

Fort Stewart Jamboree 2023 back for its 10th anniversary

By Mike Riley

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The Fort Stewart Jamboree is back to celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2023, after going on hiatus due to COVID-19 and its restrictions for the past few years. Featuring a full day of family fun and local music at the Carlow Community Centre on Aug. 12, it is organized by the Carlow Recreation Committee and all proceeds to toward the Carlow Community Centre maintenance. Admission is \$10 per person and children 10 years and under get in free. There is a \$50 camping fee. For more information on this exciting upcoming event, please contact Kim Stewart at stewartkds@hotmail.ca or Lois Hughey at loishughey6@gmail.com.

Stewart says they're glad to be back after the COVID-19 imposed hiatus interrupted their planned 10th anniversary celebration of the Fort Stewart Jamboree back in 2020. She says the recreation committee members are; Councillor Elson Ruddy, Councillor Pam Stewart, Hedy Patton, Colleen Hudson, Lois Hughey, Jack White, Marilyn White and of course herself. She says they have a subcommittee that joined them for organizing the Jamboree and they are; Peter and Cheryl Slater, Jeff and Jan Stewart, Marie Aide, Bob and Sharon Gorgerat and Scott Stewart.

?Over the past few years, our recreation committee for Carlow has lost some members of the team who were intricate in organizing the Jamboree. Audrey Hughey passed in 2021, Dale Hughey in 2022 and Dan Hughey and his wife Nicky moved to Cornwall in 2021. In 2022, we had new members join and we are here to provide our community with events that can be enjoyed by all,? she says.

Stewart reveals that preparing for the Jamboree takes some time, and their committee met with the subcommittee last September and they discussed the different duties that needed to be completed to run the event and decide who was doing what. They reconvened again in May to see if anyone area needed assistance and she said they'll meet again this month to put it all together.

?It is a team effort for sure and not just the organizers, but the volunteers who make it happen,? she says.

Stewart says that booking the musicians alone has to be done sometimes a year in advance to make sure they're available to play at the Jamboree. She says they're blessed with a lot of local talent so they don't have to go too far to find people.

?We have musicians playing from Carlow Mayo Township, Whitney, Hastings Highlands, Madawaska Valley and a couple just south of Bancroft. We do have the Breezeway and Millpond Music coming this year to run the second stage for the Jamboree. These people do an amazing job at promoting local talent and providing the best venues for summer Jamborees. They have a fabulous online presence and provide online country music videos and live music presentations, all close to home talent and all year round. We are honoured to have them joining us this year. They provide live music on the second stage while the bands are changing on the main stage. This allows the music to continue all day without breaks,? she says.

Rod Neiman is one of the performers at this year's Jamboree, and says that it's a great small town, family oriented, well-run event.

?[It's] run by people who care about family and their community. These kind folks are carrying on a rich family tradition in keeping live country music alive and well. The Hughey family and Stewart family are wonderful people and I can't thank them enough for giving my band Magnum Country the chance to play at the Fort Stewart Jamboree as the house band,? he says.

Neiman says that this is also allowing him to keep the tradition going with his son Kody Neiman, who'll be performing alongside of him with great musicians and friends Chester McCann (steel guitar), Mike McGrath (lead guitar), Dean Austin (bass guitar), and Percy Kinney (drums), who make up Magnum Country.

?The performers who we will be backing are also great musicians; Bart Lynch, Cori Coulas, and Kody Neiman. Sorry to ramble on, but I'm just so proud of everyone who has a hand in making this an event worth mentioning. We all love classic country music and are doing our very best to keep it alive and well,? he says.

Cori Coulas is another performer on Aug. 12 and wanted to send out a big thank you to the Fort Stewart Jamboree for the opportunity to perform this year.

?This is my first time performing and attending the Fort Stewart Jamboree. I am super excited to be sharing the stage with many great friends and sharing the wonderful power of music which can bring the community together,? he says.

For food and refreshments, Stewart says they have Alex and Karen Nagy from Back Alley BBQ catering service coming to supply them with custom onsite barbecue, and have an amazing menu set up for them.

Nagy says that he grew up and went to school in Bancroft, and that when he saw the event was looking for vendors, reached out to his contact on the Carlow Recreation Committee, Colleen Hudson.

?I've been running around the country for probably the past 15 years with a handful of smokers. I built them all myself and I work in the Peterborough area full-time but live in Havelock, and I've been going around on the side cooking on site for weddings and tournaments for a number of years now,? he says.

Nagy reveals that the menu at the Jamboree will feature items like smoked/fried bologna on a bun, jumbo hotdogs and potato chips, brisket/pulled pork on a bun, brisket/pulled pork sundaes, sausage on a bun/deep fried pickles, chicken fingers/fries and poutine, homemade baked beans, gravy and soft drinks and bottle water. For dinner, they'll offer either a 1/3 rack of ribs or a quarter chicken with baked beans, coleslaw, fries or mashed potatoes and gravy.

According to Stewart, the number of Jamboree attendees varies from year to year. She said it's a small community, one day Jamboree and she's often heard people refer to it as ?old home week,? as they get to visit with people they haven't seen in years.

?That is what it's all about. Bringing our community together to enjoy the music and have some laughs with neighbours and friends new and old! We have had new people move to the township over the past few years and this is a great event for them to come and get to know their community. The Jamboree has definitely grown over the years, but as for exact numbers, I would not be able to say,? she says.

Stewart tells Bancroft This Week that the Jamboree usually raises about \$10,000 for the Carlow Community Centre, allowing them to maintain it for the year without having to use the township's budget allocated for the centre. She says this includes heat, hydro, and small repairs to the building, and allows them to put on different events for the community for minimal to no charge.

?This has been the standard that our previous committee has set and our new committee hopes to maintain this same standard for the community,? she says. ?We live in a community with people that are so generous and giving and our events wouldn't be successful without all of them!?