

# RS resident leads green team for Bluesfest

EMMA JACKSON

emma.jackson@metroland.com

It isn't easy being green for Ayn Benfaida, who is gearing up for another exciting Bluesfest festival being covered up to her elbows in compost.

The Riverside South resident leads the 12-day music festival's 'green team,' which is primarily responsible for making sure the right recycling, compost and garbage receptacles are available to the approximately 400,000 festival-goers who visit LeBreton Flats over the first two weeks in July – and sorting out their garbage once they've gone.

"We get our hands dirty and we actually sort out the compost from the recycling and sort out the garbage," she said. To do this, a team of about 30 green team volunteers must collect all the bags from the various containers around the site, take them across the road to a sorting station, and sort through the muck to make sure visitors haven't thrown compost, recycling or garbage in the wrong bin.

"We try to divert as much waste from going into the garbage as we can so the whole festival has less of a carbon footprint," said Benfaida, who has been volunteering on the green team since 2007. This is her second year as team leader.

This attention to detail, as smelly it may be in the July heat, has paid off for the festival, which has been operating in Ottawa since 1994. For the past three years, the Bluesfest organization has been recognized by the Recycling Council of Ontario with an award for waste minimization.

Part of Bluesfest's green initiative is to make sure that all food and drink vendors are serving their wares on compostable dishes, even going so far as to make sure

all forks and knives can also go in the green bin. Benfaida, as the team leader, spent the winter months looking over contracts to make sure vendors' proposed dishes and cutlery are compatible with the festival's compost system, which is processed by LaFleche environmental company near Cornwall. She's also responsible for overseeing the festival's "cup suckers" – the long grey tubes attached to garbage and recycling cans that collect the festival's compostable beer cups into neat stacks.

"One of the cool things is all of the cups are made of corn, and we use the cup suckers because a stacked cup takes up less space," she explained. According to the Bluesfest website, 99.9 per cent of the 200,000 beer cups sold over the course of the festival are recovered and diverted from the landfill.

Bluesfest director of operations Mike Rouleau said all of the festival's waste is dealt with privately outside of the city's green bin and recycling programs, and they have no need to change their system unless the city approaches them.

"We meet with the city on a regular basis and it's never been offered to us. It's just hasn't seemed to be a priority for the city to get involved in the fest and event waste collection," he said.

Of course, Benfaida and her team spend a lot of time at the festival helping to avoid as much cross-contamination between garbage and compost as possible, watching out for confused festival-goers and helping them choose the right receptacle from the get-go.

"We do a lot of education for the patrons, and help them learn about the initiatives," she said. She noted that since the City of Ottawa has introduced a city-wide green bin program, many more festi-



Photo submitted

Bluesfest's Green Team is responsible for collecting and sorting waste at the 12-day festival, in an effort to divert as much waste from the landfill as possible. Riverside South resident Ayn Benfaida is the green team leader this year.

val visitors know what can be composted and what can't. Vendors also inform their customers at the till that their plates and cutlery can be put in the green bin.

Bluesfest has been making huge efforts in other areas as well to reduce its environmental footprint. All of the festival's generators are run on biodiesel, which isn't as clean as other alternative energy sources, but runs cleaner than regular petro-fuels. Maintenance crews use environmentally-friendly cleaners across the site, and Bluesfest also offers supervised

bike parking in two locations so that visitors don't have to drive to the grounds.

Although Bluesfest took over the smaller Ottawa Folk Festival this year, Rouleau said that festival has actually been the leader in environmental initiatives, and Bluesfest has actually been learning more from its smaller sister than the other way around.

"They've been able to take advantage of our size and resources, but we're taking a lot of help and feedback from their knowledge and experience," he said.

## Community Calendar

We welcome your submissions of upcoming community, non-profit events. Please email events to [patricia.lonergan@metroland.com](mailto:patricia.lonergan@metroland.com) by 4:30 p.m. on Friday.

### JUNE 4:

- The Knights of Columbus OLV 9th Annual Charity Golf Tournament will take place at Falcon Ridge Golf Course on Albion Road across from the Rideau Carleton Raceway. The first tee-off time is at noon. Cost: \$100 per person (\$25 tax receipt for each golfer.) Includes green fee, shared cart, roast beef dinner and a prize for every golfer. The cost of dinner only is \$36. To Register, contact Bernie Livingstone at 613-821-3542 or email [burnbent@hotmail.com](mailto:burnbent@hotmail.com).

