



# Festival Notes

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Let the Celebrations Begin!
- 1 Festival Nomad's Report...
- 2 INSIDE with the *Festival Nomad*...
- 3 Jazz and Blues in the Village...
- 4 Festival Ideas – *One or Two?*
- 4 Festival Tips – *Common Sense*..

## Let the Celebrations Begin!

By Gary McWilliams, *the Festival Nomad*

Beginning September 1st, 2010, there's an exciting new addition to the *Ontario Festivals Visited* website! It's our new *War of 1812 Celebrations* sub-domain! This new section contains a number of informative components and is a tribute to the War of 1812, its 200th Anniversary Celebrations and to the thousands of men and women who will and are organizing these Celebrations! Even though the Celebrations don't officially start until 2012, hundred's of hours have already been spent planning the *War of 1812 Bicentennial Celebrations*. Over the next several years (until at least 2015), we plan on bringing you, *the latest War of 1812 celebration news* - "*Celebrations Headline News*", *articles about War of 1812 events we have visited, now and in the future* - "*Celebrations Events Visited*", *weekly articles about the War of 1812, past, present and future* - "*Celebrations Notes*", *a quarterly newsletter with articles about War of 1812 events, news, organizers and participants* - "*Celebrations Newsletter*" and *an events calendar listing upcoming events with links to each event's website* - "*Celebrations Events Calendar*". There will also be an "*Celebrations Event Search Engine*" available later this year.

We hope that all "*War of 1812 enthusiasts*" will enjoy our new "*addition*" and will participate in it by submitting ideas, photos and articles to us. Judi and I look forward to the War of 1812 (*Celebrations*) beginning, see you there!

## Festival Nomad's Report...

*This report has been written to inform you of past and future Festival Nomad activities.*

AUGUST was another very busy month! July ended with two visits in one day. On July 31st Judi and I visited Port Hope's *Estival* in the morning and then drove to Aurora for the *Aurora jazz+ Festival*. The next day, August 1st, we traveled north of Peterborough to the *Coe Hill Wild West Weekend*. Our niece, Catherine, was exhibiting her line of vintage costumes at this event. The next weekend was an "*off*" weekend for us, but not for festival Nomad Correspondent, *Jim Hill*. Jim participated in and wrote about the *Siege of Fort Erie*.

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



"Website Banner Ad"  
War of 1812 Celebrations

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

We were very sorry to miss this event, but a "bug" sidelined me for the entire weekend (*plus a few days before and after!*). On the same day that Jim Hill was reporting about the Siege of Fort Erie, veteran festival goers and now, Festival Nomad Correspondents, *Connie and Tom McAleese*, were visiting the *Taste of the Danforth*. Their article and photos are now available to read on the *Ontario Festivals Visited* website. On the weekend of August 14th, Judi volunteered to help at the *Lang Pioneer Village's Fur Trade Re-enactment*. I traveled north to Lang on Saturday with our nephew, Zack to re-visit this event and to show Zack around the Village. Judi wrote an article about the event from the perspective of a volunteer. On August 21st, Judi and I split our efforts. Judi visited the *Fortune Cooking Food Festival* held at the *Harbourfront Centre* in Toronto, while I traveled northwest to Collingwood and the Village at Blue Mountain to visit the *Peak to Shore Music and ArtFest*. Both events proved to be very entertaining. Articles about each of these events can now be found on the *Ontario Festivals Visited* website.

SEPTEMBER herald's the end of summer events and the beginning of fall events. Here's a look at events that we are considering for ourselves and our Festival Nomad Correspondents:

September 3 - IlluminAqua (Welland)

September 4 - Kinmount Fair

September 5 - Pioneer Corn Roast (Lang Pioneer Village)

September 11 - Trenton Scottish Irish Festival

September 18 - Nine Mile Portage Heritage Festival (Barrie)

September 18 - Jazz and Blues in the Village (Sarnia)

September 25 - Wellesley Apple Butter & Cheese Fest

September 25 - Doors Open Brant

## INSIDE with the *Festival Nomad*...

Over the years I have attended, worked with and organized hundreds of festivals and events. With this new series, "*INSIDE* with the *Festival Nomad*", I want to give you an "*inside*" look at some of the festivals and events that I have been involved with or that I have visited. Along the way, I have had a lot of fun and sometimes frustration, but I have never been bored!

### *Organizing My First Event*

I was in my early 20's and I had never been involved in any kind of an event, let alone organized one! But that is what I was asked to do.

Please see *INSIDE with the Festival Nomad...* on page 3



"George and Sher St. Kitts"  
Aurora jazz+ Festival Organizers



"Bank Robbery Get Away!"  
Coe Hill Wild West Weekend



"Lots of People on the Street"  
Taste of the Danforth



*"Voyageur Canoe!"*  
Fur Trade Re-enactment  
Lang Pioneer Village



*"The REALLY BIG Chef!"*  
Fortune Cooking Food Festival  
Harbourfront Centre



*"Art Demonstration - Norma Lee"*  
Peak to Shore Music and ArtFest

*INSIDE with the Festival Nomad... from page 2*

I was a fairly new member of the *Young Men's Advertising Club of Toronto*, when the President called me and asked *ME* to do him a favour! How could I refuse! He was *OUR* President, after all! So here I was, the new chairman of the *YMASC Car Rally* and I was "*panicking*"! Fortunately I was able to "*recruit*" a couple of "*green*" (*that's inexperienced, not earth conscious!*) to join my committee. Together we worked with the previous committee's notes (*very complete*), and started planning our event. I think the most fun was choosing the "*rally*" route! The three of us climbed into my car and we started off. Never having planned a route before, we didn't have any pre-conceived restrictions. We knew our start and our destination, so we just drove! As we twisted and turned my fellow "*newbie's*", wrote down directions, turns and landmarks! We also searched for items (*unusual trees, interesting buildings and funny signs*) for rally participants to identify along the way. The idea was for them to "*find*" these items to earn additional points. Back then, being ambitious young men, we were able to obtain some really great prizes. So, doing well in the Car, Rally was a priority amongst rally participants!

