



Mummers
Festival
Celebrating
11 Years
2019 FESTIVAL REPORT

About Us

The Mummers Festival is a participant-led, community-based festival that encourages the celebration of mummering traditions. Each year, the Mummers Festival hosts events over the first few weeks of December leading up to its crowning event, the Mummers Parade. Workshops, public forums, lectures and school programming act as educational and momentum-building events for Parade Day. Like many other Christmas traditions, mummering brings together families, friends and strangers alike to create a sense of community. The Mummers Festival and Parade is the biggest celebration of this 300 year old tradition.



Our Mandate

To produce festivals for the purpose of education, charity, cultural promotion, community engagement and advancement of the public's understanding and appreciation of Newfoundland and Labrador folk traditions related to mummering and Christmastime practices; and to assist in the transmission of these folk traditions through participation by the public and tradition-bearers in such festivals and related forums, lectures, workshops, performances and public events.

Our Goal

The Mummers Festival aims to promote the continuance and evolution of traditional culture, art and performance by encouraging active participation in mummering activities. All events are designed to equip the public with skills and knowledge about mummering so that they can better participate in our Parade day events and, it is hoped, their own mummering practices over the twelve days of Christmas.

Our History

The Mummers Festival was initially a joint initiative with the Intangible Cultural Heritage division of the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador and Memorial University's Folklore Department. The initiative began in 2009 with the intention of passing along a well-researched model to a community group who would continue organizing the Mummers Festival. That year, the Festival included 16 free community events throughout the month of December. In 2010 a Mummers Festival community group was established and run entirely by volunteers. In 2011, the Mummers Festival incorporated as a nonprofit entity. The Festival is going into its 12th year.

Awards &
Recognition



2015 EVENT OF THE YEAR
(City of St. John's)

2012 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AWARD
(NL Historic Sites Association)

2011 CULTURAL TOURISM AWARD
(Hospitality NL)

45
Artists
& Performers

50
Volunteers

11
Year
History

90
Ugly
Sticks

11
School
Visits

1000+
Volunteer
Hours

Lots of
42"
Bras!

25 Free
Events

35
Community
Supporters
& Sponsors

2.5
Weeks of
Events

5000
Estimated
Attendance

5663
Facebook
Follows

2019
By The
Numbers

100s of
mummers &
jannies

7
Venues





Mini Mummers School Touring Program

This program is 10 years strong and aimed at elementary grade students who get to engage in an interactive demonstration of the many aspects of Newfoundland mummering. The 45 minute presentation involves question & answer, photo and video components, a hobby horse demonstration, an interactive disguise component with a teacher, and a mock-mummer guessing game with students. The Mini Mummers School tour reached 11 schools this year in the greater St. John's area.

Ryan Davis brings a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm to every presentation as this year's facilitator. Ryan started this program in 2009 and has run it for several years. School staff have written to express how "students (and teachers) absolutely loved it!", telling us that "[students are] still talking about it", and sharing stories of how students want to go out and try mummering for themselves.

www.mummersfestival.ca

Ugly Stick Workshops

Victoria Park Poolhouse
 November 30 1:00-4:00pm
 December 1 1:00-4:00pm

Mummer Mask Workshops

A.C. Hunter Public Library
 December 6 3:30-4:30pm
 St. John's Farmers' Market
 December 7 9:00am-4:00pm

Hobby Horse Workshop

Victoria Park Poolhouse
 December 9 6:00-9:00pm

Mummer Memory Mug Up

Marjorie Mews Public Library
 December 12 10:00-11:00am

Rig Up

The Lantern
 December 14* 1:00-2:00pm

Scuff 'n' Scoff

The Lantern
 December 14* 2:45-4:00pm

Music and Mumming

The Rooms
 December 5 2:30-3:30pm

Box and Bucket Workshop

Victoria Park Poolhouse
 December 8 1:00-4:00pm

Any Mummers 'Lowed In?

