little something. Flauna has been painted red and lit up with a flash light; Ted has been decked out with "dingle balls." This woman says she likes her companions because they’re just plain ugly.

One of the most attractive markers has two masks placed back-to-back, showing the sun and moon. The moon is a cornflower blue with a soft yellow stripe across the nose and eyes. The forehead is flecked with gold stars, and ribbons ripple in the wind. The music this close to the stage is very loud which makes it difficult to talk, but between sets a woman on the tarp explains that these were only two of a number of masks created by her family and friends. The youngest mask-maker is only three years old. Everyone designs their own, and when they go camping, all of the masks are grouped together to make a totem pole. Most masks are stored in one place, but those belonging to people who are especially attached to them stay in the creators’ homes.

There is no formal contest for the markers, but there is an informal one run by some Folk Festival volunteers. Last year, a couple who had been volunteering for six years won. Their classic folk marker was a pair of water buffalo sandals and a yellow flower. The sandals came from The Olive Branch, a non-profit gift store they founded together to support families in low-income countries. Each year, they use the same symbol so that friends that they only encounter at the Folk Festival can find them.

The main stage is truly festive. On one side of the field, people dance wildly. In the centre aisle, children impressively display their talents with devil sticks. At the back field, there are informal soccer and frisbee games, hacky sack circles, and children mud-fighting in the drainage ditch. Next year, I definitely have to remember to bring some toys. Before the last act, we roll up the sleeping bags and start heading for the parking lot to beat the rush. Tomorrow it starts all over again and we want to make it in time for the tarp run again. Maybe tomorrow I’ll find some of my old Katimavikers....

La Cuisine/Art:
Knowing My Place as a Volunteer at the Winnipeg Folk Festival

Danielle Carignan Svenne

I know my place as a volunteer at the WFF. The question is, do I want to be there? I feel more than somewhat awkward approaching this discussion in the first place. The WFF is a sacred cow in my life, not to be jostled, poked, or prodded—and certainly not to be butchered—by anyone, including me. I do want to perform “niceness” in this review, and to brush over problems that, for me, blemished this year’s festival. However, if I am going to be honest about what happened, I cannot ignore the events or the emotions. If I am going to publicly address what I felt and experienced, a dilemma faces me. I had problems, and I continue to struggle with the issues that arose. How can I provide the rosy view of the WFF that I want everyone to uphold, yet also face my reality that it was disappointing and frustrating? This review is an exploration of my profound level of ambivalence, as a long-serving, and now high-ranking, volunteer.

The WFF itself, like most festivals, is clearly marked as an area for playing—music, roles (the weekend hippie, the enthusiastic Ani DiFranco fan, among others), games (hacky sack, frisbee, and so on), and just general enjoyment. Between 27,000 and 30,000 people attend each year, to hear music, to visit with friends, and generally to have a good time. Creating and enabling this amount of enjoyment and entertainment requires 900 volunteers working over the course of the weekend. Granted, we get free admission, free meals, and invitations to the parties, but what is the place of work in this milieu of play? How much work is reasonable in exchange for “site access, two meals a day, and a good time? The position of volunteer is rather a strange one; worker, but not worker (because you are unpaid); audience, but not audience (because you’re often required to work just when you want to be relaxing); and so on. Most
volunteers take on this role because they enjoy the work, but
they also have the fun of attending the festival itself. But what
happens when—as was my experience this year—the work be-
comes an arduous, painful series of stresses, and you don’t
even get to attend concerts and workshops, or visit with
friends out front?

But let me give you some background first. My area at
the WFF is located backstage. Along with my husband
Alexander Carignan Svenne and our co-worker, Pat Chelack,
I run La Cuisine. We are responsible for feeding 1500 people
two meals a day for three days. Performers, volunteers, staff,
and kin get food.8 The La Cuisine area occupies two tents
and two large industrial (ATCO) trailers. The main tent is very
large. It is our main prep area; 20 banquet tables are set up on
which we cook and do the service. Under the large tent, there
are supposed to be enough picnic tables to seat 700 people.
(Frustration: In five years, there have never been enough
places. On the first day this year, we had enough to seat about
125, and I spent many valuable hours cajoling staff members
into finding the picnic tables I had requested months ahead of
time, and knew had to be somewhere in Bird’s Hill Park!) The
second tent is considerably smaller and acts as our drink
service preparation and service. We have six large metal
containers for juice and many urns of coffee. As well, we
have tea, hot chocolate, hot water, and cold water. At the
back of the large tent are the two ATCO trailers, equipped
with kitchens containing 3-sink systems, industrial ovens, and
storage space. La Cuisine operates on a mid-sized budget of
$24,000. This amount may be large compared to other areas
at the WFF, but it’s small enough that we have to cook a lot
of chick peas and bulgur and serve a lot of bread.

