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Talking About Spring...

By Gary McWilliams, *the Festival Nomad*

Actually, it's more about "*Thinking About Spring*". As I am writing this article the really cold weather has just ended and a balmy (-4° C) has just begun. This small change makes me think of festivals to come, spring festivals that is! The first one that comes to mind is the *Canada Blooms/National Home Show* event. After that it's the *Peterborough Garden Show*. The reason Judi and I really look forward to these two shows is not just because they represent spring, but they usually mean that we'll be getting together with the *Stephenson's*. The Stephenson's, in case you haven't had the pleasure of reading about them in one of my articles, are gardening "*nuts*". Well, perhaps I better say that Barbara is a "*gardening enthusiast*" and Laurence, her "*better half*" is a "*nut*"! He comes by it naturally. First, he's a "*friend*" of mine (*poor choice on his part*)! Second, he's a combination Brit, Irishman and Scots (*the Trifecta of lineage*) and still he has an accent even though he's lived in Canada longer than time! And finally he's a Musician (*need I say more*)! Actually, please don't tell him that I said this, but he's a great guy, very funny and a wonderful musician. He says he's retired now but seems to be busier then ever ... perhaps he's avoiding me! Even if he is, I know I'll see him in the spring because Barbara (*you've got to love her!*) will "*drag*" him to the shows with us!

Please see *Talking About Spring...* on page 2

Festival Nomad's Report...

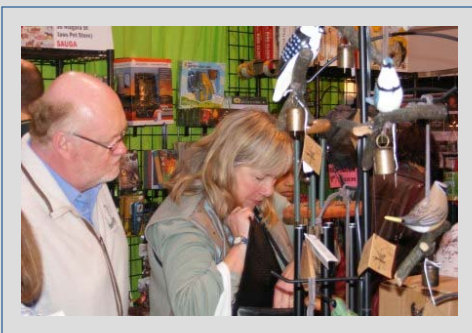
January was a "*clean up*" month for us, working on our websites, thinking of new ways to promote Ontario Tourism, festivals and events, and just relaxing after a great holiday season. And, oh yes, recovering from the ill effects of the Flu. Fortunately, we are slowly getting back to normal!

Now that *February* is here, it's time to start planning our spring festival visits. As mentioned in the first article, we have the two "*garden*" shows to consider. However, there are lots of others to consider. Judi and I we be researching a number. We'll let you know what we and our Festival Nomad Correspondents decide. In the meantime, here are some *February* events you might like to consider.

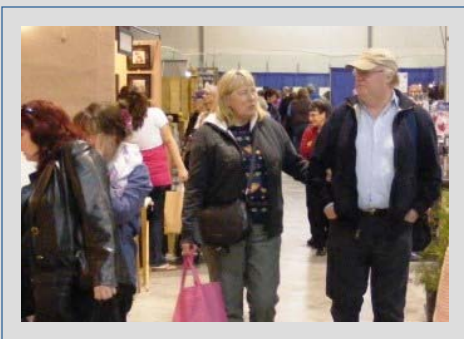
February 1 - 2, 2013 - [Grail Springs - Women's Weekend Retreat](#) (Bancroft)

February 1 - 10, 2013 - [Bon Soo Winter Carnival](#) (Sault Ste. Marie)

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



"Barb & Laurence Stephenson Shopping"
at the **Canada Blooms Show**



"Barb & Laurence Stephenson Walking"
the **Peterborough Garden Show**

Festival Nomad's Report page 1

February 1 - 3, 2013 ~ [Warton Willie Festival](#)
 February 1 - 3, 2013 ~ [Midland Winterfest](#)
 February 1 - 3, 2013 ~ [Hogfest](#) (Stirling)
 February 1 - 3, 2013 ~ [Kuumba](#) (Toronto Harbourfront Centre)
 February 2 - 4, 2013 ~ [Goderich Winterfest](#)
 February 2 - 3, 2013 ~ [Barrie Winterfest & Festival of Ice](#)
 February 8 - 10, 2013 ~ [Orillia Winter Carnival](#)
 February 8 - 10, 2013 ~ [World of Motorcycles Expo & London Bicycle Show](#) (London)
 February 14 - March 3, 2013 ~ [Kirkland Lake Winter Carnival](#)
 February 14, 2013 ~ [Love Train Revue](#) (Richmond Hill)
 February 16, 2013 ~ [Annual Valentine Dinner & Auction](#) (St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival - Prescott)
 February 16 - 18, 2013 ~ [Hamilton's Kids-Fest](#)
 February 16 - 18, 2013 ~ [Voyageur Winter Carnival](#) (Fort William Historical Park)
 February 22 - 24, 2013 ~ [Battle of Ogdensburg - Prescott](#)

Remember: There are a lot more events to choose from... visit [Ontario Event Calendar](#) and [Ontario Event Finder](#) (search engine) to discover other Ontario events!

