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We Wish You A...

By Gary McWilliams, *the Festival Nomad*

It's that time of year again! Lots of *Decorations* and *Good Cheer!* *Presents!* *Santa to some!* And, of course, *winter* and *snow!* Frankly, I am not a winter person. If I were a bear, I'd go into hibernation! The truth is, I almost do. I'm not sure if it's my age or temperament, but it's my reality. Some people, like my cousin *Jim Brien*, from North Bay, loves the winter. He has this big powerful snowmobile and a large lake (Lake Nipissing) to explore! My friend *Paul Putman* also loves the winter, or at least he says he does! Unfortunately he is not as mobile as he once was, so skiing (*his passion*) is now out of reach! And then, there is my friend Tom McTaggart. He has already left for sunny Cuba! He's gone for the winter. As a matter of fact, he loved Cuba and the warmth so much he married Rachel, a beautiful Cuban gal! Now he has two types of warmth, the warmth of a "good" woman and the heat of the "tropic sun"! For Judi and me, we're torn. We like the idea of warm weather, but we love Canada! I guess that's why we want Canada's Government to take "Turks and Caicos" ... (*World class hotels, spas, and restaurants await, as do our famous stretches of un-crowded beaches and vibrant coral reefs. On land or below the water, you'll relax in the unique serenity, hospitality and beauty of our islands*) ... offer and let them become our 4th territory! That would be like "having our cake and eating it too"! We wish everyone a safe, happy and healthy *Holiday Season*. Talk to you in the New Year!



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

Festival Nomad's Report...



I can't believe that it's December already! Yes, I know that I have said that before about other times of the year, but I REALLY can't believe that it's DECEMBER! It seems like this past year has passed me by in a "whirlwind"! As I get older, time does seem to pass more quickly, but I don't think that that is what has caused this feeling of "quickness"! Judi and I were very busy during the first part of the year and through the summer months. So, perhaps that's it, the feeling of "Where has time gone?" Whatever the cause, I know that I am looking forward to a few months of "slow time". "Slow time" doesn't mean that we are going to "go to sleep" and "close up" shop. It simply means that we are going to be like "farmers", we will not be working on the "land" but, instead, we will be working to "clean up and repair are equipment (and ourselves)".



"Merry Christmas"
Kevin, Jo-Anne & Matthew
Festival Nomad Correspondents



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

Festival Nomad's Report... from page 1

We have plenty of plans for next year! 2012 is the *War of 1812 Bicentennial* and there will be lots of activities planned throughout the year. Judi and I hope to be right in the "thick" of them, plus we hope to "take on" a number of new *Festival Nomad Correspondents*. In addition to the *War of 1812* celebrations, we now have 10 websites to "feed" and "look after" and 5 weekly Blogs and 2 monthly newsletters to write and publish. It seems like a lot to handle, what else are "retirement" hours meant for? I guess what I am trying to tell you, in a long winded way, is that we didn't do too much in *November*, only the Cobourg Santa Claus Parade and the Harvest of Christmas Delights in Port Hope.

December will likely be just as slow for Judi and me. However, here are a few of the festivals and events we are considering visiting:

December 3rd - [A Country Christmas Remembered](#) (Spencerville)

December 4th - [Christkindl Market](#) (Kitchener)

December 4th - [Christmas By Candlelight](#) (Lang Pioneer Village)

December 11th - [Brunch with Santa](#) (Cambridge Butterfly Conservatory)

December 29th - [A Light the Night](#) (Upper Canada Village)

To find out about other great December events, visit our *Ontario Event Finder* search engine at <http://ontariofestivalfinder.ontariofestivalsvisited.ca/> or our *Ontario Event Calendar* at <http://ontarioeventcalendar.ontariofestivalsvisited.ca/>

Inside Review...

"It's Never Too Late For A Parade!" (Part Two)

by Judi McWilliams

As it seems that I "might" have "picked" on my "older" sister last month, I find it fitting to let her share some of her more SPECTACULAR STORIES about being in a Parade! Unfortunately, I will need to remember her stories as told to me, so she may again be "picked on"! Carol Law (my "older" sister) has been busy marching in various *Christmas Parades* across Ontario and performing numerous concerts for the season with the *Newmarket Citizen's Band*. I had the privilege this past week of sitting in on a live performance by the *Citizen's Band* during a full concert in Bradford at a retirement residence. I had a perfect seat, in the centre, where I found that the sound traveled well. I closed my eyes most of the time (*hope the seniors didn't think I was asleep*). Years ago I learned if you shut your eyes when you listen (*especially to live music*), you can hear more clearly.