There are 101 volunteers in the kitchen in addition to ours-
elves, the three coordinators. Working and playing together,
we are a community unto ourselves. Each volunteer works a
minimum of 16 hours over the course of the weekend.
"Working" means the volunteers' time in the kitchen. We are
divided into seven crews, each having a crew chief responsible
for all of her/his crew members. We chop, sauté, stir, bake,
clean, clean, and clean, serve, mix, dice, slice, and (often)
sing. For volunteers, performers, and staff, a day at the
festival focuses on workshop start and finish times, meal
times, and the evening concert. The actual festival time, three
and a half days long (from Thursday night to Sunday night),
is called "the weekend" and anything outside this period is
called "beyond the weekend" or "during the year." For many
participants, the festival sets up an annual cycle. This year,
one woman said to me, "The next major event is Christmas
and then it’s next year’s festival again. There are two major
sets of holidays in life."

The location in Bird’s Hill Park where the WFF actually
takes place is "the site." Volunteers generally understand that
this refers to “backstage,” “out front,” plus "Hotel California"
(the area attached to backstage where the site crew live for
about six weeks). Backstage is situated behind the main stage
and Shady Grove (another stage). This portion of the site is
protected from the public’s eyes by sections of bush. In order
to get there, you need the special badge which all volunteers
and performers receive. There are three different ways to enter
this area: two paths which lead from out front (which is the
portion of the site to which the public have access), and a
delivery and service road. All are protected by security. Back-
stage is designed to be a place where performers and volun-
tees can go to relax and socialize together. Normally, no
(working) media activity is allowed backstage, so there a great
deal of informal workshoping in all different combinations of
performers.

Having volunteered in the kitchen since I was nine years
old, I lose touch with how tight-knit a group we are. The
WFF is a maze of terminology generally, and each area has its
own special vocabulary. In La Cuisine, we have "michael-
waves,”9 "drink tent,”10 "paper tent,”11 "chef prep,”12 and so
on. The "new trailer" is six years old now, and even though
it is far better equipped than the "old trailer," volunteers use
it far less frequently. Like some other communities, we are
resistant to change, even to improvement. This year, my dad’s
partner, volunteering on La Cuisine for the first time, pointed
out to me how she struggled with understanding where her
place was. I think many volunteers are aware of the
insider/outsider status the terminology creates; we frequently
need to explain meanings to new volunteers13 and to non-La-
Cuisine friends and family.

Being a volunteer at the WFF has always been part of my
life. As a child, I went along with my father. At 13, I started
to develop my own identity within the festival structure,
working at the office during the year as well as on site over
the weekend. When I was 18, my father left La Cuisine crew,
and moved to the "Schlepper" crew.14 I stayed in La Cuisine,
and at 23, became a crew chief with Alexander. At 24, we
were asked by our friends, then coordinators Karen Dana and
Leslie Hambleton, and chef Marnie Potter, to become coordi-
nators of La Cuisine. We spent one year in apprenticeship,
and this is our first year in the actual position. Each change in
my location as a volunteer has caused a shift in my responsi-
bilities, but also in my sense of place at the WFF.

This year has been the most difficult. As a regular, 16-
hour-a-weekend volunteer, I always did extra—from picking
up the bread to answering the phones—and I was always
greatly recognized for these efforts. When I was a "regular"
volunteer, I had time to hear music, visit with friends, go to
workshops and booths, get to know people, and enjoy the at-
mosphere, all the while enjoying providing a few hours of
extra service. Now, as a coordinator, I am expected to go the
extra mile. Period.