The Rooms
 December 11 7:00-8:00pm

**The Moon Shines Bright:
 Heart's Delight-Islington
 Christmas Carols**

The Rooms
 December 12 2:30-3:30pm

Mummers Parade

The Lantern
 December 14* 2:00-2:45pm

Janneys on the Big Screen

The Rooms
 December 18 7:00-8:00pm

***If weather is REALLY bad, Parade Day Events will be held on Sunday, Dec 9. Same time & place.**



Mummers Out of the Box

This year, the Mummers Festival was excited to partner with the St. John's Farmers Market and the A.C. Hunter Public Library to offer workshop activities at each venue. Participants used their imagination to make and decorate pillowcase mummer masks. There were lots of felt, feathers, buttons and bows used as lots of big and little mummers rolled up their sleeves and got creative. Everyone hugely enjoyed the activities, and our new venues were a great hit. It allowed the Mummers Festival to bring the tradition to even more people in our community.



Mummers Take Over The Rooms

We were delighted to continue our 11 year partnership with The Rooms in 2019, where we hosted several events. Our Music and Mumming session was quite popular, as Bev Kane and Gina Lacey (pictured below) from Renews sang, danced, played the accordion, and regaled participants with stories of mumming along the Southern Shore. Beloved musician Bud Davidge (pictured right with Mummer Festival Director Terra Barrett), was a huge hit at The Rooms' theatre for a staged interview where he shared his memories about "The Mummers Song", and the taping of CBC television special that helped spread the song far and wide. And the Heart's Delight-Islington Choir made a special musical visit as they joined folklorist Dale Jarvis in conversation to talk about the old Christmas custom of community men reverently singing two ancient carols, passed down for over a century, in the darkened porch of homes, and their work to keep it alive.



Paint Nite Fundraiser

The Mummers Festival teamed up this year with Paint Nite to offer a fundraising event where participants were guided step-by-step to create a work of mummer art! Instruction, paints, and canvasses were all provided so that each participant went home with their own handmade mummer painting. Participants raved about the event, and it was a great way to raise money for the festival.



Old Christmas Day Volunteer Party

January 6th is Old Christmas Day and officially the last day of mumming. This year, however, we celebrated the end of the Mummers Festival with our fellow volunteers, mummers, artists, and supporters on Saturday, January 4th. A big thanks goes out to Mill Street Brew Pub for providing a great space, a generous beer tab, and delicious finger foods! And of course we had to finish it off with a parade of mummer costumes! The best mummer costume and strut won a Purity Gift box although everyone went home with some kisses in their pockets!



Janneys on the Big Screen

Rap videos, horror films, and horror parodies were just a few of the genres showcased in this curated evening of mummers in the media. More than ever mummers are making their way off the streets and onto the big screen (or a YouTube channel). Indeed, mumming has found itself in the realm of popular culture. We screened 5 pieces as well as a trailer for a new mumming film. Some of the filmmakers were also on hand to answer audience questions about the films



Hobby Horse & Christmas Bull Workshops

A long-time program of the Mummers Festival, the Hobby Horse Workshop invited its creepy cousin, the Christmas Bull, into the stable. Hobby horses were originally made of horse skulls but research shows that they were also made from the skulls of moose, pigs, and cows. This year we hosted another workshop at Victoria Park Poolhouse. Largely a family affair, parents and children constructed personalized hobby horses and then brought them to the Mummers Parade.



Mummers Festival was live.

meet Chris MasUni Corn, our newest member of the mummer family!

3,455 people reached [Boost Post](#)

511 Views

[Like](#) [Comment](#) [Share](#)

[18](#) [Top Comments](#)



History of the Hobby Horse Workshops

The Mummers Festival has been running Hobby Horse Workshops since 2009. We turned to archival materials and conducted interviews to learn more about this tradition. Our template, designed by puppeteers Kathleen Parewick and Ryan Davis, is modelled after mid-1900s hobby horses located in the Memorial University Folklore Archives. These horses now turn up at the Mummers Parade and are used during the traditional Christmas-time, house-visiting tradition of mummering. The Festival has successfully repopulated the province with this nearly-extinct and most peculiar breed.

