

Arts & Entertainment



DYNAMIC DUO... Fanwood Library Director Dan Weiss and his wife, Mary Olive Smith, who together make up the eclectic and modern country Western-style duet, "Reckon So," perform on the lawn of the Fanwood Memorial Library on Sunday. *Marylou Morano for The Westfield Leader and The Times*

'Reckon So' Delights with Eclectic Mix of Music at Fanwood Library

By MARYLOU MORANO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

FANWOOD — There was a down-home, folksy feel in the air on Sunday as the band, "Reckon So" presented an outdoor concert on the lawn of the Fanwood Memorial Library.

Led by guitarists and vocalists Dan Weiss and Mary Olive Smith, Reckon So performed an eclectic mix of honky-tonk, country western, bluegrass and Americana music to the delight of all.

Fanwood residents will recognize Mr. Weiss as the director of the Fanwood Memorial Library.

Ms. Smith, his wife, is an Emmy award-winning documentary film producer and cinematographer in addition to her musical inclinations.

Ms. Smith and Mr. Weiss have been performing together for 15 years. Their first song together was the Louvin Brothers' "If I Could Only Win Your Love," which they performed on Sunday.

Accompanied by Joe Ongie on bass, the duet sang songs whose themes ranged from animals to love, to being in prison, to patriotism.

Ms. Smith delighted the audience in a solo performance of "Walking after Midnight," which was a hit in 1957 by Patsy Cline.

Together the duet sang, among many others, the George Jones' tune, "Will You Travel Down This Road with Me?" and the contemporary blue-grass song, "It Rains Everywhere I Go."

One of the most poignant songs of the concert was Ms. Smith and Mr. Weiss's recreation of the Tammy Wynette and George Jones 1976 hit, "Golden Ring."

Mr. Weiss also treated the audience to two of his own compositions, "On Valentine's Day" and "I'm a Lucky Man."

Waltz-lovers were pleasantly surprised by Reckon So's rendition of "Cry, Cry Darling," a Cajun-influenced melody written by Jimmy C. Newman.

Reckon So also played "Buckeroo," an instrumental made famous by Buck Owens and his Buckeroos in 1965.

The duet closed out their first set with the resounding Woody Guthrie

hit, "This Land is Your Land."

"I've been at the Fanwood library for over 16 years now and have found over and over that my dual roles as the library director and as a musician continue to complement and enhance each other," said Mr. Weiss. "I feel that I'm lucky to be able to do two things that I love, and that both make a contribution and add value to the community and the world."

Reckon So's performance was sponsored by the Friends of the Fanwood Library.

The Friends is currently conducting a membership drive and welcomes new member support in a variety of ways.

In addition to providing invaluable help to the Library, Friends' benefits include a 10 percent discount from selected area merchants and email announcements about area museum updates.

To learn more about the Friends of the Fanwood Memorial Library, call the library at (908) 323-6400 or visit their website at fanwoodlibrary.org.

Montreal's Jazz Fest Is Just One Of the Many Things To Do

By FRED T. ROSSI
Specially Written for Summer Travel Series

On your to-do list for today: Book yourself a flight and reserve a hotel room—now—and get yourself up to Montreal (it is a little more than an hour away) in time for that city's International Jazz Festival, which runs from June 26 to July 6 and will feature artists such as Diana Krall, Aretha Franklin, Rufus Wainwright, Elvis Costello, Tony Bennett, Diana Ross, Michael Buble, Earth, Wind and Fire and dozens of others.

It is estimated that two million people attend the 10 days of performances, most of which take place on a series of large outdoor stages set up right in the middle of downtown as well as at several indoor venues. Most of the shows are free, and things get underway around 6 p.m. during the week and noon on weekends and run late into the night.

I did not even know the festival was going on when I first visited Montreal a few years ago, and the all-day and all-night music turned out to be such an enjoyable place for pit-stops while I was sightseeing during the day and a great way to wrap up the evening en route to my hotel for the night.

And if, in the coming weeks, you visit Montreal, Canada's second-largest city and one that's actually situated on an island, you will be all-but-assured of doing so in nearly-perfect weather. Average daytime temperatures are in the 70s while the thermometer after sundown drops into the low 60s. While French is the official language, I found English to be spoken pretty much everywhere I went.

My time here was mostly spent in Old Montreal, a neighborhood that runs along the St. Lawrence Seaway and features a number of buildings dating back to the 17th century. There are plenty of hotels in the area along with great places—big and small—for brunch, lunch, dinner and drinks.

The Champ de Mars is a park and former military parade ground that once was the site of the city's fortifications a quarter-mile from the waterfront. Some of the ruins of the old fortifications are still visible. Today, it is a grassy park that faces Montreal's imposing Hotel de Ville, or City Hall. It was there in 1967 that French President de Gaulle gave his controversial "Vive le Québec libre" speech that delighted advocates of sovereignty for the Quebec

province.

Nearby is the Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel, one of Montreal's oldest churches, built in 1771. A few blocks away, you can wander through the Chinatown district, which is centered on La Gauchetière Street, a pedestrian walkway. During the summer, weekend street fairs are common in Chinatown, which also boasts four different "paifang," the traditional Chinese arch that marks your entry into the neighborhood. There are also several museums in Old Montreal, including one that might be a hit with the kids: the Montreal Science Centre.

A few blocks inland is Ste. Catherine Street, the main artery of downtown Montreal's commercial district. Here you will find all the shopping you need to do. For one weekend every July, one mile of the street is closed to traffic so that Canada's largest open-air sidewalk sale can be held, an event that includes live entertainment for crowds that can number up to 300,000.

Be sure to also duck below street level and check out Montreal's Underground City, one of the largest underground complexes in the world. The more-than 20 miles of tunnels spread over a five-square mile area connect shopping malls, apartment buildings, offices, hotels, museums, subway stops, train sta-

tions and an arena.

Notre-Dame Basilica is the very definition of grandeur. Built 190 years ago and a perfect example of Gothic Revival architecture, the basilica's exterior bears a resemblance to its counterpart in Paris. Its interior is majestic, topped by a ceiling of deep blue and decorated with golden stars. A kaleidoscope of colors—reds, blues, purples, silvers and golds—is evident throughout as are a variety of wood carvings and religious statues. And, unusual for a church, the basilica's stained-glass windows do not tell the story of the bible, but rather the religious history of Montreal.

An interesting thing about Canadians: They behave—and so should you—especially when it comes to crossing the street. Unlike Manhattan, where pedestrians never wait for the traffic light to turn in their favor as they edge their way across intersections and dodge oncoming vehicles, people in Montreal, at least, wait for the light. My first day there, I found myself standing at an intersection seeing no cars approaching. I started to cross the street before a policewoman barked at me to get back on the sidewalk. Even at two in the morning, I noticed people waiting for the light to change before crossing a street—even with no cars or police in sight!



WEEKEND GET-A-WAY...The Champ de Mars in front of Montreal's imposing City Hall provides a perfect spot to relax. *Fred T. Rossi for The Westfield Leader and The Times*



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