For the 1995 WFF, I worked over 200 hours, as did
Alexander. The effort has been overwhelming and I have yet
to determine where the rewards may lie. Over the course of
the weekend, I saw an hour and a half of music, and attended
the performer/volunteer/staff party for two hours. I watched
as one of "my" volunteers cut herself so badly that she needed
six stitches (neither of us enjoyed that). I haggled with staff
over getting ten more picnic tables. I dealt with crisis after
危机, including running out of food on Sunday afternoon.
I have to ask myself—what is my agenda? Why am I doing this?
What is the place of work in my place of play?
Choosing to remain part of the WFF in my current capacity will be a difficult decision. When not following my academic pursuits, I am an (unpapered) chef. I love working with food; for me, it’s a kind of music, reaching and pushing boundaries, creating intense sensory experiences. Giving food I’ve created to people and witnessing the joy (usually) they experience in eating is a great feeling for me. For years, the WFF was known for its cuisine. Performers would travel the festival circuit and relate memorable and delicious tales of the barbecued steaks and whole roast suckling pig. We developed a reputation. The two previous chefs at the WFF—Harry Paine for the first 13 years and Marnie Potter for the last 8 years—created a strong sense of pride in the fare provided at the WFF. In recent years, La Cuisine’s budget has remained steady, but the cost of food has risen. Gradually, financial constraints have eroded our generosity and forced us to cook with low cost items. The days of steaks and pig roasts are gone now, and although I have no desire to return to the excessive 1970s, I want to alter the philosophy and direction of La Cuisine, in order to provide more food, more frequently.

I can find two significant reasons, then, for wishing to stay in my current capacity at the WFF. First, it’s important for me to try reaching this goal of improving and increasing the food service. Second, I would like to remain in the prestigious position of WFF Chef. But as I struggle with this new place, certainly no 16-hour-a-weekend volunteer, but not staff either, I wonder if these grounds are sufficient. I see the WFF, volunteers, staff, and many performers as part of my community. I want to give to them, but I am also concerned with receiving, and our relationship is feeling less and less reciprocal.

Beyond the kitchen, the WFF is friendly, sweet, and warm. Strangers smile and nod at each other, and the common goals of good music and good times seem evident. To an outsider, the cultural characteristic of “niceness” seems to permeate the event. As an insider, I wonder if it is only in the kitchen that an incredible abruptness and rudeness is evident. When hungry, thirsty people are lined up for food and drink (is it free, or is it payment for their services as performers and volunteers?), they become ferocious. La Cuisine volunteers suffered the angered snipes of those they served, and the mutual frustration of portion control. The “niceness” of the festival is strained when work and play become confused in the role of the volunteer, and when volunteers, like myself and Alexander, begin to feel that the gap between the value of our work and the price it is accorded by the WFF staff and board is widening.

Under these circumstance, I finally begin to wonder what does “make” my festival? Going to at least one workshop (this year I saw Quartette singing gospel music)? Eating a Whale’s Tail? Meeting friends for a beer at the Tavern? Giving and receiving big, warm hugs from “festival friends” (those people you see only at the festival, and you have no idea what they do in the “real world”)? Catching some mainstage? Sitting back late at night and watching as the kitchen hums in preparation for the next day? I am in the process of trying to understand my place, trying to decide what is best for me in terms of commitment, reciprocity, and happiness. Being a volunteer and insider is an intense experience and I honestly hope I am able to re-define and retain my place at the Winnipeg Folk Festival.

Stop the Folkin’ Music!:
How I (Kinda) Found My Place at Winnipeg Folk Festival Camping

Janet Macaulay

I must admit that I had ulterior motives for choosing Festival Camping (the “noisy” or “rowdy” campsite at the WFF) as my “beat” for this session of fieldwork. A weekend listening to and pondering about folk music would probably have driven me batty. I like stuff with more of an edge, stuff that is dangerous, and Festival Camping (FC) is edgy and dangerous, so it’s also the part of the WFF that interests me the most (except perhaps for the backstage food discussed by Danielle Carignan Svenne in this issue!).

Angus Gillespie’s “Folk Festival and Festival Folk in Twentieth-Century America” (in Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival, edited by Alessandro Falassi, University of New Mexico Press, 1987) inspired me to start thinking about FC for my field session at WFF ’95. It defined the demographics of a festival as composed of three groups: the outlaws (drug dealers, bikers, etc.), the family set, and the folkniks (who bring their own instruments with them, just in case). I did not feel as though I belonged to any of these categories. When I go to the WFF (which I have done for the past three years, despite my feelings about most of the music), I want to feel relaxed and safe, and I want to have the opportunity to experience some really good music (which, much to my surprise, happens occasionally). These things are guaranteed to happen on the WFF site proper. The opposite happens at the FC site. It is rowdy, uncivilised, and somewhat frightening. I asked myself this year, “Where do I fit in?” and “What, if any, of the groups at the WFF-FC do I belong to?” What follows is a chronicle of my alienation.

Appropriately enough, I started my WFF-FC experience in the rain. The WFF has always been a test against the elements; every year I think I have brought all I need, and then at night I will be wishing I had brought mitts. The following year I bring mitts, but wish I had brought a sun screen with SPF 30 instead of 15. This year I wished I had brought a

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