Talking About Spring... page 1

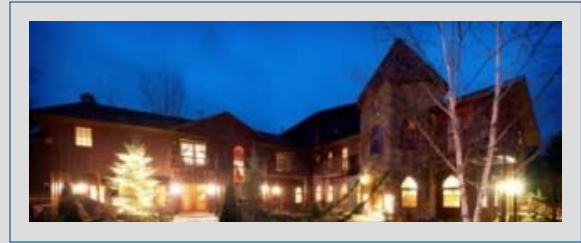
There are lots of other things that remind me that spring is on its way (other than Laurence). Enough said about the Stephenson's! Back to (almost) spring celebrations. First, there's *Ground Hog* day. I am sure that *Warton Willie* is "*chopping at the bit*" to let us know long we have to wait for the real spring. By the way, have you pulled out your annual "*Ground Hog Day*" movie yet? *I have!* And last, but definitely not least, we can't forget (*Judi will "kill" me if I do*) that Valentine's Day is also coming soon! A date definitely to remember! So, my *festival friends*, although "*Spring*" is not really in the "*air*", our "*thoughts*" are. I'll see you when I come out to check my shadow! I'll be the one with a "*rose*" between my teeth! Happy February... happy (*almost*) Spring!

What's New?

Twitter/Facebook ~

Judi and I have been thinking about going "*social*" for a long time. Yes, we have been posting "*Blogs*" for many years, but going "*full steam*" with "*Twitter and Facebook*" took a lot of thought. What finally turned the table was our nephew, *Jon Law*. We found out that he and his friend *Stephanie* were avid users of "*social media*". When I found this out, I started to talk to Jon about our creating "*Festival Nomad*" *Twitter and Facebook* accounts. He convinced me that it would be easy and that he would help us along the way. That turned the table and I am happy to announce that both *Twitter and Facebook* are now available on all of our websites. We hope that you "*follow us*" and "*like us*"!

Please see *What's New?...* on page 3



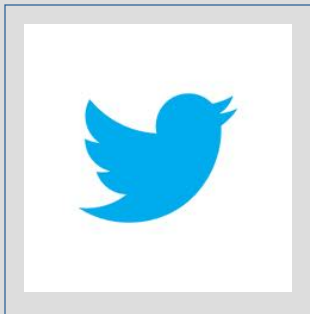
"*Women's Weekend Retreat*"
 Grail Springs - Bancroft
 February 1 - 2, 2013



"Happy Groundhog Day!"



"Happy Valentine's Day"



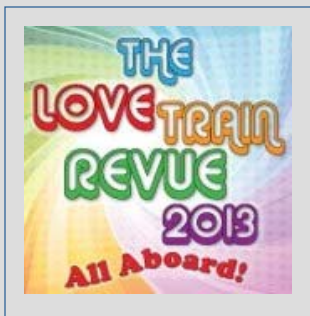
["Follow Us"
on Twitter](#)



["Like Us"
on Facebook](#)



["Featured Events"
Ontario Event Finder](#)



["2013 Love Train Revue"
Richmond Hill](#) ~ February 14, 2013

What's New?... page 1

Each week and hopefully most days we will send out *tweets* about festivals/events that we (and our Correspondents) are going to visit, list events we would recommend that you might want to visit, post current event news, tell you about new products, when there are upcoming newsletters and much, much more! We hope that you will join us on our "*festival*" journey!

Featured Events ~

We have just reset our *Ontario Event Finder* (search engine) to include two monthly "*Featured Events*" promotional spots. Each month we will be offering event organizers the opportunity to promote their upcoming events in one of these "promotional" two spots. Opportunities are limited, so inclusion will be on a "*first come*" basis. Visitors to this website are increasing rapidly. If you'd like more information about this new program, please visit our *Ontario Event Finder Featured Event* webpage at [Featured Events](#) or contact Judi by e-mail at judi@ontariofestivalsvisited.ca or by telephone at 1-888-818-0255.

Event Apps ~

We are in the process of working with website designer, *Shawn King*, to develop an "*Event App*" that will especially appeal to small and medium sized festivals, events, fairs, communities and attractions. The *Event Application* will be introduced at this month's OAAS (Fair Conference) which will be held on February 15th, 2013 in Toronto at the Royal York Hotel. If you are interested in learning more about this exciting new product or would like a demonstration of the "*Event Apps*" capabilities, please contact me (Gary) by e-mail at gary@ontariovisited.ca or by telephone at 1-888-818-0255.

Black History Month...

Notes from *Judi McWilliams*

Black History Month, also known as African-American History Month, is an annual observance in the Canada, United States and the United Kingdom for remembrance of important people and events in the history of the African American diaspora. (A diaspora being a "*scattering, dispersion*" "*the movement, migration, or scattering of people away from an established or ancestral homeland*" or "*people dispersed by whatever cause to more than one location*", or "*people settled far from their ancestral homelands*").

Black History Month sparks an annual debate about the continued usefulness and fairness of a designated month dedicated to the history of one [race](#). (Race is a classification system used to categorize humans into large and distinct populations or groups by anatomical, cultural, ethnic, genetic, geographical, historical, linguistic, religious or social affiliation.)

