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Double Your Pleasure...

By Gary McWilliams, *the Festival Nomad*

It's hard to accept the price of gas today! As I listened, recently, to a newscaster on *CNN* trying to explain the reasons why prices were going up, I became more indignant! All of the reasons seemed so contrived. Personally I think the main reason is just "greed". However, that's another topic for another day. Today's high prices are causing great challenges for both event organizers and event visitors alike. I don't think that anyone wants to see an event fail. They are great for the communities they are held in and usually an inexpensive way for families to have fun. With this in mind, I've got a few suggestions... Wouldn't it be great if everyone who decides to visit an event, invite their family, friends and neighbours to go with them. Form car pools to lower travel costs. Make going to the event, "an event"! "Double up" to share and lower costs! What you'll find, is that you will not only lower costs, but you will have a lot more fun! Judi and I quite often go to events with others and we always seem to have a better time. And, here's a suggestion for event organizers. You can help too! Why not offer Visitors who "double up" an incentive. Offer anyone who "double up", a premium or a discount. Who knows, you might event get more people to visit your event that way! It's important to promote the "double up" idea in all your event advertising. Maybe you even provide "Double Up Parking" "Doubled Up" Visitors. Your volunteers could wear "double up" pins or name badges! Maybe we can start a new "double up" trend in the Visitor experience! So, as I said in the beginning, "Double Your Pleasure"!

Festival Nomad's Report...

February was a busy month for Judi and me. Not so much with festivals, although we did get to visit *Winterlude* in Ottawa. More about that a little later. Most of the month was taken up with updating our websites and planning for the upcoming festival/event season. This is especially true for the *War of 1812 Bicentennial*. In the second week of the month, Judi and I traveled by train to Ottawa. We had arranged to meet and interview the Honourable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages. Minister Moore's ministry is responsible for the Federal Government's involvement with the War of 1812 Bicentennial celebrations. During our meeting with the Minister we were able to ask a number of questions about the Governments bicentennial plans. You can read more about our interview, later in this newsletter.

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"Doubled Up" with family at the Toronto Zoo's Spring Toad Festival



"Doubled Up" with friends at the Canada Blooms show

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While we were in Ottawa, as I mentioned above, we were able to visit Ottawa's famous *Winterlude*. Judi and I had not visited the event in a number of years, so this year's visit was especially enjoyable. We will be posting our event article shortly. Other activities during the month included writing a number of *Ontario Event Rating* articles ([Link](#)). This month's newsletter includes our "rating" of the *Elmira Maple Syrup Festival*. To date we have posted 7 "ratings". In the future we will be posting to the *Ontario Event Rating* website at least 1 event per week. Also during February, our intrepid Festival Nomad, Kevin Stuart and his family visited this year's *Cobourg Winter Festival*. Kevin report that they had a great time at this event. His event article will be posted on the *Ontario Festivals Visited* website shortly.

It looks like March should be an interesting month. We are hoping to re-visit this year's Canada Blooms show which is combining forces with the National Home Show. Here are some of the events we hope to visit in March.

March 5th ~ [Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Kortright Centre, Woodbridge)

March 10th ~ [Norfolk Wildlife Festival & Adventure Show](#) (Simcoe)

March 17th ~ [Buckhorn Maple Syrup Festival](#) (McLean's Berry Farm)

March 24th ~ [Canada Blooms](#) (Toronto)

March 31st ~ [Elmira Maple Syrup Festival](#)

The Inside Scoop...

by Judi McWilliams

Excerpt from Interviews with *Ms. Joan Balinson*, Executive Director and *John Terence*, Producer of the Canadian International Military Tattoo & Festival.

