



Ontario Visited, P.O. Box 272, Cobourg, ON, K9A 4K8, Canada  
 www.ontariovisited.ca gary@ontariovisited.ca (888) 818-0255

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## It's Hard To Believe!!!

By Gary McWilliams, *the Festival Nomad*

It's hard to believe that it's that time of year again! Everything seemed to happen so quickly! Even though it's getting colder outside, this season brings out the warmth in our hearts. Judi and I wish you all a Happy Holidays and a Very Merry Christmas. We will see you all in 2013.

## Festivals of Life...

By Gary McWilliams, *the Festival Nomad*

### Festivals of Life...

This year is almost over! Life for me, this year, has been bitter-sweet, with my illness and battle to recover, and then the loss of my brother Chuck, whose life battle was over. Life was like that this year for some festivals and events. Some festivals that fought a long hard battle, ended permanently this year, while others were born and are just starting their journey. *Ontario Visited* and its websites have flourished, thanks to the hard work of Judi and our entire wonderful "Festival Nomad" Correspondents. We also flourished thanks to the many wonderful festival/event organizers who worked with us to maximize their efforts to market/promote their events. The increased awareness from our website helped to maximize their attendance. It seemed that with our extended efforts and their support we all were successful. We hope that all of our readers enjoy a successful and Happy News Year.



"We Wish You A..."  
Gary, Judi & Dusty



## Festival Nomad's Report...

It seems that *November* is the Santa Claus Parade month. There were certainly a lot in our area. Judi and I, together with fellow Festival Correspondent, *Kevin Stuart* and his son, visited the *Cobourg Santa Claus Parade*. Fortunately the weather was quite mild and we were able to enjoy it without freezing. My Granddaughter and her dance group participated in the *Port Hope Santa Claus Parade*. Speaking of Grand Children, my daughter's youngest son, an aspiring thespian, appear in the "*Aladdin*" play, produced by the *Northumberland Players* and held in Cobourg at the *Park Theatre & Performing Arts Centre*.

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*Festival Nomad's Report...* from page 1

In *December* we look forward to Holiday Festivities. Here is a list of some December events -

*December 2012 - January 6, 2012* - [War of 1812 Exhibition](#)

(Canadian War Museum - Ottawa)

*November 30 - December 2, 2012* - [A Country Christmas](#)

[Remembered](#) (Spencerville)

*December 1 - 2, 2012* - [Westben Arts Festival Theater - Elijah'](#)

[Angel](#) (Campbellford)

*December 8 - 9, 2012* - [Christmas By Candlelight](#) (Lang Pioneer Village - Keene)

*December 21 - 23, 2012* - [Festival of Light GALA & Costume](#)

[Ball](#) (Grail Springs - Bancroft)

## Inside Review...

### *Bridging the Gap...*

by Judi McWilliams

Through many *THE INSIDE SCOOP* interviews this past year with Ontario's festival and event leaders and organizers, I have been able to gain knowledge and insight through their experiences. I will be sharing with you in the coming months. For this "*The Insider*" issue, I would just like to touch on the subject around the sustainability of Ontario's great festivals and events. One of the major components to a successful festival or event are its "*Volunteers*". Most times volunteers form the entire committee. These volunteers are the leaders/organizers of the events. What the "*SCOOP*" hears, is that organizers and leaders in the industry are talking about are the challenges they are currently facing. One such challenge they are talking about is the dynamics of aging volunteer groups. There is an alarming concern about these "*aging population*" of the volunteers. Many of these folks have volunteers for 20 years or more and have dedicated their time and passion to create such amazing festivals/events in Ontario. Many of these groups belong to clubs, societies, associations and their focus is to raise monies for their communities and community based projects. They pride themselves on their contributions and successes. As the groups become older, (*as I myself have experienced this through my own volunteering*), they (I) just do not have the energy to commit as much time and physical effort as in the past. The fact is, many of our wonderful festival/events are ceasing to exist. The event may still be successful, but the volunteer groups just can't dedicate their time any longer. It is not always just their age preventing them from participating, it could be family obligations (*perhaps helping out with grandchildren*). Some discussions talk about "*Bridging the Gap*" ... An older volunteer group may try to encourage younger members to join. Through my interviews, I have learned that this is not always as simple as it seems.