Ugly Stick Workshops

The ugly stick has played a role in Newfoundland party times throughout the years. It's about four feet long, on which bottle caps, tin cans, small bells and other noisemakers are attached. Add a boot at the bottom and you're good to go! It is played by thumping the stick, and striking its attachments with a "saw"--a notched stick that really gets those bottle-caps rattling! By far our most popular workshop, participants have transformed hundreds of boots and thousands of bottlecaps into some of the finest and ugliest of musical instruments.



Mummers Festival

Published by RyRy Davis (?) · December 4, 2017 ·

Here's Wayne showing us how to play an ugly stick!

Your video is popular in Newfoundland and Labrador [Boost Post](#)

Nathan Barrett helped us tremendously in 2019 by stepping in and preparing dozens of ugly sticks and helping run the workshops.



Fun Facts!

- * We wash about 2000 beer bottle caps for this workshop
- * All these bottle caps come from one local bar
- * Evergreen Recycling collects 120 tin cans for us
- * Participants have made over 800 ugly sticks in 9 years

Rig Up



The Rig Up gives people a chance to create a mummers disguise on the spot! For an hour before the Mummers Parade, people can sort through endless costume choices to fashion their best mummers rig. This year we were hosted by the kind folks at The Lantern. And where does all that clothing come from? This year we were given donations by Neighbourhood and the Salvation Army Thrift Store. We love the community support!



Mummers Parade

Drumline

What's a Parade without some noise?! For 7 years, a group of mummer drummers have been bringing beats to the streets! This group--Drumline --began as a percussion ensemble in 2004.

Initially, the drumline practiced and performed on drum set snare drums and tom-toms, but now has a full complement of modern marching drums including high-tension snare drums, multiple tenor drums and tonal bass drums. The drumline's repertoire is made up of different marching patterns or 'cadences'. Each cadence is a unique piece of music and can be influenced by several different styles of music including rock, latin and jazz.

The twenty current members of the Music Collection Drumline range in age from 13 to 19 years old and some have been playing with the group for over 9 years.

Scuff 'n' Scoff



The Mummers and the Paupers

A long-time favorite with the Mummers Festival, the Mummers and the Paupers took to the stage for our annual Scuff 'n' Scoff. This is our post-Parade concert with live music, Purity sweets and syrup. The Mummers and the Paupers is a 10 member mummers troupe with a repertoire of music, dance, skits, stories and recitations. The troupe performs as both a roaming group and as a stage act. When circulating through a crowd, the musicians typically play guitar, accordion, fiddle, banjo and bodhran while being accompanied by a hobby horse and dancers. For on-stage performances, the troupe reconfigures with the addition of harp, upright bass, harmonica and jig dolls. The troupe is one of the few local groups to use the old jig doll percussion instrument in its performances. The performance repertoire includes stories, recitations, skits, dance and music - traditional Newfoundland songs, Christmas carols, traditional Irish tunes, English Morris dances, folk and country favourites and kitchen party waltzes. Costumes continue to evolve, but are very much in the classic Newfoundland and Labrador tradition. The troupe has performed for a variety of clients ranging from local charities to international conferences.

Promoting Volunteerism



Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Mummers Festival and we would never succeed without their support. Our volunteers range in age from high-school students to retirees. They collect materials for workshops, serve Purity syrup and cookies to hungry mummers, and work as workshop assistants, guiding the public through various activities. They help set up events, produce signage, and provide labour for event clean-up and break down. Volunteers act as Parade marshals and carry our Parade banner.

The Mummers Festival's Board of Directors is made up of 10 dedicated volunteers. This group ensures the Festival is achieving its goals. They volunteer their time to monthly meetings and additional tasks throughout the year.



