
Keeping it simple a good idea for new festival

Posted 20 hours ago

It's easy to root for an event as simple in concept as the Day of 1,000 Canoes.

It's even easier to call an event "simple" when you're not the one running it.

Certainly, pulling off an event of its size, especially in its first year, was no simple feat.

Launching more than 600 paddlers from some 300 canoes and kayaks into the Grand from the Caledonia Fairgrounds -never mind queuing them up for parking, unloading and registration -could have been a nightmare for everyone.

It's down to the sound planning and hard work of organizers and community volunteers that Haldimand's newest festival ran as smoothly as it did Saturday, and it's a big reason why so many participants have already marked the date for next year's event -June 23 -on their calendars.

But for all the complex juggling they did behind the scenes, organizers deserve credit for keeping things simple.

The event offered lots of fun extras, to be sure -the Tim Hortons "paddle through" may just be the greatest idea since the theory of relativity - but the focus of the event was charmingly straightforward: head out on the river, have some fun, try not to tip.

Festival co-founders Blaine Nicholls and Shane Carmichael have hit upon a winning idea with the Day of 1,000 Canoes, and they've also taken the right approach in planning for its future: they've decided to keep things simple by working out a few of the wrinkles from this year's event, and not to rush into expanding the festival.

As much as we're looking forward to seeing the event expand into Dunnville in the coming years, the decision to keep the Day of 1,000 Canoes a one-day event for 2012 is the right one.

Many an event has gotten off to a great start, only to lose its momentum with the push to grow things too quickly.

The better strategy is to focus on how good you can make an event, rather than on how big you can make it.

Do that, and the growth will take care of itself.

We congratulate everyone who worked behind the scenes to make this the first Day of 1,000 Canoes a success, and for all the paddlers who came out to support the event.

With the organizers' commitment to put quality before growth, we're confident the Day of 1,000 Canoes will be one of Haldimand's great, simple summertime pleasures for years to come.

Paul Baswick

Copyright © 2011 Dunnville Chronicle