Volunteers for Success

For many festivals and events, it is critical to have volunteers! As part of my conversation about the *Canadian International Military Tattoo & Festival*, I asked both Ms. Balinson and Mr. John Terence, producer of the Tattoo, how many volunteers they required for the *Canadian International Military Tattoo & Festival* and did they have any systems in place to "keep the volunteers happy". *Joan Balinson, Executive Director, Canadian International Military Tattoo & Festival* shares with us, "CITA (Canadian International Tattoo Association) is a not for profit registered charitable association. As such we operate with a very limited budget. All planning and execution of the production is done by volunteers. From our board of directors, down to senior managers, Festival and show weekend volunteers, we utilize 80 people to help us put on the largest military tattoo in Central Canada".

Please see *THE INSIDE SCOOP ...* on page 3



"Sugar Shack"
at the Buckhorn Maple Syrup Festival



"Garden Display"
at Canada Blooms



"Crowds at the"
Elmira Maple Syrup Festival



"Grand Finale at the"
Canadian International Military Tattoo &
Festival



"Drum Major"
Canadian International Military Tattoo &
Festival



Minister James Moore
poses with Judi and Gary
McWilliams

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Mr. John Terence added, *"quite simply the show would not go on without Volunteers"*! Approximately 40-50 volunteers work with John alone, not to mention all the other teams. There are various co-ordinators in place and coordinators that liaison with all the Cadet services. The *Canadian International Military Tattoo & Festival* holds a wonderful Volunteer Appreciation night. I mentioned to John that I felt Volunteers are the upmost importance to the ultimate success of a festival/event/production and John said *"that's absolutely it! It is important to keep the volunteers happy! You will ultimately end up working with higher quality people with high quality work ethics"*. John says *"these volunteers take a lot of pride in doing their job well, no matter how menial"*. Again, John repeats his comment that *"he tries to instill in his volunteers that no matter how small or menial a job might be, it most likely is critical to the intricacy of the overall performance. If the visual cues are not on time, it could affect in a major negative way"*. I said to John, there must be a **Lot of Trust**! He replied ... *"no kidding!"* A lot rides on the tasks taken during a performance by the team and volunteers. Mr. Terence *"encourages his volunteers and team to use their initiative. He shows them how to and when to use their initiative. He gives them the freedom to make decisions themselves, but, he does encourage them to call for assistance to be guided by him"*. Once John *"gives them the answers and directions, he trusts them to do it!"* He states that he *"deplores micro-management"*. He feels *"that by micro-managing people all you are doing is demonstrating to them that you do not trust them. Again, he encourages initiative! If you see a situation that needs to be addressed you do it!"* Sometimes mistakes do occur. John feels "it is important (repeating during our interview several times) *"that it is important to always end a discussion on a positive note"*. A situation/person may need to be addressed for their error, but, John feels *"it is critical to always offer a solution!"* Part of his leadership and in getting others to take leadership depends on this *important step in managing Volunteers!* Mr. Terence says *"it is important to give your volunteers/team instructions and the tools, whether it is physical tools or words or pictures and diagrams. John relies heavily on diagrams coordinates during a performance. It is also important to let them do their job, then it is equally important for them report back to you!"*

War of 1812 Bicentennial...

*War of 1812 ~ The Honourable James Moore
written by Judi McWilliams*

The following is an excerpt from our interview with the Honourable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages. During our meeting with the Minister, we were able to discuss the Federal Governments role in the upcoming War of 1812 Bicentennial celebrations.

Please see *War of 1812 Bicentennial...* on page 4

War of 1812 Bicentennial... from page 3

Canada has great ethnic diversity, immigration and culture. I was able to ask *Minister Moore* if the *Federal Government* had any programs or plans to integrate these multicultural individuals and families into the fabric of our Country. I also asked what initiatives there were to encourage the youth of today to become volunteers and to take part and become involved in the Bicentennial celebrations. *Minister Moore* discussed what he referred to as the "Three biggest challenges" in accomplishing the above. He feels "it is important that the War of 1812 Bicentennial Celebrations be a full benefit to all! It is the Government's hope to engage all Canadians". He talked about how this War defined Canada's Boundaries, in particular creating a much different future for people of Aboriginal origin.