Those were great days! I can't tell you how much fun we had in the planning and then the execution of the event, but it was a lot! The dinner parties, the laughter and the "*secrecy*" all added to our excitement. Even though we were very inexperienced, everyone at the rally enjoyed themselves and, we, the organizers, thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. We were the hit of the club, at least for the moment. This event, more than any other, sent me on the road for a life-long *fascinate* with festivals and events!

## Jazz and Blues in the Village...

Each year (*this is their 7th annual!*) the Sarnia Organ Donor's Awareness Group stage *Jazz & Blues in the Village*. "*The proceeds raised from this event are used to assist transplant patients and their families and to assist in research and education on organ donation and transplantation.*" The festival, located in *Sarnia's McGibbon Park*, offer festival visitors great "*jazz and blues*" in the park! The festival runs for two days, Friday, September 17th and Saturday, September 18th, and features performances by *Old Bald Tire* and *Julian Fauth* on Friday night and *Dominant Seven Jazz*, *Dave Bennett's "Tribute to Benny Goodman"* and *Dave Reddoch & the Johnny Bond Quartet* on Saturday afternoon. On Saturday night it's *Lit'I CHICAGO* and the *David Rotundo Band*. The music is topped off, in the park, with great food and a fabulous wine bar! So, "*come and enjoy a glass of wine, a bite to eat... and all that jazz!*"

## Festival Ideas...

### One or Two?

Over the years Judi and I have visited over 150 festival and events. Most of these events have taken place on weekends and most ran more than one day. We've visited events on both Saturdays and Sundays. Invariably we find that there is more to do on Saturdays than on Sundays. Saturday events tend to be better attended, even on long weekends. So, why the difference? One reason is that many people attend church Sunday mornings, so long drives to festivals are prohibitive. Also, people normally don't like to drive in homeward bound holiday traffic. I think that a less obvious reason is that festival organizers put more emphasis on Saturday, offer more interesting things to do (*parades, named performers, better activities, etc.*). They seem to leave the more mundane activities to Sundays. Organizers seem to feel that they must offer two day (*plus*) events. I think that this can quite often be a mistake. It generally cost more to hold (*dollars and manpower*) a two day event than a one day event. A "*bad Sunday event*" can leave visitors with negative feelings towards the event. These negative feelings are then transmitted to family and friends! Not a good thing for annual events. I believe that a better strategy is to hold an "*awesome*" one day event. To concentrate on making the event one to "*remember*", "*to be talked about*"! The wear and tear on volunteers, both planning and operational, will be much less! Yes, there are definitely some negatives about one day events. They include vendor resistance, inclement weather and perhaps, less revenue. This can be minimized with thoughtful and careful planning. However, if the organizers look at the benefits versus the negative effects, I believe that they might come to the conclusion that a one day event is the way to go. "*One day events*" should be at least considered. If the ultimate conclusion by organizers is to hold a two day event, organizers should make sure that **BOTH** days offer visitors quality entertainment and value!

## Festival Tips

By Judi McWilliams

### Common Sense...

One of the most difficult decisions, when the *Festival Nomad* and I venture out to visit the wonderful festivals and events in Ontario, is leaving our "*baby*" behind. Our "*baby*" is none other than a beautiful *English Springer Spaniel Field dog "Dusty"*. She loves to travel in the car and just jumps in at every chance. So, taking her in the car is no problem. The challenges of bringing Dusty (*or any Pet*) to a festival or event are many. A lot of festivals and events prohibit pets on their grounds or premises. Leaving a Pet in a hot car (*especially in the summer months*) for any length of time, is definitely a **NO!** It just doesn't seem right, either, to bring a Pet to extremely crowded venue (*we must look like giants to our Pets*). Also, not every person is comfortable with Pets and may be afraid of them. I am shocked and astonished, at outdoor events, when people sit in the shade themselves and leave their Pets exposed to the sun's hot rays. I too often see people drinking water but not giving their Pet any. Common sense might say "*if you are thirsty, your Pet is thirsty*"; "*if you are hot, your Pet is hot*" and "*if you need a toilet break, your Pet may need a toilet break*" (*not to mention that even pooping & scooping may leave residue on the pathways and walkways*). Some festivals and events are aware that some folks just can't part with their beloved. These festivals and events gratefully provide cold water in bowls for visiting Pets. One outdoor festival we visited recently was attended by a smaller crowd. There were plenty of shady spots that could be used to sit for periods of time. People with Pets could sit with them and comfortably enjoy the entertainment. Folks at the event had all kinds of unique water bowls, water dispensers, and buggies to carry their Pets. They even had chairs for the Pets and more! People really took the time to give number one care to their Pets. Unfortunately this is the exception rather than the norm. All in all, I feel that Pets are best left at home in the cool and comfort of their normal environment. When we have leave for longer periods, we have family and friends "*pop*" in on our Dusty. This leaves us with knowledge that she is well cared for. My "*festival tip*" to you ... be sure of the festivals and events policies before you venture out and, most of all, please use "*Common Sense*"!

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