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16 Centre Street, Essex, ON N8M 1N9
Tel.: (519) 776-4268 Fax: (519) 776-4014
Email: essexfreepress@on.aibn.com
Website: <http://essexfreepress.reinvented.net>
Publisher: Laurie A. Brett



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The excitement in Morley Bowman's voice Monday morning came as a bit of a surprise. After four exhausting days at the Fun Fest and innumerable days and months of preparation leading up to the event, one could easily forgive the longtime Fun Fest organizer if he admitted to a touch of weariness.

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But such was not the case. Bowman was happy to report that the Fun Fest was an unqualified success despite

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editorial

laurie brett

Sunday night's disappointing news that the fireworks will have to wait a week. He was happy to report that the mechanical bull ride raised just under \$900 for the arena project and that the weekend came together with only a few minor difficulties.

Would the response be the same if we spoke to each member of the Fun Fest organizing committee the day after the event? Probably not. Chances are that a few of them are starting to get a bit weary of the tremendous responsibility that accompanies planning and executing one of Ontario's Top 50 festivals. Chances are some of them would love the opportunity to groom a worthy successor – or, better yet, a group of successors – to carry on the important work that needs to be done next year.

Sharing the burden helps everyone to avoid exhaustion. More hands make light work. Judging from the number of Fun Fest volunteers visible throughout the weekend, there is certainly no shortage of available volunteer help when it comes to the Fun Fest. Selfless, good citizens abound in this community. What we need is people who are willing to take on leadership roles as they become available and that's a much larger challenge.

All of our local organizers deserve a big round of applause for making the 2006 Fun Fest a tremendous success. It is truly amazing that a small band of committed individuals can deliver a festival of such high calibre. Congratulations on a job well done!



FIREWORKS WE COULD HAVE DONE WITHOUT THIS WEEK.



The family outing to Boblo Island was a rite of passage each summer for most of us. You could never get away with not taking the kids to the island amusement park. And it was oh so convenient. Just a half hour ride to the dock at Amherstburg and presto, you were on the island playground.

Boblo was home to such events as the Chrysler picnic and family reunions. For our parents, there were memories of the big bands playing at the Albert Kahn-designed dance pavilion that still stands. But for us, Boblo was about the rides, the food, and the jobs! That's right! Many a college student paid their tuition working on the island.

The Boblo Excursion Company first developed the island as a tourist destination in 1898. Before that it was privately owned. The lighthouse, which still stands, was once owned by James Hackett, the light-house keeper.

The Browning brothers purchased the island in 1949 and operated it for 30 years with mixed results. I was involved in their advertising through local ad agencies run by Stephen Callas and Arthur Leadley. One learned not to go near

the Boblo office in Detroit on Monday if it had rained all weekend. Remember, the year's revenues had to be earned between Victoria Day and Labour Day.

The rides were the unforgettable part of the Boblo experience. Island visitors loved the Corkscrew, the Wild Mouse and the Octopus. Who will ever for-



BILL GAY
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get watching their kid's first ride on the historic merry-go-round? The unforgettable figures were made famous by carousel maker Mangels Illions. The last owner of the park sold the carousel for a pittance (\$34,000), as they did everything else that wasn't nailed down. At the time, it gave many the feeling you would have seeing the furniture in your favourite aunt's home put in a yard sale.

After a day on Boblo Island, it was back on the

boat to Amherstburg and the ride home, already looking forward to the next visit. That's why it was so sad when the park, after several changes of ownership, closed as an amusement park, to be developed as a haven for the rich and the very rich.

I recall new owner John Oram coming to Essex Town Council with Malden Mayor Carl Gibb with a superbly detailed model of what the new Bob-lo would look like. (Bob-lo is a Canadian island and was part of Malden Township.) Those dreams never fully materialized and floundered in a sea of financial woes.

When Bob-lo, the amusement park, closed on Labour Day 1991, it left more than a little bit of sadness for the thousands of Essex County residents who grew up with her. But Boblo is still there to enjoy from afar from a bench in the Navy Yard Park in Amherstburg. If you listen hard you can still hear the Boblo we knew as kids.

"Boblo: Remember When You Were A Kid?" is the newest exhibit at Windsor's Community Museum. The exhibit continues until December 23. For information, call 519-253-1812.



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