

Newfoundland

by Kelly Russell

The Newfoundland folk festival scene is looking very promising for this coming summer, with nine separate festivals scheduled throughout the island. Many regions have their own Folk Arts Councils who, among other things, are responsible for organizing the annual folk festival in their area. The following is a breakdown of the various festivals, their locations and dates.

1. The 4th annual Placentia Bay Festival will be held in the community of Placentia on July 4th.
2. The 4th annual Conception Bay Folk Festival, to be held in Harbour Grace on July 10 and 11.
3. "The Hangashore Folk Festival" will be held once again near Corner Brook on July 22-24.
4. The Twillingate Fish, Fun and Folk Festival (date to be announced).
5. The 3rd annual Labrador Heritage Festival will be held in Goose Bay, Labrador on July 31 - Aug. 1.
6. The 3rd annual "Le Longue Veille", a French folk festival, will be held at Cape St. George on August 4.
7. The Regatta Folk Festival will be held for the first time on the shores of Quidi Vidi Lake in St. John's on August 4.
8. The 6th annual Newfoundland and Labrador Folk Festival will be held at the same location on August 6 - 8.
9. The 3rd annual Bakeapple Festival will be held at L'Anse-au-Loup on the Labrador coast. Date to be announced.

Probably the largest and most notable of these festivals is the "Regatta Folk Festival" in St. John's. Regatta Day has been an annual tradition in St. John's ever since 1828 and these boat races up and down Quidi Vidi Lake are considered to be the oldest sporting event in North America. This year is the first time that a traditional folk music festival has been combined with the annual Regatta. This event is being sponsored by Imperial Oil Limited and is shaping up to be quite a spectacular festival.

Most of the performers at the various Newfoundland folk festivals are older people; "traditional" performers in the true sense of the word. However, each year there seems to

be more participation from younger people as more and more of them are recognizing the value of our folk traditions. There is also participation from professional folk entertainers but, due to the fact that performers are rarely paid much for their performances (the reason being small budgets), all are pretty well in the same "non-professional" category.

The one element that I feel is missing from our folk festivals is the organization of workshops which I have seen at other events outside Newfoundland. I feel that this is a valuable and necessary part of a folk festival and hope to see this included in festivals in the future. Otherwise, I feel that the festival scene here is very healthy, continuing to grow in popularity year by year, both in performer participation and audience attendance.