Cultivating
Art

traditional drama, **the art of disguise, mask-making, costuming, folk theatre, music, singing and recitation, jokes and pranks, instrument crafting, storytelling, dance, puppetry** and performance

Mumming is an artful tradition. As a type of theatre, it involves both performance and craft. Mumming is the art of disguise, the art of costuming, and a form of traditional drama. It includes the art of mask-making; music, singing, storytelling and recitation; dance, jokes, pranks, and puppetry as both craft and performance.

The primary goal of the Mummies Festival is to promote the continuance and evolution of traditional arts and performance. Our hope is that informal, community-based folk drama and associated material arts will flourish both during the festival and afterward as a living, 300 year old house-visiting tradition in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In The Press

Mummers made quite the racket this year and the media noticed. We were featured in international, national, and local publications.

- CBC Crosstalk
- CBC Life
- CBC News
- CBC WAM
- NTV News
- The Globe and Mail
- The Muse
- The Telegram
- VOCM Lunch Bunch
- CBC ICI Terre-Neuve et Labrador

Mummers Parade keeps Newfoundland Christmas tradition alive: organizer

Juanita Mercer (juanita.mercer@thetelegram.com)
 Published: Dec 15, 2019 at 6:13 p.m.
 Updated: Dec 16, 2019 at 8:26 a.m.



The 11th annual Mummer's Festival parade in St. John's, Newfoundland, on Saturday afternoon.

The Telegram



ICI Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador
 Les nouvelles recrues créent leur déguisement pour le défilé des *mummers*



Triah Simmons et sa petite-fille, Sofia, ont fabriqué des masques pour le défilé des *mummers* ce week-end à Saint-Jean, T.-N.-L. PHOTO: RADIO-CANADA / PATRICK BUTLER

Patrick Butler
 Publié le 13 décembre 2019

Une nouvelle génération de recrues se lance dans une tradition terre-neuvienne qui date de plusieurs siècles : le *mumming*.

Équipés d'une taie d'oreiller, de colle, de crayons et de feutres, les jeunes s'attaquent à la création des masques pour le défilé des *mummers*, un événement multicolore - et farfelu - qui aura lieu dans les rues de Saint-Jean samedi.

Durant le temps des Fêtes, les Terre-Neuviens se déguisent et visitent les maisons de leur village. Depuis 2009, un défilé annuel des *mummers* est également organisé en ville. L'objectif : se déguiser de n'importe quelle manière pour ne pas être reconnu par ses voisins.



Terra Barrett, directrice du Festival des *mummers*. PHOTO: RADIO-CANADA / PATRICK BUTLER

Certains se font un masque à l'aide d'un drap, d'une taie d'oreiller ou d'un napperon. D'autres construisent des masques plus complexes avec des boîtes en carton, des seaux ou des rubans.

Cette année, Mme Barrett a décidé d'ajouter un atelier de fabrication de masques consacré aux enfants à la programmation du Festival « pour leur montrer la tradition du *mumming* et, avec un peu de chance, les convaincre à participer à la parade ».



Mummers take ugly sticks and hobby horses to the streets of St. John's for annual parade

Important to share tradition of mumming, says executive director
 CBC News · Posted: Dec 14, 2019 5:44 PM NT | Last Updated: December 14, 2019



Mummers filled the streets of Georgestown in St. John's for the Mummers Parade Saturday, complete with hobby horses and ugly sticks. (Jeremy Eaton/CBC)

Hundreds of people covered their faces, donned silly, oversized clothes and took to the streets of St. John's Saturday afternoon for the 11th annual Mummers Parade.

The mummers rigged up and paraded their hobby horses and ugly sticks through Georgestown before wrapping up with a scuff and a scoff — a dance and a snack of Purity syrup and cookies — at The Lantern.