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"A Country Christmas Remembered 2010"
Spencerville



"Christmas By Candlelight - 2010"
Lang Pioneer Village - Keene



"Santa Claus Parade - 2007"
Toronto





"Evening Santa Claus Parade - 2010"
Ajax



"Santa Claus Parade - 2008"
Cobourg



"Santa Claus Parade - 2011"
Cobourg

Inside Review... from page 2

It's my understanding it helps block out visual distractions and lets you focus on the music and sound. When I had my eyes open, I saw Carol playing the tympani drums with great precision, the bells with great enthusiasm and the snap stick with great emphasis. *Carol* tells me, however, marching in the Parades is quit another story. Here is a list of some anecdotes from *Carol Law* of the *Newmarket Citizen's Band*.

Imagine marching with a massive heavy drum attached to your chest; your view is impaired. All you can see is occasionally the rows of Band members in front of you! Here are some of the challenges!

- While you are walking down the main street of a town, the only thing you can see is the front of the Band where the banner carriers are. Suddenly there is a big rolling hill before you and the only thing you can see, the banner, disappears below your sightline. You can not see at all where you are going. Only Carol's experience kept her from falling out of the precision of the line.
- Then there is your fellow Band members yelling out over the music and their own performances, "*Carol watch out!*" Sometimes the "*poop patrol*" doesn't make it in time to clean the street after horses or other animals have passed by.
- Carol also tells me, what folks don't realize is that the Band often times will march the entire route of the parade (*sometimes very long*), only to have to walk the entire route back to their vehicles. Sometimes they are fortunate to have a team supporting them who will re-locate the vehicles during the parade ready for them to take off right away.
- Carol has had to deal with heavy winds that have caught the drum and knocked her literally off her feet, rolling onto the curb.
- The *Festival Nomad* and I hopefully aren't in the way when we take photos at a Parade or Event, but, Carol tells me that she had tripped over photographers who are crouched down taking photos. She thinks that the photographers don't seem to realize that she can't see them at all!
- Then there was the time the Band was marching in a Parade through a town. Suddenly a train came through the main intersection. Carol tells me it was then that the Band decided to give an "*impromptu*" concert for the spectators stuck on the same side of the tracks as they were.
- One wish Carol has, as I'm sure other Parade participants would wish, is that the visitors/spectators at the Parade be aware of obstacles that may blow/fall into the Parade route. By this she means such items as empty coffee cups blowing into the pathway or the route, hard candy where Parade participant's feet can roll on, and even stray children walking into the route during all the excitement.

I hope everyone enjoys this great season of Parades! I'm sure they participants will enjoy the slower months of deep winter ... soon March will be here and time to "*March on!*" March on Parade Participants, March on!

INSIDE with the Festival Nomad...

Interview with Mrs. Claus...

Festival Nomad (FN): Well Mrs. Claus, you must be very excited at this time of the year. I'm sure that over the year you must help Mr. Claus with the planning for the Big Night! Can you tell me what the first things you and Mr. Claus do to prepare for the Big Event?

Mrs. Claus (MS): *Well Festival Nomad, I am very good at coming up with ideas. Lots and lots of them! You know... little extra touches and surprises to make the Big Event fantastic! There is a lot of hustle and bustle as the event draws near. Mr. Claus and the Elves also have their own ideas, plans and duties. The Elves' tasks range from to the building of the toys and treasures to the wrapping of the presents, Santa's tasks are to plan the distribution of the gifts, training and conditioning routines for himself and the Reindeer. Between all of us involved, it can become very confusing. So, I make a LIST. I call it Mrs. Claus's Master Plan.*

FN: Lately I've noticed that there seems to be a lot of advertizing, promoting Christmas. How much of this is initiated by you and Santa and how much of it is spontaneous?

