

**LETTERS
POLICY**

The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

Letters to the Editor,
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OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Animals deserved better

Re: Festival went berry well, gears up for 2011, July 17.

I am an avid participant in local community events and now that our family has grown with a young one, I look forward even more to attending as our child experiences them for the first time.

This year's Strawberry Festival again dampened my spirits due to the lack of care displayed in the petting zoo. The festival provided a dismal site where these poor animals were showcased.

I understand the need to expose kids and adults to our local animals and it is always nice to get up-close and personal with them, as many may not have the chance to do so otherwise. But we really need to provide better care for them.

There was a very small space that held multi-coloured bunnies – not sure why their fur had to be dyed blue, green and red. They had the bun-

nies passed back and forth by young kids under no supervision while we were there. Some were dropped and were not properly being handled.

Then there was the cage of rabbits that were so small and at perfect height for kids to poke their fingers in the rabbits' faces. I am not blaming the children, but perhaps they should not have been allowed to get so close.

The animals are timid to begin with and being stuck in a cage with no place to hide is beyond cruel.

Then there was the donkey that was caged in the smallest pen possible. Also, the poor lamb had no water or coverage in the pen.

All of these incidents were completely unnecessary.

As adults and farm animal owners, we really need to raise the bar on how these animals are taken care of during these events.

LAURA KAYE
STOUFFVILLE



Why not indulge in a little culture this summer?

How long has it been since you indulged in Shakespeare and sat in Stratford's revolving-stage Festival Theatre?

I confess the last time I attended a play at the Stratford Theatre was when I was in high school.

A longtime gal pal and I changed that this past holiday weekend when we soaked in the sights, sounds and pleasures of *The Tempest*, starring Christopher Plummer.

I'd read that this fine Canadian actor hates *The Sound of Music* albatross around his neck and, now 80, delights in roles that are vastly different from his Captain Von Trapp persona.

Well, I'm not theatre critic, but I'd say his performance of Prospero certainly did the trick for me.

The Tempest is a slow-moving, heavy play, but his thunderous dialogue and thoughtful soliloquies — delightfully countered by tiny, impish, acrobatic spirit Ariel played by Julyana Soelistyo — proved to be a magical matinee for several hundred spectators and dashed *The Sound of Music* on the rocks of the imagined island purgatory of Prospero and fair daughter Miranda.

Mr. Plummer earned a standing



Marney Beck

ovation that literally continued for several minutes. After the show, the lineup to "meet the star" and obtain a coveted autograph was the length of the theatre.

But it wasn't just the actual theatre experience — and the quick gulping down of a glass of wine at intermission — that made the Stratford experience enjoyable.

I'd forgotten how lovely Stratford and the Avon River parks are. It's truly an arts and culture experience from the Art in the Park artist displays to the performances on floating barges of local musicians.

We parked the car and wandered around, sat on a park bench with a coffee, then wandered some more for an

ice cream and fresh fruit concoction.

Everywhere families were enjoying picnics, watching the swans and ducks, chatting in the sunshine or lying on the shady grass.

Best of all, it was affordable at \$50 for a balcony ticket and an easy day trip from Richmond Hill.

I picked up my friend in Thornhill at 9:30 a.m. and we were in Stratford by 11:30. The return trip was just as easy and we were back in time to enjoy a late barbecue supper with my husband, who is not a theatre aficionado.

My husband does, however, enjoy jazz, and, closer to home we've been enjoying free jazz evenings at the Richmond Hill theatre's open-air plaza.

No driving to consider for this cultural experience, we just walked two blocks.

One Tuesday, the show was standing room only and theatre staff were kept busy bringing out more chairs for increasing number of patrons. The waiters were also kept busy, bringing wine and beer to thirsty music lovers.

As with the Stratford experience, the main stage offering is only part of the enjoyment.

There's usually someone I know within the spectators to catch up on news or share a brief chat. There are

the sounds of summer backdrop against the music, the traffic driving by, pedestrians talking, dogs barking, clouds moving and sun setting above — all part of the outdoor panoply of sounds and sights.

Lest you think the aforementioned was an elaborate advertisement for the Stratford Festival, I encourage all readers to embrace cultural experiences near and far this summer.

If you don't wish to go out of town to Stratford, the Shaw Festival or nearby McMichael Gallery in Kleinburg, remember every Tuesday and Wednesday night all summer there are outdoor concerts at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts.

Thursdays the free concerts move to the Mill Pond (next Thursday is the Good Brothers, how good is that) and some Sunday afternoons the venue is Richmond Green's outdoor stage.

In Stouffville, the Lebovic Centre for Entertainment — Nineteen on the Park hosts a summer series that will segue into its fall program. Markham's Jazz Festival is just around the corner.

Vaughan has been offering concerts in the park, and Newmarket's Resurgence Theatre Company presents *Hamlet* and *The Jungle Book*.