

War of 1812 Celebrations



War of 1812 Celebrations Newsletter

Spring 2011
Volume 2 Issue 1

Published by
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Judi McWilliams
Editor

As Time Marches On...

By Judi McWilliams

As time marches on, I am excited to report that I have been busy interviewing interesting folks for our *War of 1812 Celebrations* website and for this newsletter. Many people are interested in sharing their stories and news! I am still putting the call out there for others who still wish to participate! Our website is dedicated to promoting Ontario's *War of 1812 Bicentennial Celebrations*. The website, which forms part of the *Ontario Visited Group of Websites*, has been designed to further *War of 1812* memories and to honour the men and women who are now organizing and participating in the bicentennial celebrations. Our website contains comprehensive segments including *Headline News*, *Celebrations Articles*, *Events Visited*, *Celebrations Newsletter* and a *Celebrations Events Calendar*. You can view this site at <http://war1812celebrations.ontariofestivalsvisited.ca/> .

Please see *As Time Marches On...* on page 2

Battle of Longwoods...

by Anne Brooks



Anne Brooks
Festival Nomad Correspondent

Many events already have taken place this year in the form of celebrations and remembrances. These in appreciation and respect for the many that severed for Canadians during the *War of 1812*. One of our *Festival Correspondents*, Anne Brooks, just happens to be the *1812 Bicentennial Event Coordinator and Communication Officer* for the *Upper Thames Military Reenactment Society*. She is currently working on the planning, development and organization of local events related to Canada's upcoming *1812 Bicentennial celebrations*. In this Spring Newsletter, I thought that it would be fun to re-visit Anne's visit to the 21st annual ***Battle of Longwoods Re-Enactment*** near London, Ontario, held the first weekend each May. (Last year Anne attended on Saturday May 1st). Her excitement might just spur you to get out there and attend this year's ***Battle of Longwoods*** at the *Longwoods Road Conservation Area*.

Please see *Battle of Longwoods Report* on page 2

As Time Marches On from page 1

We want to offer visitors to the website the most comprehensive and up-to-date information possible. You can be part of the "*Celebrations*" by providing -

- Information about the events taking place in your area, this year and celebration years
- Stories about re-enactors and re-enactments in your area
- War of 1812 area news releases
- Contact information about re-enactment leaders and re-enactors in your area (for interview/article opportunities)
- An opportunity to interview you as a *War of 1812* enthusiast
- Any other information you wish to submit

Finally, we are pleased to present this season's newsletter, we hope that you enjoy it!

Battle of Longwoods from page 1

You can experience history being brought to life! As quoted by the Society ... you can "*step back in time to March 4, 1814, as British troops attempt to expel American invaders. Hear the crack of the musket and the roar of the cannon. Come and experience life in the early 19th century. See the colourful clothing, smell the food prepared over open fires, and let us entertain your family for the day*".

Anne Brooks article is written from last years event and I hope that it inspires you:

The Battle of Longwoods is the first War of 1812 re-enactment event of the season. It takes place the first weekend in May with over 300 re-enactors and merchants in attendance. Re-enactments are great events to attend because of the high level of knowledge that participants have and the importance of marking these significant historical events. These people are passionate about their hobby and it shows when they respond enthusiastically to the many questions about the history of the war, camp life, and their kit (costume).

Re-enactors are always approachable and eager to share with spectators. Each re-enactment is unique. Longwoods is an excellent site for the re-enactors to battle on, with lots of trees for soldiers to hide behind and many areas in which cannons be seen.

Please see *Battle of Longwoods...* on page 3



"Student Re-enactors"
Chris Robin's Recruits



"Red Coats, Aim & Fire"
Battle of Longwoods



"Return Fire"
Battle of Longwoods



"Negotiations"
Battle of Longwoods



"Preparing to Pass the Ten Foot Rule"
Chris Robin's Recruits



"Student Uniform"
Chris Robin's Recruits

Battle of Longwoods from page 2

Also at this year's re-enactment was a Native War Council which added to the authenticity of the day and showed what a vital role was played by the native peoples of the time during the many battles of the War of 1812.

If you have a chance to attend a re-enactment whether it is the Battle of Longwoods or the Siege of Fort Erie make sure you take advantage of that opportunity. They are events that are full of activity, excitement and a wealth of knowledge for those involved. Check one out this season and remember to ask lots of questions of the re-enactors who work so hard to bring the history of our country to life.

Chris and the Ten Foot Rule...

I have been busy interviewing interesting folks for our **War of 1812 Celebrations** website. Many people are interested in participating with their stories and I recently had the opportunity to speak an extraordinary individual, Mr. Chris Robins, History/Geography Teacher at our local West High School in Cobourg, Ontario. Chris just happens to be a *Professional Re-enactor!* Recently, I wrote about my interview with my nephew Zackery Caron, a student at the West high school. Mr. Robins happens to be one of Zack's teachers and mentors Zack and his fellow students in the "life of re-enacting". He tells me that there are two types of re-enactors that he spends time with. The students are one type and the other type is his summertime regiment, that Chris calls the "real re-enactors". Chris seems to always have a gleam in his eyes and a smile on his face, which made me laugh when he told me the difference between *student re-enactors* and "*real re-enactors*" are the people with "gun powder"! Speaking of "authenticity", I asked Mr. Robins if he knew about "*the ten foot rule*". He hadn't heard of it, so I wanted to share with you now an excerpt from my article written about just that ... **Do You Pass the Ten Foot Rule?** So here it is for you to enjoy ...

Please see *Chris and the Ten Foot Rule...* on page 4

Chris and the Ten Foot Rule from page 3

Do You Pass the Ten Foot Rule?

*Beyond the actual re-enacting, I became aware of just how important being true to the **Period Clothing** was. Period Clothing now means, to us modern folk, that something is "old fashioned, junkie or, just outdated"! Ask someone ... "where'd you get that outfit ... back in the 70's?" and see what they say! Even the popular T.V. show "What Not To Wear" challenges people on "out-dated" clothing. However, Period Clothing to a re-enactor is clothing belonging to a very specific historical period and it needs to be is Period Correct in its accuracy! Apparently the "educated spectator" can be quite "judgmental"! There are even terms used to demonstrate just how serious these "judgments" can be. The funniest term I found was "**the ten foot rule**". This is a measurement from ten feet away. If it looks period from that distance, you just might pass! Who knows, from afar, if it's "leather or vinyl", has "too many threads per inch in the weave" or is "hand-made or factory made in Taiwan"? Apparently these "judgmental" spectators have disparaging remarks and names given to them from the re-enactors. Names such as "thread counters" and "garb snarks". It's a nasty game that I choose to stay out of! For us, we choose to enjoy all the extreme efforts put forth by the re-enactors and take pleasure being "transformed in time"!*

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"The Red Coats are Coming!"
Chris Robin's Recruits



"Keeping in Step"
Chris Robin's Recruits



"Keeping It FUN!"
Chris Robin's Recruits