

NORTHERN LIFE

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MARG SEREGELY

VALLY LAFLAMME is the chair of the 2004 festival. She enjoys a piece of blueberry pizza with friend Blueberry Bear. The festival turns 18 this month.

Blueberry Festival organizers promise tasteful party

Fun starts July 11

BY SCOTT HUNTER HADDOW
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For the last 18 years, the Sudbury Blueberry Festival has paid homage to the round, blue fruit jewel of the north.

Along with the 18 years of celebrations, countless numbers of people from all walks of life have enjoyed the growth of the festival from a weekend event to a smorgasbord of events, activities and food spread out over a two-week period.

John Lindsay, Sudbury Blueberry Festival vice-chair, has been involved with the annual festival for about 15 years. He is pleased with its evolution from a good idea to a sprawling, community-wide extravaganza.

"There's a lot more community involvement now compared to the first few years," said Lindsay. "When we went to a two-week event, it gave the festival a big boost."

This year's festival will mark the third anniversary of the two-week schedule.

"It gives people more of a chance to take in all the activities," said Lindsay. "We have increased the number of participants from the community this year by about 20 to 25 per cent. It's great to see such tremendous support."

The key to the successful growth was support from local groups and businesses.

"As soon as we started getting more groups involved locally, it really began to grow. If people see other people getting on board, then they want to get involved as well."

The festival attracts its share of tourists.

"That old saying, if you build it, they will come has worked," said Lindsay. "People are coming from all over. We talked to people at the farmers' market event last year, and a significant number of them were from out of town. Even with local people going away to camps in the summer, we get people from out of town to fill in."

The year's festival runs from Sunday, July 11 till Sunday, July 25. There will be no shortage of things to do and treats to eat. [See related story on the museum and garden tour on Page 8].

"People can expect a lot of fun with good food and good times and friendship that you can only get in the north," said Vally Laflamme, 2004 festival chair. "I feel a lot of energy surrounding this year's festival and it's something for the whole community to look forward to. We hope it continues to grow in the direction of increasing tourism and economic development."

The opening ceremonies take place at Blueberry Hill in Minnow Lake, Monday, July 12. Blueberry Blast family day will take place Friday, July 16 in Memorial Park, downtown Sudbury. Activities move to Market Square Saturday, July 17.

Look for a full event schedule in Friday's issue of Northern Life.

For more information about the festival, phone the Older Adult Centre at 673-6227.

News we love to hate

Highway improvements means delays for drivers

BY CRAIG GILBERT
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The Ontario government has released more details about how it will spend \$256 million on Northern Ontario highways. The money was announced in the May budget.

The work to begin this month stretches from resurfacing projects as far north as Highway 11 west of Hearst to bridge replacements and four-lanings south of Parry Sound.

Minister of Northern Development and Mines Rick Bartolucci says the infrastructure investments will help

encourage economic growth and make the province's roads safer.

Closest to home, the Ministry of Transportation will be reconstructing 12.1 kilometres of Highway 17 between Regional Road 55 and Sudbury, as well as resurfacing 39 kilometres of that highway from the east junction of RR 55 to Hagar.

Five changeable message signs will be installed on Highway 69 between Sudbury and Highway 141.

The tenders for the latter two projects, respectively, will be awarded shortly and the work is expected to be completed by fall 2005.

Resurfacing of the Highway 17 southwest bypass, which is near completion, should be wrapped up this summer.

Sudbury-based Terranorth Construction and Engineering Ltd. has been awarded the \$4.95 million contract to construct a new interchange at Muskoka Roads 32 and 38 at Highway 69. That project starts this month and is expected to be finished next summer.

The ministry also listed several projects under the federal-provincial Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program (SHIP) expected to get underway this year. They include the four-laning of a total 16.5 kilometres of Highway 69 in four places: from the Seguin River Bridge north to Nobel, between Muskoka Rd. and MacTier, the previously announced construction of a four-lane section immediately south of Sudbury and new overpass structure at Old Wanup Road.

Gardeners invited on special tour

A very special Sunday is planned in Valley East and Capreol. Supporters of the Colours of Summer Garden Tour, the Northern Ontario Railroad Museum and the Arthritis Society, Sudbury Chapter, have combined their efforts for a self-guided garden tour July 11.

Gardening enthusiasts are invited to visit four gardens in Valley East, and three in Capreol from 10:30 am to 3:30 pm. One of these gardens was a finalist in the Communities in Bloom contest.

The tour will be the kick-off event for the Sudbury Blueberry Festival.

Several gardens will have members of the Valley East Arthritis Support Group or The Arthritis Society staff available to answer questions, hand out information, or demonstrate assistance devices that can help arthritis sufferers continue to enjoy gardening.

The event is a joint fundraiser for the Northern Ontario Railroad Museum and The Arthritis Society.

As usual, beverages and blueberry desserts will be available in the museum's Old World Tea Room for \$3. Visitors are invited to tour the heritage gardens and the museum.

Passport tickets are \$10 and include a self-guided tour and free draws for several lovely prizes. Passport tickets are available at the following locations in Sudbury: The Arthritis Society office; Adam and Eve Garden Centre; and Village International on Durham Street. In Valley East, tickets are available at Holla's Produce and Greenhouses; Val Caron Pro Hardware; Pet Palace; and Valley Shrubs and Trees. Tickets are also available at the Pro Hardware and The Northern Ontario Railroad Museum in Capreol.

For more information or for tickets, phone 858-5050 or 858-3859.