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## "Fair" Weather...

By Gary McWilliams, *the Festival Nomad*

It's hard to think of Agricultural Fairs in the winter, but that's what Judi and I are doing right now! In fact, in a few days, we will be travelling to Toronto to attend the annual *Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies*, or, if you'd prefer, the *Ontario Fairs Convention*. Here 100's of Ontario Fair volunteers and staff will converge on Toronto's Royal York Hotel to discuss the future of Fairs in general and their Fair in particular. As we did last year, we are hosting a booth this year's convention *Trade Show* to let participants know more about *Ontario Visited* websites and our "Fair" services. We are also honoured to be presenting a seminar at the convention about "the benefits and perils of marketing Fairs and Agricultural Societies and their activities". Our presentation will feature our interview with Andy Letham, Manager of the Lindsay Agricultural Society. In preparing our presentation, Judi and I thought back about the 20 plus agricultural events that we had visited over the past year. It was inspiring to think about the different events that we had explored, larger ones like the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto and smaller ones like the Lakefield Fair. Although very different, they still had a lot in common.

Please see "Fair" Weather ... on page 2



Ontario Association of  
Agricultural Societies

## An Increasing Trend...

Lately we've been hearing about more and more festivals and events holding pre-event fundraising activities. This, of course, is not a new phenomena, but with governments and businesses cutting back with grants and donations, fundraising events are a great way to raise "seed" money. The types of fundraising events vary as much as the types of festivals and events being held.

Here's a personal example. Several year's ago, Judi and I were involved with a festival in Port Hope. It was called "The Great Farini Festival". The Great Farini, you see, was actually *William Leonard Hunt*, a prominent citizen (sometimes) of the area, and a phenomenal "renaissance man". Hunt/Farini started out as a "Tight Rope Walk", challenging "The Great Blondin" (Charles Blondin) to several tightrope battles over Niagara Falls. After tightrope walking, Farini became an acrobatic aerialist, an acrobat trainer, a spy, a manager of circus acts, a circus owner, an inventor (the Human Cannonball, folding theatre seats and more), an explorer (explored the Kalahari Desert on foot), a botanist, an artist, a farmer and an investor.

Please see *An Increasing Trend ...* on page 2



At the Fair Convention  
OAAS

"Fair" Weather from page 1

Both featured farm animals and held completions to judge the best of the show, animals and their handlers. Both displayed produce that had been grown with care at the farms that surrounded their communities. Both fairs honoured the people who fought storms, winds, droughts, bugs and more, just to "feed" their neighbours! I've heard some people say that "farming is dead", but this is the farthest from the "truth"! Sure, farming and farms had changed over the years, but so has everything else. I think about our own websites that we started seven years ago. As I mentioned in last month's *INSIDER* newsletter, we have revamped all of our *Ontario Visited Websites*. We have had to, to stay relevant. The same with farming. What worked 100, 50, 25 years ago doesn't work today. Judi and I believe that this also applies to Fairs. What worked 30, 20, 10 years ago just doesn't work as well today. Fairs and their Boards must embrace the future with passion and enthusiasm. They need to see how their event will work in today's society and how it must be changed to survive and prosper. But, in doing this, they should heed Andy Letham's advice, "Change the future without disrespecting the past".

In closing this article, I'd like to remind communities that are at odds with their community's Fair. Your community and its residents are much better off "remembering and honouring its past". After all, it's "who you are"! It's where you came from, how you've survived and succeeded! Rather than trying to find ways of eliminating Fairs, community leaders should look for ways to help them... enhance them... so that the Fairs make their community stronger and their citizens prouder... and remember, "FARMERS FEED CITIES"! Support them and, buy locally... and "GO TO THE FAIR"!

*An Increasing Trend...* from page 1

And, although Farini's life was full of danger, he lived to the ripe old age of 91 and is buried in a Port Hope cemetery. With all this rich history, it seemed appropriate to honour *The Great Farini* and his life, with a Port Hope festival! The only problem was, we had very little money but, like Farini, we had big ideas! The town had given the Festival some money, however, not enough to fulfill all our plans. As a result, the committee decided to hold a fundraising event several months prior to the festival, which was taking place in August. The fundraising event, a "Formal Gala" was scheduled to take place in February and its theme, naturally, was a "Circus/Carnival". The amount of work to pull-off the Gala off was almost the same as it was for planning and running the actual Farini Festival. The main difference was that we didn't need as many volunteers. The Gala had fabulous food, entertainment, Carnival games, music and much more. It was fun and successful and, most important, we raised the needed extra capital.

In addition to raising much needed capital, preliminary fundraising events offer a lot more ~ increases organizational skills; develops a more cohesive volunteer group; creates greater public awareness of the main event; attracts more volunteers and sponsors. And, if marketed right, the festival should gain a lot of additional media coverage. Not bad for something that "adds" dollars to your budget!