### JUNE 4 AND 5:

- Don't miss your chance to explore the inner workings of Ottawa's most interesting buildings during Doors Open Ottawa. More than 100 buildings of historical, architectural and functional significance will open their doors for free tours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. In Ottawa South, the Gloucester Artifact Collection, St. James Anglican Church, the Hindu Temple and the Sri Sathya Spiritual Centre will all be open.

### JUNE 6:

- Come join The Ottawa Rotary Home at Emerald Links Golf & Country Club for a fun-filled day of unlimited golf, fantastic food and loads of great prizes. All proceeds from the Golf Marathon will go towards the Rotary Home's

Youth and Young Adult Overnight Respite Program. Participants must raise \$253 in pledges to enter. At the tournament, breakfast will be served starting at 7:30 a.m. with tee-off at 8:45 a.m. Lunch will be served at noon and dinner will be served around 6 p.m. To find out more about the Golf Marathon and to register online please visit [www.rotaryhomegolf.ca](http://www.rotaryhomegolf.ca).

- Don't miss early registration for Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Venturers June 6 at the Rideauview Community Centre in Riverside South. From 7 to 8 p.m., parents wishing to register their children in any scouting program offered by the 1st Manotick group can stop by to sign up. Registration is \$175 per child for the year. If you can't make the Riverside South date, please visit the Manotick session on June 8 at St. Leonard's Catholic School in the lobby, from 7 to 8 p.m. Further details about 1st Manotick group at <http://1stmanotickscouting.ca>.

### JUNE 25:

Knights of Columbus Annual BBQ and Yard Sale! Come out on Saturday, June 25 from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Our Lady of the Visitation Church, 5338 Bank Street South. Donations of items in good condition are welcome on the morning of the sale. Table rentals are \$25 if you wish to sell your own items. Great deals! For information or to reserve a table, contact Pat Malloy at 613-821-3157 or e-mail [pmalloy@rogers.com](mailto:pmalloy@rogers.com).



Claude Des Rosiers of the Boone Flushers, left, and Robert Merkley of The Brick Peddlers participate in last year's Ride the Rideau.

### THE OTTAWA HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

It was the summer of 2009 that the idea came to Claude Des Rosiers. As an avid cyclist, the Gloucester resident knew that there was potential for a well-supported cycling fundraiser. And as a member of the board of directors for The Ottawa Hospital Foundation, he was very familiar with the number of dynamic, passionate scientists at the Hospital, and the need for research dollars.

Then, one day, it clicked. Along with Robert Merkley, of Merkley Supply Ltd., Des Rosiers, championed the idea of a 100-kilometre road bike tour in support of cancer research at The Ottawa Hospital.

Cancer is something that affects everyone, said Des Rosiers, who is the V.P. General Manager Boone Plumbing and Heating Supply Inc.

"Every week, you hear of someone who's been affected by cancer," he said. "Funding for cancer research is hard to come by. We want to try to accelerate the raising of funds for cancer. We can't be shy of reaching out to the community."

In Ride the Rideau's inaugural year, he was extensively involved in the event, which The Ottawa Hospital Foundation hoped would bring in \$500,000. The event proved to be a huge success, raising more than \$940,000.

Once again, this year's ride, to be held Sept. 10, begins in Ottawa and ends in Merrickville. Des Rosiers hopes to double the number of riders to 600 and the fundraising total to \$1.8 million.

"We absolutely need to do this," he said. "We have a great cancer centre and great research and we're proud of that. Now we need to do our share – the business community needs to get involved."

Des Rosiers believes in leading by example. While Boone Plumbing has committed to sponsor the event for three years, Des Rosiers has also formed a team, the Boone Flushers, which has 30 members so far. Being part of a team to support cancer research has many benefits, he said.

"I see the life changes that people have made, by eating right and training," said Des Rosiers, who, along with his wife Francine, regularly puts in dozens of kilometres on their bikes at their weekend home in Mont Tremblant.

In addition to challenging themselves to be healthier, being part of a greater cause builds community, he said. "It's a very important by-product of Ride the Rideau."

Now, Des Rosiers is issuing a challenge to other businesses in the community.

"It's easy to put a team together and fundraise," he said. "And it's a good feeling to be out there with other great corporations."

Of course, the main goal of the ride is to raise funds for research, he said.

"It's eye-opening to see the young talent at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute," said Des Rosiers, who's seen firsthand researchers' energy and passion for their work. "It's great to see that happening right here in Ottawa."

To support Claude Des Rosiers' ride, register to ride or to volunteer, visit [www.ridetherideau.ca](http://www.ridetherideau.ca).



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