

LYNDHURST'S MAGICAL TURKEY FAIR

A Free Day of Family Fun for All Ages

By Lorraine Payette

Whether you enter Lyndhurst by the magnificent stone bridge that sweeps you into the beautiful downtown district, or come in past St. Luke's Anglican Church, you find a delightful village nestled in its history and happy to see you. It feels like a wonderful moment frozen in time, unless you happen to be there on the third Saturday in September when Turkey Fair breaks loose to wake things up and take over the entire area...

The annual Lyndhurst Turkey Fair is a one day event starting at 8:30 a.m. and running through until 5:00 p.m. Every possible millimetre of space fills up with displays, vendors, activities and entertainment. From antique cars to quilts, voyageur canoes to turkeys of every imaginable kind, live entertainment to fresh cooked food, there is a sense of excitement and joy in the air that can be found nowhere else. Frank Ellis even brings two St. Lawrence River Skiffs that have been in his family since the 30s down to the bridge and lets people row them.

"It's quite a treat," says Ellis. "You haven't lived until you've rowed a St. Lawrence River Skiff."

"Turkey Fairs started in Athens and Lyndhurst after 1884 when the Brockville Westport and Sault St. Marie railroad opened," says Art Shaw, local. "They were held in early December when it was cold enough that the birds could be shipped to Montreal and New York City in boxcars. I know a lady who started work in the bank

in 1946 and she recalls working during a few turkey fairs. It lapsed until the 1990s when the name was recycled for the current event every September, which has been a big success."

"This is the 21st year for the new version," says Stephanie Etherington of the Committee. "The Lyndhurst and Seeley's Bay Chamber of Commerce brought it back, run by the volunteer Turkey Fair Committee."

Promoted as "A Free Day of Family Fun", the fair fills the entire village.

"We have free Voyageur canoe rides on the Lyndhurst River, a quilt show, antique cars – everything you can think of," says Etherington. "There are three different entertainment stages – the Green Gecko, the Classic Car and the Jonas Street Music Festival – so we can feature non-stop live musical entertainment all day long."

The musical line-up includes Simon Clarke, Catalina, Chris Royer from Amherstview and Backlash, fronted by Lyndhurst's own Bruce McElroy. Elvis Tribute Artist Matt Cage will also be there.

"You just can't have Turkey Fair without an Elvis," says Etherington. "We've almost always featured an Elvis artist as part of our entertainment. One year, however, we didn't bring one in and the public was really upset. So now we know better."

Vendors and artisans practicing vintage skills will be out. There will be activities of every kind for the kids, including a climbing wall. A horse drawn wagon can take you where



A once in a lifetime chance to bring out your inner turkey

the action is. There is also a free shuttle to get you around the village and to the remote parking areas.

Not to be missed are the turkeys. There are turkey building competitions; lots of turkey art – sculptures, colouring pictures, toys, hats; live turkeys to look at; different foods made from turkey; you can even get your picture taken as a turkey.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about Turkey Fair is that it simply appears on that one Saturday each September, filling every possible part of the village, and by Sunday morning it disappears as if it had never existed.

"We have to thank our volunteers for that," says Etherington. "This army of hard working, dedicated people is the real secret behind the success of Turkey Fair. We could never do it without them." **LH**

To learn more about this year's Turkey Fair on September 20, please go to <http://turkeyfair.com/>.