Lindsay Exhibition  
LEX



Toronto International RV Show  
ORVDA



Cobourg Winter Festivities  
Cobourg



Toronto Golf & Travel Show  
Toronto



## Festival Nomad's Report...



*Tunics & Tartans Fundraiser*  
Cobourg Highland Games Society



*Buckhorn Maple Syrup Festival*  
McLean Berry Farm



*Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival*  
Bruce's Mill, Stouffville



*Battle of Longwoods Commemoration*  
London

*January* and the beginning of *February* turned out to be a month of rejuvenation for both Judi and me. We had hoped to head north to visit the Cannington Dog Sled Races, but extreme weather conditions prevented us from doing so. Hopefully next year! Most of the time was spent on updating the Ontario Visited websites. We have added articles and photographs for most of the events and communities we, and our correspondents, visited last year. Only a few remain, and we are working on those. We are also updating both our *Ontario Event Calendar* and our *Ontario Festival Finder* (search engine). If you have information about an event that you are involved with or attend, please let us know the 2014 dates. We are happy to add them to the website at no cost. Each listing has a link back to the event's website. Many event organizers had been taking advantage of sending us "news/information release" for posting on one of our "Headline News" pages. This is also a "free" service and a great way to promote an event or let potential visitors know "what's new". Finally, we hope that you have visited our updated Ontario Visited Websites and will let us know what you think, good and bad. We want to offer visitors to the websites the best experience possible.

### The Nomad's February/March Event List

Now, as we head into *March*, flowers start "popping" up! Well, maybe not flowers, but "flower or garden shows". That's one of the great things about this time of year, we start "dreaming" about what's to come! Although "winter" is still here in full swing (especially this year), March events and shows keep the dreams alive. The *Nomad's Event List*, shown below, will help you find your "dreams".

#### *February 2014 (15th to 28th)*

*February 14 - 16, 2014* - [Winter Brewed Festival](#) (Ottawa)

*February 14 - 17, 2014* - [London RV Show](#) (Western Fair District, London)

*February 15, 2014* - [Heritage Day](#) (Buckhorn Community Centre, Buckhorn)

*February 15, 2014* - [Cobourg Winter Festivities](#) (Cobourg)

*February 15, 2014* - [Guided Moonlight Snowshoe](#) (Gordon Park, Manitoulin Island)

*February 15 - 17, 2014* - [Frosty Fest](#) (Brantford, County of Brant)

*February 15 - 17, 2014* - [Hamilton Kids-Fest](#) (Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum, Hamilton)

*February 15 - 17, 2014* - [Voyageur Winter Carnival](#) (Thunder Bay)

*February 15 - 17, 2014* - [Family Day Weekend](#) (Blue Mountain)

*February 15 - 17, 2014* - [Family Day Weekend at the ROM](#) (Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto)

*February 16, 2014* - [Love in the Afternoon](#) (Hutchison House, Peterborough)

*February 16, 2014* - [Burlington's Heritage Day](#) (Western Corridor 1812, Pathways to Peace, Burlington)

Please see *The Nomad's February/March Event List...* on page 4



Canada Blooms  
Toronto



Toronto International Home Show  
Toronto



Maple in the County  
Prince Edward County



Presqu'île Waterfowl Weekend  
Brighton

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February 16 - 17, 2014 - [Toronto Kids-Fest](#) (International Centre, Mississauga)

February 17, 2014 - [Family Day](#) (Pickering Recreation Complex, Pickering)

February 20 - 22, 2014 - [Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies Convention](#) (Royal York Hotel, Toronto)

February 20 - 23, 2014 - [Ottawa Boat & Sportsmen's Show](#) (EY Centre, Ottawa)

February 21 - 23, 2014 - [London Boat, Fishing & Outdoor Show](#) (Western Fair District, London)

February 21 - 23, 2014 - [Canadian Ice Fishing Championship](#) (Sutton West)

February 22, 2014 - [Valentine Dinner & Auction](#) (St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival, Prescott)

February 22 - 23, 2014 - [London Golf Show & Sale](#) (Western Fair District, London)

February 22 - 23, 2014 - [Winter Survivor Overnighter](#) (Gordon Park, Manitoulin Island)

February 23 - 24, 2014 - [icefest](#) (Bloor-Yorkville, Toronto)

February 23, 2014 - [Chili Cook-off](#) (Brantford, Count of Brant)

February 27 - March 1, 2014 - [Port Credit Comedy Festival](#) (Toronto)

February 27 - March 1, 2014 - [Festivals & Events Ontario Conference](#) (Parkway Sheraton Toronto North Hotel, Toronto)

February 27 - March 4, 2014 - [Toronto International RV Show](#) (Mississauga)