MC: *I've heard that there are "Secret Santa's" out there. It is my understanding that these folks help make sure a special person gets a special gift. Santa, the Elves and I make no effort to disguise how magical Christmas can be. When I have been out shopping for my baking ingredients, I have overheard some folks being "grumpy" about all the Christmas decorations, and such, coming out so soon in the season. They say it's too much "commercialism" these days. It is my sincere hope that these extra efforts will only increase the goodwill and kindness that usually is evoked in many folks. The longer communities can be aware to help others less fortunate and be kind to one another, the better for everyone! I've heard that some Festivals and Events, during the festival season, encourage folks to bring canned goods, non-perishable food, warm clothing, toys and such out to their events. An example is a communities "Lighting of the Tree Ceremonies". I understand also that some companies match dollar for dollar if their employees donate to charity efforts for this special time of the year. So, Festival Nomad, I would like to think that advertizing and promotion can be a blessing in disguise. People become aware sooner and seem to open their hearts and goodwill.*

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"Santa & Mrs. Claus"
Interview with Mrs. Claus



"Story Telling"
A Country Christmas Remembered - 2010



"Winter Transportation"
Cobourg Winter Festival - 2008





INSIDE with the Festival Nomad... from page 4

FN: My next question for you is, what are the biggest challenges for both you and Santa when planning such a Big Event?

MC: *My biggest challenge, when planning this Big Event, is COMMUNICATIONS. With the Elves in the workshop, Santa in the exercise room (trying to get in shape for his big journey) and me in the kitchen baking, we keep on top of our "Master Plan" by communicating with one another is a must! We constantly have to adapt our communications methods as technology changes over the years. Back in the day, we used tin cans strung together with string to yell through. Then there was the dial telephone, megaphone, party-lines, and more. Now there is on-line, instant communications. They have created a "Webcam" where we can see one another as we communicate. Texting is fun, although I love the voice activated method (my hands are usually sticky from baking). As for Santa, his biggest, biggest challenge is DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE. Of course, Santa knows where all the good little girls and boys live, but with such a large population, many similar homes, similar street names ... he does have a challenge finding his way sometimes. Modern technology offers GPS, but with Santa's large gloves on, it can be a distraction pressing the buttons. Santa tries hard to "Pre-Plan" his routes. He makes alternative route plans in case of too much snow on a roof top for the reindeer. I must say though, Santa finds all the Christmas lights and decorations helpful.*

FN: I have noticed over the past few years that you are attending and participating in some Christmas Parades. Would you rather be riding in them or watching from the comfort of your cozy cabin? And, what is your favorite part of the parade?

MC: *Well, I am pleased and proud to be riding in a few Christmas Parades. It gives me a chance to see first hand the excitement of all the children (young and old). With modern technology, I can leave my baking on automatic timing, so I can take the time to get out more. I stay warm and cozy in the parades by dressing in lots of layers, drink warm coco from a thermos and keep my feet dry. I love getting out and visiting our Communities. It helps keep me "in-touch" and well informed. I like to see our "New Canadians" and folks from many diverse backgrounds out taking part in this tradition. My favorite part of the parade most likely is the music! ... from the marching bands and the beat of their drums ... children and choirs singing together.*

Please see *INSIDE with the Festival Nomad...* on page 6



"Christmas at Queens Park"
Toronto - 2007



"Santa Goes Fishing!!"
Simcoe Christmas Panorama - 2007



"Christmas Tree Display"
Capitol Christmas - Port Hope - 2008



Please see *INSIDE with the Festival Nomad...* on page 5

FN: What would be your most important "Tip", to give to our readers who might be planning a large event themselves?

MC: *The best advice I can give is to have a "BACK-UP PLAN"! The best laid plans can go awry. For example ...one of the reindeer might catch a cold, our communications system might "crash", my ovens could quit before the baking is done. That is why we take the time to have such a comprehensive "Master Plan" from the beginning. We are prepared for most unforeseen eventualities. We re-print the copies for Santa's routes (and alternate routes), we bring extra batteries for our communications, we bring extra warm clothing (in case Santa gets dirty climbing down a chimney), and even some extra "munchies" for the reindeer (in case they get hungry while Santa is in eating cookies and warm milk).*

FN: I asked Santa this question last year, but I wanted to know from you ... after the Big Event, what do you, Mr. Claus and the Elves do to "wrap-up" Christmas?

MC: *My first priority after the Big Event is to re-group with Mr. Claus and the Elves, to go over our "Master Plan". We like to see what went well, and perhaps what did not go well, take notes. These notes begin the process of creating next year's "Master Plan", hopefully new and improved! After all, we want folks to keep enjoying this Big Event. I would also like to say that I take great comfort in being "home"! Safe and sound with all the people I know and love. I wish you, Festival Nomad, and your family and all of your Festival and Event Friends, a safe, healthy and happy Holiday Season!*



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"Fun on the Hill"
 Ajax Winterfest - 2008



"Festival of Trees"
 Peterborough - 2007



"Standing with St. Nick"
 Christmas By Candlelight - 2007
 Lang Pioneer Village (Keene)