

Time is perfect to establish a King Township fall festival

Mark Pavilons



As the door to the Kettleby Fair closes after almost four decades, the barn doors have swung wide open for new opportunities. This small but mighty fair fit the bill as a genuine, small town country fair. Unfortunately two consecutive wash-outs effectively killed the event and took the steam out of the team of volunteers.

So, as we bid adieu to this country festival, it leaves it wide open for a replacement.

Kettleby Fair was a September event, but that doesn't mean we can't move the dates around. We don't want to conflict with any other major local event.

With the lack of an eastern King agricultural society, we'd have to look elsewhere for an event organizer. Since it would be a fall event, it wouldn't detract from the highly successful Schomberg Spring Fair, held in May.

King City has its festival in June and given the success of this year's event, its longevity is guaranteed.

Councillor Cleve Mortelliti, in doing the groundwork for the King City Festival, had initially considered a King Oktoberfest. That's a fine idea. Who doesn't enjoy some schnitzel, sauerkraut and lederhosen? Why not celebrate with the current FIFA World Cup champions?

If it's felt a more all encompassing ethnic event is more suitable, it could take the form of a multicultural celebration, marking our European roots. Sharing with cultures from around the globe is a great idea. Breaking bread, sharing everything from meals to music, helps bring us all together.

Befitting our name, why not hold festivals fit for 'Kings'? I'm thinking of two in particular - The King (Elvis) and the King of Pop (Michael Jackson). With a lineup of local bands and tribute artists, this would really bring out the crowds. The Collingwood Elvis Festival, the biggest in the world, is a testament to the success of this sort of thing. And surprisingly, the bulk of top-notch Elvis Tribute Artists hail from southern Ontario, so attracting the talent is easy.

We could try some sort of equestrian festival, highlighting all aspects of this industry. There are more than enough farms and local experts to make this a successful extravaganza. Given the 2015 Pan Am Games, showcasing our equestrian talent simply makes sense.

We have water! Both the canals in the Marsh and the fine facility at Spray Lake can host a multitude of water-based events, from riverboat cruises to dragon boat races. Anyone up for a water polo tournament? How about a casino fundraiser and some lively jazz on moonlit cruise?

We also have Cold Creek Conservation Area, a beautiful spot on the western border. This place could play host to virtually anything, from a 'Kingstock' and hot air balloon races to a running of the bulls!

On another note, we will be hosting the Pan Am Games in 2015, with venues in Toronto and across the GTA, including the Caledon Equestrian Park in nearby Palgrave.

With world-class athletes, visitors and media exposure flocking to our neck of the woods, it would be the perfect time to capitalize on it. The Township is already working with Headwaters Horse Country, but that doesn't prevent us from putting on a party of our own.

There is plenty of time to organize some sort of festival or even VIP reception in King for equestrians, water skiers, etc. Time to put the thinking caps on and explore some ideas for next July. We have the talent and volunteer might, so I have full confidence in our residents.

King is no longer the country cousins of its urban GTA?neighbours. We're in the game, big time and we have a lot to offer. King Township, over the past couple of years, has come up with many plans, strategies and directives to promote our municipality and make it better and stronger.

Armed with things like the Sustainability Plan, Parks and Rec Master Plan, Museum and tourism strategies, we've charted a progressive course into the future.

And this future, as recognized by our current movers and shakers, is about leveraging opportunities and partnerships. It's really that simple.

See an opportunity, seize it, jump on board and find a way to make it benefit all involved. It's about give and take. If the benefits outweigh the costs, it's often a no-brainer.

So, we have plenty of opportunities to spruce things up around King. Fortunately, the gears are turning and the wheels are in motion. The key is to keep 'em rolling along, avoiding speed bumps along the way.

So, with some like-minded citizens, volunteers and businesses, we can bring King together this fall for a new community festival, no matter what form it takes. From baking the best apple pie in the world to overindulging on bratwurst, the game is on.

Grab your stilts, put on your Elvis jump suit, hone your juggling skills and let's get at it!

Any ideas?