Terra Barrett, executive director of the Mummers Festival, says it's exciting to get to share the tradition of mumming with people who aren't familiar with it, be they locals or New Canadians.



Terra Barrett, executive director of the Mummers Festival, says she's happy to help people get rigged up and learn the tradition of mumming. (Jeremy Eaton/CBC)

"It's great to be able to educate people on what mumming is, why we do this tradition, the joy that it brings for people," she said.

"The hope, of course, is that people continue to mumm afterwords — they leave here and maybe during the 12 days of Christmas, they go out themselves. It's just that education piece, that it's a unique custom for Newfoundland and Labrador, and that we hope that it continues for years to come."

- Dollies, beer cases and Nan's bras disguise mummers at St. John's parade
- 'I stuffed my butt so I can shake it': Mummers dance in the streets of St. John's

Barrett said the festival started in 2009, with about 300 people taking part in the first parade, and the event has grown steadily ever since.



How outlandish costumes bring Newfoundlanders together each holiday season



Hobby horse costumes require mummers to cover themselves with sheets and hold a fake horse head propped up by a pole.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW ADVERTISEMENT

"Traditionally, they'd enter a house ... and (immediately) turn the lights off," she says of hobby horses pulling pranks. "One mummer I interviewed told me, 'The old horse would keep snapping at the children so they wouldn't get too close and figure out who was underneath the costume.'"

For other Newfoundlanders, like *Colliers* writer and photographer Dennis Flynn, the mumming season involves parading from door to door holding a dead wren. A tradition that made its way from Ireland and England in the 1800s, The Wren is practice similar to mumming that takes place on St. Stephen's Day — also known as Boxing Day — in which young boys hunt for small birds, carry them around to their neighbours and collect money for their funerals.

It's a tradition rooted in folklore in the province: Sailors once considered wren feathers to be lucky and a ward against drowning, Flynn says. According to ancient tales, the wren was once considered "king of the birds."

"It could fly the highest by flying under the eagle's wings, and when the eagle would reach its highest point, the wren would fly a foot higher. So, he won by being clever or through trickery," Flynn says.



How outlandish costumes bring Newfoundlanders together each holiday season

SPONSOR CONTENT

Over the last ten years, the festival has become a well-loved tradition bringing the St. John's community together.

Changing your body shape, altering your voice and concealing your identity are all key to perfecting the practice. While just about anything goes when you're a mummer, some choose to inhabit certain traditional characters, Barrett says.



The hobby horse is a classic choice, in which mummers cover themselves in a sheet attached to an intimidating fake horse head propped atop a pole. These puppet-style costumes, designed to be creepy, have deep roots in Newfoundland and Labrador, with folklorists saying they've been a key part of the mumming tradition for centuries.





Andrea O'Brien leads hobby horse-making workshops every year as part of the Mummer's Festival, as a way of keeping the age-old costume tradition alive.


But when Andrea O'Brien, registrar of historic places at Heritage NL and member of the Mummer's Festival board of directors, was organizing the first iteration of the festival in 2009, the hobby horse had lost its popularity.


O'Brien, who holds a masters in folklore from Memorial University, grew up in Cape Broyle hearing stories of the hobby horse and its antics. Before the Christmas season, it was a common sight to see a mummer with a hobby horse costume.


