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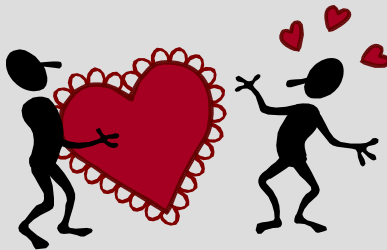
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**What is Love?**

By Gary McWilliams, *the Festival Nomad*

It's the month of February and *love is in the air!* So what? That's the question I posed to Judi when we were discussing our opening article for February's newsletter. We were discussing the subject of Valentines and Judi asks, "What about the shape of Valentine Cards?" I said "Huh?" She repeated, "The shape of Valentine Cards." I recovered and said, "What about them?" She replied, "Why do they have to be heart shaped and why do they have to be for an individual!?" She went on, "There are all types of love! What about 'love of country and community', 'love of what you do and the people who help you', think of the love an event organizer has for his/her fellow volunteers! Why can't they all be 'Valentines'?" With the questions finished, it really got me thinking! Rather than 'Valentine's Day' just being for 'sweethearts', why not make it for everyone or thing in your life that you love! Think of the effect that it would have! Love of your community, your festival friends and the people who make our communities a better place to live! Something to think about... *Happy Valentine's Day!*



Happy Valentine's Day!!!

**Festival Nomad's Report...**

As with other *February's*, Judi and I are getting ready for the "big" push this spring and summer. We are already filling in far off dates to visit festivals and events. The *War of 1812 Bicentennial* is playing a big part in our scheduling. To make ourselves and the websites ready for the busy season, we are working on several projects. For example, we will be meeting and interviewing the Honourable James Moore, *Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages*. His ministry his spearheading Canada's *War of 1812 Bicentennial* celebrations. While we are in Ottawa, we plan on visiting Ottawa's famous *Winterlude*. Other projects we are working on include a new website, *Ontario Event News* ([Link](#)), that consolidates all of our "Headline News" pages into one website and a website dedicated to evaluating and rating festivals and events we and our *Festival Nomad Correspondents* have visited. The new website is called *Ontario Event Ratings* ([Link](#)) and we will be posting one new rating per week. I will talk more about this new program later in the newsletter. Another area that we want to expand is our *Festival Nomad Correspondent* program. It has always been Judi's and my hope to expand the number of festivals and events we visit each year. Because of various factors, there are regions in Ontario that we have not been able to cover.



Ontario Event News



Ontario Event Ratings

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We hope to start rectifying this gap into coverage this year by bringing on more Correspondents. We are currently working on a plan to accomplish this. Finally, we plan on expanding our communications ability by adding ourselves to the growing number of organization who use "*Facebook*" and "*Twitter*" to keep in touch with their followers. I am still very much a novice in this area, so I'm going to ask my "*15 year old grandson*" to teach me! I'll let you know when they are up-and-running!

Here are some of the festivals and events in February that we are considering...

February 4th - [PolarFest \(Lakefield\)](#)

February 8th - [Winterlude \(Ottawa\)](#)

February 9th - [Love Train Revue \(Richmond Hill\)](#)

February 18th - [Heritage Day \(Buckhorn\)](#)

February 25th - [Battle of Ogdensburg](#) (Prescott)

## Inside Review...

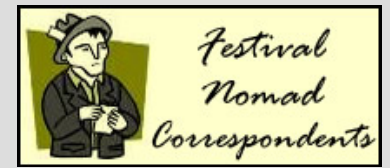
The Nomad's Top Ten (10) Picks for 2011...

At the end of each year, Judi and I review the festivals and events we have visited during the year. Last year we decided to make our *10 Most Memorable Ontario Event List*. Here are the last 5 in our list for 2011, with a brief description of each. The events are listed in no particular order. They were all great!

**Niagara Passion** - *Niagara Region* is one of my favourite places to visit. The *sweet treats*, wines, fruits and vegetables that the *Region* has to offer along with the beautiful lush landscape, makes it wonderful place to visit. **Niagara Passion** offered a great amount of fun and interesting activities, including delicious wine and food tasting, great music and unique live and silent auctions. The event is located in a wonderful Niagara Region nursery that really added to the event's charm. **Niagara Passion** is extremely well organized by the Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake. If you enjoy great food and wine, this definitely an event to visit.

**Canadian International Military Tattoo and Festival** - In the heart of downtown *Hamilton*, lays the *Copps Coliseum*. Last year was the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the *Canadian International Military Tattoo*. There was excitement in the air during the entire time. Our hearts beat to the "*beat of the drums*", our feet tapped to the "*sound of the music*" and it was difficult to not be amazed by the professional dancers and performances. This is most likely Judi's favourite Festival of 2011. At the finale, *The Mass Bands* began to play "*Taps*". *Danielle Bourne*, who has a beautiful powerful voice, sang "*We Gather Together*". I turned to Judi who was standing there silently with tears in her eyes. I asked her why and she told me she was thinking of her grandfather, who she had never met, but had died a hero in a long ago war. It was at this point when the MC said over the PA that he "*would like us all to stand for the anthems but I can see you are all standing already*". 2012 should also be another fabulous show, as they will also be celebrating the War of 1812 Bicentennial.