The *Minister Moore* was quite adamant when he stated... "that it will be equally as important to celebrate the War of 1812 Bicentennial in regions further from what is perceived to be the main focus of the Celebrations in the Niagara Region". He said "that it will be just as important to reach out to smaller communities, to Halifax, Quebec and Calgary also. Therefore, the first challenge is our physical boundaries. He stated that New Canadians are already engaged as they learn about Canada and go through courses to study to become Canadian Citizens. The second challenge is that it is important that the Quebec Storey is understood. That although the War of 1812 was between the American/British and Upper Canada, there is the French Fact. The third challenge is to engage the Youth of our society and communities".

While *Minister Moore* was visiting France this past summer, he spent some time visiting the fields of previous battles. It was apparent to him how virtually impossible the terrain made for deplorable conditions for Battle. By watching a battle reenactment, *Minister Moore* tells us "that it somewhat brought how true it might have been during the War, how gritty it truly was. Hand-to-hand battles, face to face, very "ugly". The Youth of today might imagine death by smart bombs, automatic machinery, and such." but what he states is "The fact that most Soldiers did not die in combat. They died a much more miserable painful death, perhaps from infections, starvation, or worse."

NOTE: To read my entire interview with Minister James Moore, which will be published over the next few weeks, please visit my Blog at [THE INSIDE SCOOP](#).



"Smiths Falls Train Station"
Ottawa Train Trip



"Skating on the Rideau"
Winterlude



"Living History"
Parliament Hill ~ Ottawa

INSIDE with the Festival Nomad...

Festival/Event Rating ~ Elmira Maple Syrup Festival

by Gary McWilliams

Each year the Town of Elmira proudly hosts its annual *Maple Syrup Festival*. This is a well attended event that encompasses the entire village plus an awesome Maple Sugar Bush and Farm located away from the town. The event includes "shuttle wagon" services from nearby parking areas. The main downtown street is full of event vendors offering everything from great food to unique maple products. Just off the main street, all day pancake breakfast are being served. Close to the Pancake tented area kids can enter an old fashioned barn and learn about farm animals. Other parts of the town include a Craft Show, an Antique Show, a small Carnival/Midway, a Toy Sale and a Super Dog Show. All in all, it is a well run event that offers families plenty to do and see.

Event Advertising & Promotion - Rating 5

The *Elmira Maple Syrup Festival* has an easy to use comprehensive website that includes pricing and event descriptions. It also includes such things as an event list and schedule, area information, directions to the event, activity descriptions and an event history. When we arrived, we were given an event program guide along with instructions on how to best enjoy the festival.

Curb Appeal - Rating 4

Finding a parking spot was a bit of a problem. This was both "bad" and "good". It was "bad" because like most of the events we attend there were very few directional signs. This is such an easy fix. It's amazing that most events still don't think directional sign are important, especially for out-of-town visitors. It was "good" for the organizers, because it was a beautiful day and there were a large number of people wanting to visit the event. This caused traffic tie-ups and full parking lots. I believe that the *Elmira Maple Syrup Festival* organizers did everything they could to alleviate this challenge, but the great weather beat them a little. Once we finally found a parking spot in one of the official parking lots, we were able to board one of the many "shuttle" wagons. The wagons took us right to the downtown area. It's unfortunate that the shuttle weren't "access friendly". Because of the terrain and the type of festival, it is not an easy fix.

NOTE: To read our entire "Rating" on this event or other events, please visit our *Ontario Event Rating* website at <http://ontarioeventratings.ontariofestivalsvisited.ca/>.



"Welcome to the"
Elmira Maple Syrup Festival



"Pancake Line at the"
Elmira Maple Syrup Festival

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Producer of the Canadian
International Military Tattoo
* Event Rating of All About
Horses at the Lindsay
Exhibition Grounds

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