbour*. As chair of the *South Grenville Economic Development Commission*, she soon became well aware of the importance of tourism. That is where she and I and the *Festival Nomad* (*Gary McWilliams*, [Ontario Visited](#)), all share a similar passion! It is interesting that Sandra, a mother of three daughters (*who just happen to be all musical*), helped Sandra become "*aware of the importance of the arts in our small rural town*". Sandra is extremely intelligent and has a sense of humour to boot. She holds a *BSc in Biology* and a *Masters in Public Administration*, the humour, she tells me "*my study of Shakespeare amounted to about 15 minutes in English 2 at Queen's*". How is it then that Sandra became so involved with the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival? Sandra tells me that she has been involved almost from the beginning.

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

INSIDE with the Festival Nomad...

Great Weather!

It's amazing how "*great weather*" can draw people to a festival or event! That's what happened when we visited the *Elmira Maple Syrup Festival*. We arrived in Elmira on a sunny Saturday morning. Our contact at the event had pre warned us to be "*patient*"!

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

INSIDE with the Festival Nomad... from page 3

She was right; we did need "patience"! We entered Elmira from Guelph. As soon as we reached the outer limits of the village, the traffic started to slow down and line up. Fortunately, I knew Elmira fairly well and was able to take some back roads and eventually reached the main north/south road. This allowed us to find one of the numbers of "official" festival parking lots. Having a busy festival/event can be both a blessing and a curse. For unorganized festivals, it is likely a curse. Fortunately for the *Elmira Maple Syrup Festival*, who were extremely well prepared, it turned out to be a *blessing*, or at least, not a *curse*! Not only did they have well placed parking lots, they had great "people" movers. They used tractor pulled "hay wagons" as transportation. This was similar to the ones used by the *International Plowing Match*. All in all our time at the festival went smoothly and we enjoyed every minute. We would recommend this event to anyone. Our only caution is that this is not an event for people with "accessibility challenges". Unfortunately, many of the facilities and grounds are not friendly to "wheel chairs" or "walker" users. Frankly, given the nature of the event and its multiple locations, I'm not sure that there is a reasonable solution to the problem. It is always wise to check out festival/event websites to find out the "accessibility" before you head out!

Festival Tips...

Ask Questions...

by Judi McWilliams

Something I discovered when interviewing *War of 1812* re-enactors was that they knew a lot about their hobby and that they liked to talk about it! This got me to thinking about my next *Festival Tip* article. That is, how can I help visitors enjoy their re-enactment experience more? The answer, ask questions! I think that by asking lots of questions, you will be amazed at how much more interesting a re-enactment can be. That's what happened to me! So, what type of questions should you ask? Actually, anything that comes to mind is okay, but here are some suggestions. You might ask why the re-enactor feels the *War of 1812* "living history" is important. Here's the answer I received from *Chris Robins*, high school history teacher and re-enactor, "Sometimes, until you get involved with re-enacting, you underestimate just how important history is."

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"Gary with Sabina Voisin"
Elmira Maple Syrup Festival



"Great crowds"
Elmira Maple Syrup Festival



"Like a scene from a Peter Etril Snyder painting"
Elmira Maple Syrup Festival



"Chris Robin's student re-enactors"
Cobourg Waterfront Festival



"The firing line"
Wasaga under Siege



"Gary with Dave Brunelle"
Nine Mile Portage Heritage Festival

Festival Tips... from page 4

You start to understand why the men and women of the War of 1812 period fought the way they did. This is what I love to teach today's students!" Chris taught me things that I didn't know about the "whys" and "ways" of battles. Other questions could be about their uniforms. *"Where they obtained their uniforms, what kinds of costs were incurred, do they hand-sow them, how many do they have, are they hot, do they itch."* I was surprised when Chris Robins told me that many of his jackets are purchased from local charity second hand stores. He and his wife had hand-sown the alterations! He has this innate ability to see a unique period uniform from a typical men's jacket! How about a personal questions. *"How many hours of training does it take to participate in a re-enactment? "What kinds of food do you eat during the day? "Staying true to authenticity is key in front of the public, so are there some behind the scenes we don't see?"* David Brunelle, Regional Project Director for the War of 1812 Bicentennial, surprised me with one of his answers to this question about authenticity. Dave said he is *"as true as possible for all aspects, from all the equipment to the training, drilling and knowledge. Some encampments are out-of-public-sight so the "authenticity" issue can have some leeway as it doesn't play such a role in the effects of the visual observation by the public audiences"*. I did *"catch"* Dave once. It was during a visit the *Festival Nomad* and I had taken to an encampment that he was taking part in at *Fort Willow* in the Barrie area. Dave was *"caught off guard"* when I saw him huddled inside his personal *"officers tent"* with a bag of jelly bean candy's in his hand! Technically, he was *"off duty"*, but I chuckled none the less.

So, once again, my *"TIP"* is *"ASK QUESTIONS ... LOTS AND LOTS OF QUESTIONS"*! You soon too might get excited and *"hooked"*, as I did!

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