February 27 - March 2, 2014 - [Kingston Canadian Film Festival](#) (Kingston)

February 27 - March 2, 2014 - [Stratford Garden Festival](#) (Stratford)

February 28 - March 1, 2014 - [Ontario Winter Games - Volleyball](#) (Midland)

February 28 - March 1, 2014 - [Re-Max Hockey Tournament](#) (Midland)

*March 2014 (1st to 31st)*

March 1, 2014 - [Tunics & Tartans](#) (Cobourg Highland Games Society, Cobourg)

March 1, 2014 - [Astronomy Night](#) (Gordon Park, Manitoulin Island)

March 1 - 2, 2014 - [Bronte Creek Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Oakville)

March 1 - 2, 2014 - [Fanshawe Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Thorndale)

March 1 - 2, 2014 - [Maple Town](#) (Campbellville)

March 1 - 2, 2014 - [Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Bruce's Mill, Stouffville & Kortright, Woodbridge)

March 2, 2014 - [Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Westfield Heritage Village, Rockton)

Please see *The Nomad's February/March Event List...* on page 5



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**March 3 - September 30, 2014** - [Bicentennial 1812 Exhibit: Noose, Knife and Fire: The Bloody Assize](#) (Western Corridor 1812, Pathways to Peace, Burlington)

**March 4, 2014** - [Battle of Longwoods Memorial](#) (Western Corridor 1812, Pathways to Peace, Burlington)

**March 5 - 7, 2014** - [Farm Show 2014](#) (Western Fair District, London)

**March 7, 2014** - [Longwoods Royal Bash](#) (Western Corridor 1812, Pathways to Peace, Burlington)

**March 7, 2014** - [Homecraft Garage Sale](#) (Ancaster Fairgrounds, Ancaster)

**March 7 - 9, 2014** - [Greater Hamilton Home & Garden Show](#) (Hamilton)

**March 7 - 9, 2014** - [Quinte Sportsmen Boat & RV Show](#) (Belleville)

**March 7 - 9, 2014** - [Kenora Winter Carnival](#) (Kenora)

**March 8, 2014** - [Battle of Longwoods Commemoration Ceremony](#) (Western Corridor 1812, Pathways to Peace, Burlington)

**March 8, 2014** - [Guided Animal Tracking & Winter Ecology](#) (Gordon Park, Manitoulin Island)

**March 8 - 9, 2014** - [Wildlife Festival & Adventure Show](#) (Norfolk Fairgrounds, Simcoe)

**March 8 - 16, 2014** - [March Break Mystery Fun](#) (Black Creek Pioneer Village, Toronto)

**March 8 - 16, 2014** - [Bronte Creek Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Oakville)

**March 8 - 16, 2014** - [Fanshawe Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Thorndale)

**March 8 - 16, 2014** - [Maple Town](#) (Campbellville)

**March 8 - 16, 2014** - [Springwater Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Aylmer)

**March 8 - 16, 2014** - [Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Bruce's Mill, Stouffville & Kortright, Woodbridge)

**March 8 - 16, 2014** - [March Break at Blue](#) (Blue Mountain Village)

**March 8 - 16, 2014** - [March Break at the CN Tower](#) (Toronto)

**March 8 - 16, 2014** - [March Break at the Science Centre](#) (Toronto)

**March 8 - 16, 2014** - [March Break at the Simcoe County Museum](#) (Minesing)

**March 9, 2014** - [Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Westfield Heritage Village, Rockton)

**March 11 - 14, 2014** - [March Break Programs](#) (Hutchison House, Peterborough)

**March 12 - 13, 2014** - [Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Westfield Heritage Village, Rockton)

**March 12 - 16, 2014** - [Little Ray's Reptile Zoo](#) (Western Fair District, London)

**March 14, 2014** - [St. Patrick's Day Luncheon](#) (Midland)

**March 14 - 16, 2014** - [All Equine Show](#) (Western Fair District, London)

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Ontario Science Centre  
Toronto