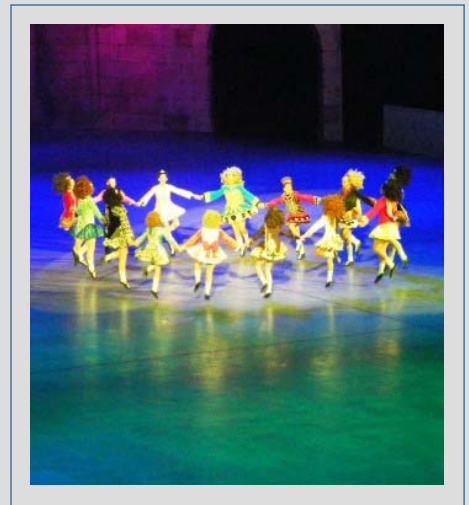
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Festival Nomad Correspondents' Program



"Sampling at"  
Niagara Passion



"Dancing at the"  
Canadian International  
Military Tattoo



"Cheese Tasting at"  
The Great Canadian  
Cheese Festival



"Battle Watch at the  
Battle of Fort George



"Terri Clark sings at the  
Norfolk County Fair &  
Horse Show

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**Great Canadian Cheese Festival** - After a wonderful drive through Prince Edward County along the beautiful *Loyalist Parkway*, we arrived at the breathtaking *Crystal Palace* located on the *Picton Fair Grounds*. We were welcomed by a gigantic *Brama Bull!* After a warm welcome by their many volunteers, we were in "*Cheese Heaven*". This *Cheese Festival* is an event for cheese lovers and enthusiasts. Local wines and beers were also featured. We tasted, learned and bought some one of the most diverse dairy foods available in Canada. We even tried some of the tasty wines that were being offered. Many "*sweet treats*" available were also a welcomed experience! Judi managed to "*obtain*" her share (plus) of these "*treats*". We congratulate the *Great Canadian Cheese Festival* on their inaugural event! Next year we may return to become *Cheese Coinsurers!*

**Battle of Fort George** - As I mentioned above, one of our favourite places to visit is the *Niagara Region*. Fort George is located at Niagara-on-the-Lake. The *Battle of Fort George* re-enactment featured about 250 re-enactors representing the British/Canadian troops and American troops. The re-enactment took place over a large open field. It was very exciting! Cannon smoke filled the air, soldiers charged forward and then fell back. Rifle and cannon shots rang out and soldiers on the battlefield dropped down "*dead*". Unlike *Fort Henry* in Kingston, *Fort George* is an older *Fort* with the fortifications made from wood logs. The ends of the logs are pointed and sharp! The layout inside the *Fort* is simple and the buildings include two Blockhouses, a Flag Bastion, Gun Shed, Officer's Quarters, Officer's Kitchen, Artificer's Building, and Powder Magazine. So much more to discover, but a great way to spend a day with your family and friends!

**Norfolk County Fair & Horse Show** - Wendy Brick, the fairs *Publicity and Marketing Coordinator* welcomed us again to this spectacular "*family*" event! We believe this is one of the best fall fair events in Ontario. It has a wonderful ambiance and rustic charm that includes farm animals, fun activities, harvest displays, rural crafts, horse events, great entertainment, and so much more. As Judi said, "*It is a feeling of childhood memories all wrapped up in a neat bundle.*" We really enjoyed watching professional divers dive into a small pool about 26 feet wide, 10 feet deep, the diving boards platform 25 meters high. The highlight for us, this year, was watching and listening to *Canadian All-star Country Singer Terri Clark*. It was a day to remember for a long time to come!

## The Inside Scoop...

by Judi McWilliams

Excerpt from an Interview with *Mr. Shawn King, Web World Strategies*

### *Part 4 - What should a GOOD WEBSITE include for Your Festivals and Events Website?*

I asked Mr. King, what he thought a *GOOD WEBSITE* should include. Shawn replies ... "*When I think of a Festival/Event I think of fun! The website usually gives a good reflection of what people can expect when they come out to visit.*

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*THE INSIDE SCOOP...* from page 3

*If your website offers lots of pictures and video, it will be a great asset in promoting and enticing visitors to attend. Testimonials of people having a great time would be of benefit!*

Shawn feels a poor website is one that is "too cluttered". A website that does not focus on the actual event will not be as successful. It is important to be clear and have prevalent information about your Festival/Event including details about the time, location, costs, phone numbers, maps and other relevant information. (Such as are pets allowed on the grounds to- are the grounds accessible to all?)