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"A Country Christmas Remembered"  
Spencerville



"Christmas By Candlelight"  
Lang Pioneer Village - Keene



"Cobourg Santa Claus Parade"  
Cobourg



"Peterborough Festival of Trees"  
Peterborough



"Rudolph with Santa"  
North Pole



"Rudolph at the SCOOP Interview"  
Cobourg

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Seniors and middle-aged folks have different interests, different value systems, old ideas do not always meld with new ideas, old & new do not always mix. I am hearing from some organizers that they are trying to reach out to middle aged volunteers and encourage them to bring their children along to volunteer. Family participation is an amazing solution to "Bridging the Gap"! However, not all festivals/events are geared for youth volunteers. After discussions with the *Festival Nomad*, he has some fantastic suggestions and solutions on how to "Bridge the Gap". As a result, I have lined up some great interviews for the start of 2013 to discuss some of these challenges I will report on these interview and will discuss some the *Festival Nomad's* ideas ... so stay tuned and I will give you some "INSIDE SCOOP" on how to "Bridge the Gap".

## THE INSIDE SCOOP...

### Interview with Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer...

As many of you may recall, I have already, over the past two years, had the pleasure of interviewing both *Santa Claus* and *Mrs. Claus*. Today, I find myself fortunate enough to be able to interview a top notch celebrity, *Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer*. As with many of my interviews, I will start at the beginning...

**Scoop** ... So Rudolph, how did you become involved in this special event?

**Rudolph** ... "It was really quite simple. I was out in the field and was kind of retired and this big jolly guy with a big white beard asked me if I wanted to become involved in a project that he managed. He was aware that I had leadership abilities and wanted to use those abilities for his project."

**Scoop** ... How long have you been involved with this organization Rudolph?

**Rudolph** ... "Gee, I don't know, it seems like forever. I know it's been a long time, years actually."

**Scoop** ... How do you, and your team, get ready for the big event?

**Rudolph** ... "We do a lot of research before hand and use that research in the planning process. As you know, I am in charge of transportation and communications. I am now making use of all the technical advances that are available today. You know ... cell phones, computers, GPS, etc. One of our best tools is the Google map. We can plan our route, look at houses from afar, and check out the weather. With each map we look at we can make quadrants so we can save time. What used to take us all year to map out and plan just takes a week or two now."

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*THE INSIDE SCOOP – Rudolph... from page 3*

**Scoop** ... So you have a team of 12 reindeers, how do you all get along?

**Rudolph** ... *"Like any team, we have our disagreements. But, over the years we have learned that in order to be successful we need to work together to work out our problems and most of all to stay focused!"*

**Scoop** ... In order to accomplish your goals and to do all that travelling it must cost a lot. How do you cover your expenses?

**Rudolph** ... *"You know that we have been doing this for a long time so we have a lot of supporters who donate both time and money. We also have quite a bit of corporate sponsorship which helps to defray some of our costs. However, Donner is a great "Grant Writer" and over the years has been able to obtain grants from several levels of government."*

**Scoop** ... Do you find with the world wide recession that funding is becoming more difficult to obtain, even with these skills Donner has?

**Rudolph** ... *"That's a good question ... it is true that governments seem to be cutting back, but as a team we have become more innovative and have created programs and concepts to attract non-traditional sponsors and donors. We just have to be more creative and think outside the box to continue with our success."*

**Scoop** ... I would like to change the scope of this interview and focus my questions on the actual event itself. When you fly down the road, how do you and the team occupy your time?