 **Audrey Crocker Wells** · 19:16 Wonderful celebration of our culture. ❤️❤️  1


 **Renee Hannam** · 25:36 Renée from Hamilton Ontario Hi everyone and a very Merry Christmas! 🎁🌲


 **Jennifer Barnable** · 1:15:01 My first time missing the festival!




 **Laura Fewer** · 31:49 My ❤️... Home!

 **Johnny Fisher** · 6:56 This is beautiful 😊

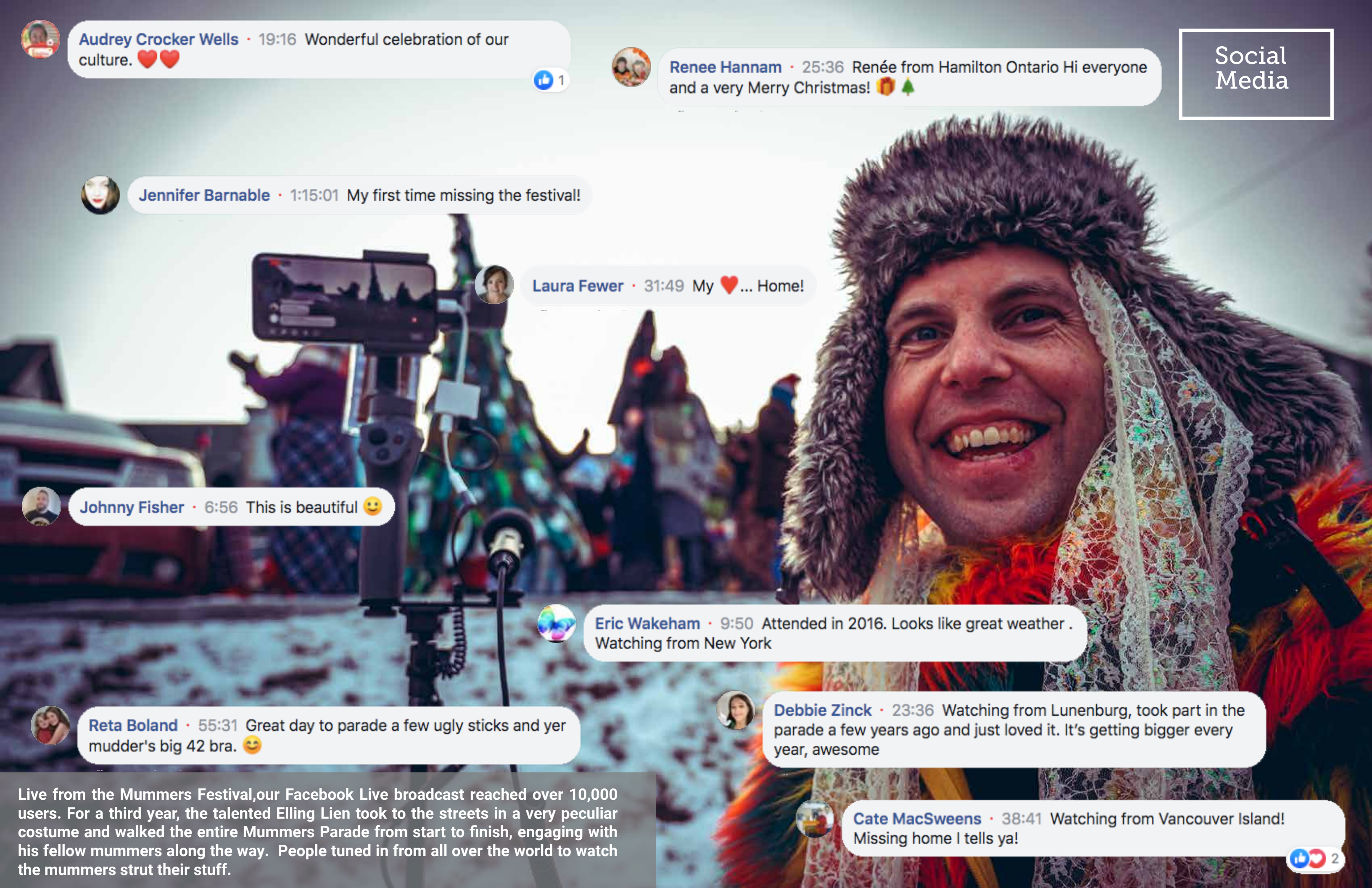
 **Eric Wakeham** · 9:50 Attended in 2016. Looks like great weather . Watching from New York