*If you see the contact information predominantly posted on your website it is inviting. It also states that you have nothing to hide and welcomes questions to assist with visitors. It is vital to have a contact telephone number at the site on the days of the Festival/Event. This will allow visitors to ask any challenging questions (from the Festival/Event being cancelled due to weather, re-located to different location, time changes, etc.) It is important to keep promoting your Festival/Event all year around. Visitors sometimes plan their outings and schedules well in advance. If they see your website and your' Festival/Event, it may just prompt them to "pencil you in".*

## War of 1812 Bicentennial...

*War of 1812 CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS ...*

*written by Judi McWilliams*

Through our *War of 1812 Celebrations* website, I have been reporting about the *War of 1812* ... writing articles, doing research, and posting article Blog's with interesting interviews leaders/experts/historians/re-enactors. While visiting the internet and reading other articles posted, I have found that for each article that appears on the internet, there is quite often a subsequent article with a diametric "opinion" about the historical articles written, thus resulting in *controversial topics*. As you know, I reported in the past about this exact issue stating that the word "NOTION" suites this situation well. The definition of **NOTION**: "INSIGHT, COMPREHENSION, CONCEPT, ASSUMPTIONS, IMPRESSION, KNOWLEDGE, JUDGEMENT, OPINION, YOUR UNDERSTANDING." There are articles and stories that are compelling, interesting, and controversial to some. As we continue to write about the *War of 1812* and in particular the *Bicentennial Celebrations*, I am going to report on *Expert's opinions/notions* as to their thoughts about these "controversies". I was concerned that we might "offend" some of our *War of 1812 Celebrations* website readers, but now I think that the conversation is worth the debate. My next writings will be about some of the Expert's opinions/notions as to their thoughts about these ongoing "Controversial issues" ... "Are they even Controversial?!"... and ... "Just who do you think/feel you are offending?!"

My next War of 1812 Articles Blog will be talking about the "controversy" about John Norton. Is he a true "forgotten War of 1812 Hero" or "that he was somewhat divisive" and not a hero to others?



"Web Master"  
Shawn King  
Web World Strategies



"Cannon Fire"  
Battle of Fort George



"Judi Taking Precautions at"  
Wasaga Under Siege

## INSIDE with the Festival Nomad...

### The Rating Game

As I have written in a previous Blog, Judi and I don't formally evaluate or rate the festivals and events we visit. We do, however, have "opinions" and to lessen the tedium of long trips, we have developed an "Event Evaluator". The "Evaluator" helps us organize our thoughts into clear sections - *Promotion, Curb Appeal, Site Layout, Event Theme, and Miscellaneous Final Thoughts*. It's not a "scientific" evaluation, but it suits our "discussions". I can't say that we always agree, but that's natural when we have two different sets of eyes and minds taking in the sights and sounds of festivals. Over the past 5 years, Judi and I have visited over 250 festivals and events, and we have, to some degree, discussed each one of them. We even have written "Event Evaluators" on many of them. Also, for most of these 5 years I have written more than 200 *Adventures of the Festival Nomad* Blogs. In them, I write about the events we have visited, the people we have met and the communities we have discovered. However, I have not, once, rated or evaluated any of the events we have visited ... that is, until *now!* We have now created a new website, *Ontario Event Ratings* (Link), that will be dedicated to evaluating and rating events that we have visited in past. Festivals/events will be rated on their *Advertising & Promotion, Curb Appeal, Festival Site & Activities, Festival Theme and Final Thoughts & Overall Rating*. Each area will be "Rated" on a 1 to 5 points basis, with 5 being the highest. We do, however, add a word of caution, *"the rating and evaluation are the "opinions" of the writers and don't necessarily reflect those of the readers. Also, we do not attend an event for its entire duration. Our visits are only a "snap shot in time". We would encourage readers to "discover" each event for themselves. Whatever you decide, remember that Ontario festivals and events are the best and so are their event organizers and their volunteers. Anything can determine how an event appears at any given time - weather, time, unforeseen circumstances, etc. Always keep an open mind and if you have a suggestion or concern about an event, let the organizers know. They will appreciate your input."* The first two events rated are the *Norfolk County Fair & Horse Show* and the *Cabbagetown Festival*. We will be adding one festival/event per weeks.



"Horse & Wagon at the"  
Norfolk County Fair &  
Horse Show



"Street Music at the"  
Cabbagetown Festival



"Great Food at"  
Niagara Passion

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#### Inside the Next Issue

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Honourable James Moore,  
Minister of Canadian Heritage  
& Official Languages  
\* Event Rating of Elmira Maple  
Syrup Festival