**Rudolph** ... *"Well, it took me a long time to get accepted, but now I play 'reindeer games'."*

**Scoop** ... What kind of games do you mean?

**Rudolph** ... *"Well, we play such games as 'eye spy with my little eye', or Rock, Paper, Scissors, Alphabet name ending game, spelling bee, Once Upon a Time story telling sequence, Banana Game (spot the yellow vehicles), find a license plate, Slug Bug, Fortunate-Unfortunately game, who am I game to name a few.. One game I remember since I was young that I played with my family was 'bury all your horses'."*

**Scoop** ... What other type of things do you and the team do to occupy your time during the long journey?

**Rudolph** ... *"We sing songs, tell stories, watch the scenery as it goes by below us. Actually, to be honest with you, we are so busy with great anticipation and excitement of the day that time just seems to fly by."*



"Santa"  
Ajax Santa Claus Parade



"Rudolph with fellow reindeers"  
Cobourg Santa Claus Parade



"Santa, Rudolph and the reindeers"  
Flying High!

Please see *THE INSIDE SCOOP – Rudolph...* on page 5



"Christmas at Presqu'île"  
Presqu'île Provincial Park - Brighton



### One Last Call... by Gary McWilliams

My birthday is in December and I'll be waiting for my annual call from my friend, *Tom Merrick*! He calls every year! I won't get that call this year. Unfortunately Tom passed away this past month. Like my brother, Chuck, Tom lived life to his fullest. Several years ago I asked him why he didn't retire. He laughed and asked why; he was having too much fun managing a thriving real estate office. Tom was very important in my life, first he was my boss at *Guaranty Trust*, but more importantly, he introduced me to Judi! It was ironic, because it all happened on a golf course. It was the annual company golf tournament and I was in a foursome with Tom, and a branch manager and his secretary, Judi. For me, it was love at first sight! Our relationship blossomed and so did my friendship with Tom. Even after *Guaranty Trust* sold off the division that I had worked for and Judi and I had moved to Peterborough, our friendship with Tom continued. As I have mentioned, Tom was one of my bosses and he was quite the character. When "*post it notes*" first came out, Tom who liked to be very organized, started to post them in quantity. He wrote himself notes and posted them everywhere ... in his desk, on the telephone, on the metal filing cabinets, and his calendar. Frankly, they were everywhere. I often, when we were having a high spirited discussion, wanted to mix them up. Fortunately I never did and as a result "*kept my job*". Tom was an avid golfer. Just ask his friends at the Bayview Golf & Country Club. He was also a very imaginative golfer. I can remember being at one golf tournament with him. He had hit his ball into a shallow stream. Rather than take his ball from the stream, he merely took off his shoes and socks, rolled up his pant legs and then stood over his ball. He stood there, hat on head, sunglasses on and pipe in his mouth and then hit the ball onto the green only 1 foot from the hole. This was Tom all the way, full of life, kind and a friend to everyone! I'll miss his calls!

*THE INSIDE SCOOP – Rudolph...* from page 4

**Scoop** ... I guess weather conditions could be a big factor with your plans?

**Rudolph** ... *"That's true, we are seasoned travelers, so we know a lot of the tricks of the trade and we know how to avoid severe weather conditions. As I mentioned before, we carry 'hoof-held' devices and can log onto the weather network to check ahead."*

**Scoop** ... When you reach a really busy destination do you ever have any trouble finding a parking spot for you and the sleigh?

**Rudolph** ... *"We are fortunate that we always plan ahead and know where the best parking areas are located. We do this by advance research and planning. Sometimes things just don't work out and from experience we travel around the town and enter from the other side. Luck and good fortune often plays a part in our success."*

**Scoop** ... One last question, how are things with the BIG GUY? How's he feeling and is he looking forward to Christmas and the New Year?

**Rudolph** ... *"Santa is looking great and feeling wonderful! He's really back on his game and ready for all the upcoming challenges! Merry Christmas to one and all!"*



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P.O. Box 272  
Cobourg, ON K9A 4K8 CANADA  
**Phone/Fax:**  
1-888-818-0255  
**E-mail:** [gary@ontariovisited.ca](mailto:gary@ontariovisited.ca)