Please see *Black History Month...* on page 4

Black History Month... page 3

Many people hold concerns about black history being delegated to a single month and the "hero worship" of some of the historical figures often recognized. Personally, I'd like to acknowledge the contributions of all Canadians through celebration all year long. Anyone who makes an effort for the betterment of our society needs to be congratulated, acknowledged and appreciated. *February* means that *all Canadians* get to enjoy many more festivals and events throughout this winter month. A number of events happening to celebrate *Black History Month* include ~

- *"The Love Train Revue"*
February 14, 2013
Richmond Hill Centre for Performing Arts
www.the-revue.com or www.stkittsmusic.ca
- *Harbourfront Centre ~ Kuumba*
February 1 - 3, 2013
Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay West Toronto, ON, M5J 2G8
FREE (with the exception of one ticketed event Saturday)
www.harbourfrontcentre.com/kuumba
- *Muhtadi International Drumming Festival Drum Beats*
January 14 - February 25
www.muhtadidrumfest.com
- *Clement Virgo with The Canadian Film Centre
CELEBRATING BLACK, BOLD, RISK TAKER*
February 1, 2013
TIFF BELL Lightbox 350 King Street West, Toronto, ON M5V 3X5
Ticket Price: \$20
www.ryerson.ca/ric
- *Mackenzie House Celebrates Black History Month*
February 2013 | Weekends 12 to 5 pm
Mackenzie House, 82 Bond Street
www.toronto.ca/museum-events
- *Young People's Theatre
The Power of Harriet T!*
February 4 - 22, 2013
Young People's Theatre, 165 Front Street East Toronto, ON M5A 3Z4 Canada
Ticket Prices: \$10 - \$20
www.youngpeopletheatre.ca
- *The Ontario Black History Society and Heritage Toronto
Discover Black History in Toronto*
February 9, 2013 | 9am - 12pm
www.heritagetoronto.org



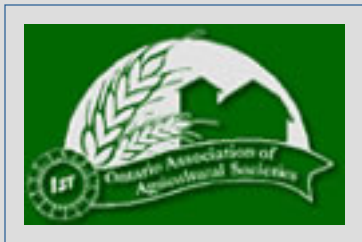
"Ajax Winterfest"
[Ajax](#) ~ February 3, 2013



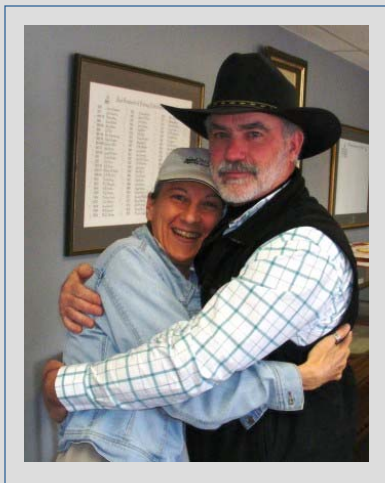
"Winter Festivities"
[Cobourg](#) ~ Events Throughout February



"The Big Announcement!"
[Warton Willie Festival - 2012](#)
(Photo taken from the [Warton Willie Festival Website](#))



["OAAS 2013 Convention"](#)
[Royal York Hotel, Toronto](#)
[February 14 - 16, 2013](#)



["Judi with the Mantracker ~ Terry Grant"](#)
[All About Horses ~ Lindsay](#)
[May 25 - 26, 2013](#)



["Gathering the Maple Sugar"](#)
[Elmira Maple Syrup Festival](#)
[April 6, 2013](#)



OAAS 2013 Annual Convention...

Speaking of the *Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies* (OAAS) annual convention, we are pleased that we will be taking part in their one day "*Trade Show*". (Friday February 15th, 2013). We have lots of new things to offer and look forward to meeting and talking with convention participants. We even have a few "*goodies*" to hand out! If you're coming to the convention, we hope you will come to our booth for a visit! We'd love meet and talk to you. If you're not attending the convention, feel free to contact us by March 15th or sooner to find out more about our "*OAAS Show Specials*".

Going Forward...

by Gary McWilliams

Festivals Visited...

At the beginning of each year we try to take a look at the previous year see what went right and what didn't work out as well as we thought it would. One of the challenges we have faced over the years is visiting and promoting festivals and events that are far away from our home. We have tried to visit as many distant events as possible, but traveling and overnight restraints limit the number. We do have *Festival Correspondents* available in many areas and this helps a lot, but in our opinion not enough. That's why we have decided to offer a new event promotional package that we allow distant festivals and event the opportunity to create their own "*Festivals Visited*" page. If you are interested in finding out more about this NEW package, please contact us by e-mail at judi@ontariovisited.ca or by telephone at 1-888-818-0255.

Ontario Event Review...

Last year we created a new website, *Ontario Event Review* that was dedicated to reviewing festivals and event that we had visited. Because of medical circumstances last year we didn't visit and write about as many as we had planned to. These reviews are impartial appraisals of the events we visit and include ratings in select areas (see website). This year we plan on expanding the number of reviews conducted and are contracting with independent correspondents to carry them out. If you know of any event that you would like to see reviewed, please let us know. We will try to arrange for a review to take place, although we can't guarantee it. For this year, we would prefer not to re-review events. All types of event are eligible for review.

[Ontario Visited](#)

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