

Celebrate the discovery of Canada

Nine-day festival includes roving musicians, historical figures, food and more

Members from the Markham Italian-Association and Friends of Newfoundland Association invite you to a nine-day street festival to celebrate the 500th anniversary of John Cabot's discovery of Canada.

Entitled Caboto Trail: A Voyage of Discovery, the festival will see Main Street Unionville come alive with music, dancing and food from June 13-21.

Held in conjunction with the Toronto International Festival Caravan, it will be the first time in Caravan's history that an entire street will become a pavilion, said John Hawco, founder of Friends Of Newfoundland Association and the co-chair of Caboto Trail in Unionville.

Main Street Unionville will be transformed into Italian and Newfoundland themes.

Roving musicians will perform to people on the streets and in the restaurants, which will be serving food from the two places. Famous people from both cultures - including Sir John A. Macdonald who will be giving unity speeches - will talk to people passing by.

The street will also be decorated with fish nets, lobster traps and 10 murals depicting scenes from the two places. A Venetian Courtyard and the Bonavista lighthouse will also be set up on the street.

After months of travel, Newfoundland was a happy site

Bonavista (Buona vista in Italian) is where Cabot is said to have landed in Newfoundland in 1497. After travelling for many months, it is said Cabot proclaimed Buona vista, which is Italian for happy site, said Hawco.



The Friends Of Newfoundland Association (above) and The Markham-Italian Association are involved in Unionville's Caboto Trail: A Voyage of Discovery, June 13-21.

The famous Newfoundland Bonavista lighthouse will be set up in the gazebo in front of the Living Water Restaurant. The lighthouse is where the majority of Newfoundland events, including fish jigging for kids, will be taking place. Symbols of the Newfoundland culture including Newfoundland dogs, the dory and some of the murals will be positioned there.

The Venetian Courtyard, which will be set up in Mariani's Courtyard, will be the centre of Italian activities including the contests and music.

While touring around Main Street and

learning about both cultures from the mayors of the Unionville pavilion - Flavio and Rocco Searano from Markham-Italian Association and princess Vanessa Nero - people can participate in contests like pizza making, spaghetti eating (no hands) and a grape stompers mash.

Once-in-a-lifetime event is about a bond forged 500-years ago

To participate in the once-in-a-lifetime event, people must buy a \$20 passport that gets them into the Main Street festivities, the opening dance at Crosby Arena and the closing Maudi Gras-style dance with Newfoundland's traditional Mummies.

The passport also gets them into the 35 pavilions at the Toronto International Festival Caravan. A one-day passport costs \$10.

Passports can be purchased for the event at participating Main Street businesses or the Markham and Unionville CIBC branches.

"It's really about a bond forged 500 years ago. No matter what our roots are, we are all Canadian," said Hawco.

People can visit the festival from 6:30 pm to 11 pm on weekdays and from noon to 11 pm on weekends. Both dances start at 8 pm. People must have a passport to get into the dance.

For details visit the website at <http://CABOTOTRAIL.TorStar.Wave.Ca> or call 416-410-7148

Events:

- June 14 at 7 pm, the Come By Chance Accordion Band will be playing at the Old Country Inn.
- June 15 the Minturnese Italian Folklore Dance Group will be performing at the Venetian Courtyard at 6 pm.



Vanessa Nero, 18

Princess able to answer any questions

The year is 1497. A young aristocratic woman in a crushed purple and red velvet floor-length dress with gold detailing and a gold headpiece curtsies to Giovanni Caboto - the man who discovered the new world.

Five hundred years later, Vanessa Nero, 18, puts on the traditional aristocratic Venetian headpiece.

"It's the Princess Lea look," said Nero of the gold headpiece that has extra material around the head and hangs half way down her back.

The University of Toronto student chose the dress to greet visitors to Unionville's Italian and Newfoundland pavilion during the Toronto International Festival Caravan June 13-21.

The traditional dress of Italy - an off-the shoulder, cream colored cloth dress wouldn't be something a woman would wear when greeting John Cabot, said Nero who was chosen to be the pavilion's princess for the festival.

Every pavilion at the festival chooses a princess who represents the culture. Nero was chosen because of her energetic and charismatic personality, said John Hawco, founder of Friends Of Newfoundland Association and co-chair of the Unionville pavilion.

And Nero has the advantage because of her Italian heritage and the ability to speak the language.

"I was able to fulfill both sides. The Newfoundland heritage, being the Canadian part, and the Italian part. I was very honored."

So honored, she immediately called her mother who dropped her own surprise - her mother was a princess for Caravan in 1971.

The princess must stay at her pavilion for the entire nine days. She must greet the guests as they come to the pavilion and answer any questions they might have.

Nero said she is prepared for most of the questions that might come her way.

"I have read up on John Cabot, I know the Italian heritage inside and out and I am pretty confident with the Newfoundland heritage."

articles by Lisa Cartwright



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