Royal Ontario Museum  
Toronto



Western Fair District  
London



Direct Energy Centre ~ CNE  
Toronto



Home Shows



Ice Fishing Derbies



Hockey Tournaments



Sportsmen Shows

*The Nomad's February/March Event List...* from page 5

- March 14 - 23, 2014 ~ [Canada Blooms](#) (Toronto)  
 March 15, 2014 ~ [Guided Moonlight Snowshoe](#) (Gordon Park, Manitoulin Island)  
 March 15 - 16, 2014 ~ [Buckhorn Maple Syrup Festival](#) (McLean Berry Farm, Buckhorn)  
 March 15 - 16, 2014 ~ [Ottawa Outdoor & Travel Show](#) (Ottawa)  
 March 15 - 16, 2014 ~ [Waterfowl Weekend](#) (Presqu'ile Provincial Park, Brighton)  
 March 16, 2014 ~ [Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Westfield Heritage Village, Rockton)  
 March 21 - 23, 2014 ~ [Maple In The County](#) (Prince Edward County)  
 March 21 - 23, 2014 ~ [A Taste of Niagara-on-the-Lake](#) (Niagara-on-the-Lake)  
 March 21 - 23, 2014 ~ [Muskoka Arts & Crafts Spring Show](#) (Bracebridge)  
 March 22 - 23, 2014 ~ [Junior Beef Expo](#) (Western Fair District, London)  
 March 22 - 23, 2014 ~ [Buckhorn Maple Syrup Festival](#) (McLean Berry Farm, Buckhorn)  
 March 22 - 23, 2014 ~ [Speed & Custom Car Show](#) (Western Fair District, London)  
 March 22 - 23, 2014 ~ [Bronte Creek Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Oakville)  
 March 22 - 23, 2014 ~ [Fanshawe Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Thorndale)  
 March 22 - 23, 2014 ~ [Maple Town](#) (Campbellville)  
 March 22 - 23, 2014 ~ [Springwater Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Aylmer)  
 March 22 - 23, 2014 ~ [Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Bruce's Mill, Stouffville & Kortright, Woodbridge)  
 March 22 - 23, 2014 ~ [Women's Lifestyle Show](#) (London)  
 March 23, 2014 ~ [Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Westfield Heritage Village, Rockton)  
 March 25, 2014 ~ [Ski Doo Spring Show](#) (Western Fair District, London)  
 March 28 - 30, 2014 ~ [Newmarket Home & Lifestyle Show](#) (Newmarket)  
 March 28 - April 20, 2014 ~ [Countylicious](#) (Bloomfield)  
 March 29, 2014 ~ [Marching Through Time History Symposium](#) (Western Corridor 1812, Pathways to Peace, Burlington)  
 March 29, 2014 ~ [Forest City Derby Girls](#) (Western Fair District, London)  
 March 29 - 30, 2014 ~ [Buckhorn Maple Syrup Festival](#) (McLean Berry Farm, Buckhorn)  
 March 29 - 30, 2014 ~ [The National Franchise & Business Opportunities Show](#) (Western Fair District, London)

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*The Nomad's February/March Event List* from page 6

- March 29 - 30, 2014 ~ [Bronte Creek Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Oakville)
- March 29 - 30, 2014 ~ [Fanshawe Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Thorndale)
- March 29 - 30, 2014 ~ [Maple Town](#) (Campbellville)
- March 29 - 30, 2014 ~ [Springwater Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Aylmer)
- March 29 - 30, 2014 ~ [Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Bruce's Mill, Stouffville & Kortright, Woodbridge)
- March 30, 2014 ~ [Maple Syrup Festival](#) (Westfield Heritage Village, Rockton)

NOTE ~ This is not a complete list of all of Ontario's great festivals and events held in the period mentioned. They do, however represent the ones we have been requested to list. If you know of any festival or event that should or would like to be listed on either our *Ontario Event Calendar* and our *Ontario Event Finder* (search engine) websites, please send their information to us at [gary@ontariovisited.ca](mailto:gary@ontariovisited.ca).

## Calling All Festival Nomads...

At this time of year, Judi and I start thinking about Spring Festivals and Events and which ones we want to visit. The problem is, that there are just too many to attend ourselves. That's why we developed our "*Festival Nomad Correspondents Program*". This year we've prepared a detailed description to help potential correspondents learn more about the program. The full description has now been posted on our *Ontario Visited* website. Here's an excerpt ~

### Who Becomes An Ontario Visited Correspondent?

- People who are interested in visiting festivals & events
- People who enjoy writing, photographing and videography

### What Are The Benefits of Becoming An Ontario Visited Correspondent?

- Free access (where possible) to events
- Media access privileges (when available)
- Portfolio Enhancement (By-line & Internet exposure)
- Volunteer Youth Credits (for highschool students)

### Why Join the Ontario Visited Correspondent's Team?

- Maximize festival and event experience
- Be seen ~ *Ontario Visited Websites* attract over 800,000 event visits per year
- Recognized by major search engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing) for festival and event information
- Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, Blogs, Newsletters) activities
- Association with established festival and event industry leaders

If you are interested in becoming an "*Ontario Visited Festival Correspondent*", and want to learn more, please "*click*" onto our "*Festival Nomad Correspondents Program*" webpage ([CLICK HERE](#)).



*Endangered Vancouver Island Marmot  
Toronto Zoo ~ Behind the Scenes Tour  
Photo By Ron Clifford*



*Zoo's Health Centre  
Toronto Zoo ~ Behind the Scenes Tour  
Photo By Ron Clifford*



*Zoo's Health Centre  
Toronto Zoo ~ Behind the Scenes Tour  
Photo By Ron Clifford*

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