 **Reta Boland** · 55:31 Great day to parade a few ugly sticks and yer mudder's big 42 bra. 😊

 **Debbie Zinck** · 23:36 Watching from Lunenburg, took part in the parade a few years ago and just loved it. It's getting bigger every year, awesome

 **Cate MacSweens** · 38:41 Watching from Vancouver Island! Missing home I tells ya!   2

Live from the Mummers Festival, our Facebook Live broadcast reached over 10,000 users. For a third year, the talented Elling Lien took to the streets in a very peculiar costume and walked the entire Mummers Parade from start to finish, engaging with his fellow mummers along the way. People tuned in from all over the world to watch the mummers strut their stuff.



f 5663 Followers
t 2803 Followers
ig 1465 Followers

Mummers Festival added 129 new photos from December 1, 2019 to the album: 2019 Ugly Stick Workshops.
 Published by Terra Barrett [?] · December 1, 2019 · 🌐 📍

2019 Ugly Stick Workshops at Victoria Park Poolhouse

2019 Ugly Stick Workshops
129 Photos

Mummers Festival
 Published by Terra Barrett [?] · December 18, 2019 · 🌐

Coming up tonight - come on out to see how janneys have been portrayed on the big screen in our last event of the season.
 *Viewer discretion is advised!

JANNEYS ON THE BIG SCREEN

WED, DEC 18, 2019
Janneys on the Big Screen
 The Rooms · St. John's, NL

★ Interested

Marilynn, Neil and Shane

Mummers Festival
 Published by Terra Barrett [?] · December 9, 2019 · 🌐

This evening we're horsing around! Stop in to the Victoria Park Poolhouse from 6-9pm and make a hobby horse of your own 🐾

1,867 People Reached
 110 Engagements

Boost Post

37 2 Comments 10 Shares

Mummers Festival
 Published by Terra Barrett [?] · December 1, 2019 · 🌐

Back at the Victoria Park Poolhouse today from 1-4pm. Drop by and make an ugly stick of your own!
 Ps. If you were here yesterday stay tuned for an album of photos!

Mummers Festival
 Published by Terra Barrett [?] · November 16, 2019 · 🌐

It's brew day Mill Street YYT! This year with the Mummers Festival, they're brewing up some Janny Juice. What better way to quench your thirst after mummering through the streets of St. John's! Keep your eyes open for the release day of this brew 🍺

Mummers Festival
 Published by Terra Barrett [?] · February 2 · 🌐

Check out some 2019 Mummers Parade photos by Alex Stead Photography

+172

Mummers Festival
 Published by Terra Barrett [?] · December 13, 2019 · 🌐

In case you don't know we have a NEW route for tomorrow's parade. We are starting and ending at THE LANTERN (35 Barnes Road)! See you tomorrow at 1pm for the RIG UP!

3,751 People Reached
 352 Engagements

Boost Post

37 2 Comments 20 Shares

WE WANT

YOU

VOLUNTEER WITH US
mummersfestival.ca/volunteer

The Mummers Festival could not exist without the generous support of a proud, local community. A big thanks goes out to supporters who unite with us to help keep our time-honoured and colourful traditions alive!

2019 Sponsors & Supporters



+G J Shortall, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, Drumline Music Collection, First Choice Movers, Evergreen Recycling, Salvation Army, Thrift Store, Benevolent Irish Society, Town of PCSP, Grind Mind, St. John Ambulance, Justin Hawco

Who We Are



Board of Directors

Andrea O'Brien, Patti Hamilton, Maria Lear, Delores Burton, Katie Crane, Jenny Quilliam, Beth Saunders, Wyatt Hirshfeld Shibley, Krista Thorne, Terra Barrett

Executive Director

Lynn McShane

Photo Credits/Courtesies:

Ritche Perez, Alex Stead, Paint Nite, Grind Mind, Cynthia Silver, Gary Green

MUMMERS
FOREVER

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