

CULTURAL MOMENT FOR MAY 6, 2024

CELEBRATING THE ARTHUR LIONS DUCK RACE



For the past 30 years one of the 'rights of Spring' in the Village of Arthur has been the annual Lions Club Duck Race. Held on the Saturday of Mother's Day weekend, it has become a favourite of children and adults alike.

This event was the brainchild of Lion Jerry Paul and has been held every year through all kinds of weather. It has seen warm sunshine, bitter cold and windy snow showers, high water levels when the ducks couldn't be caught, and low water levels when the ducks couldn't move and the winning tickets had to be drawn from a drum.

The race itself is the culmination of many activities that start mid-morning and wrap up with the race at 2 p.m., starting with the dumping of the ducks off the George Street bridge and finishing at the bridge on Charles Street. One of the favourite activities for children, when it is safe to do so, is

following the ducks down the river and helping any that get caught in the rocks, or along the banks. They are also a big help to the Lions in gathering all the ducks after the winners have made it over the finish line.

Other activities over the years have been face painting, balloon-making, bouncy castles, rock climbing, a road hockey tournament, a children's singsong, plant sales, vendors market, and displays and demonstrations by the volunteer fire department. And, of course, lunch and snacks are always available at the Lions' food booth.

The ducks are pre-sold through a lottery where every ticket sold has its number attached to a duck. Prizes are given to the ticket holders of the first three ducks, as well as other random draws from the same tickets.

Tickets are on sale through April right up to the morning of the race. They can be obtained from any member of the club, or at the venue on Francis Street prior to the race.

All proceeds from the event go back into our community through various programs throughout the community, from minor sports clubs to the Christmas Hamper program.

It's a family and community event and the Lions are very grateful for the support given by the neighbours on Francis Street, especially Jim Dingman and Ted and Judy Watt, who generously offer their hydro for the club's use during the day, as well as room for the bouncy castle and other activities. They also appreciate that residents on the street don't object when the street is closed from early morning until mid-afternoon, and lawns sometimes get trampled in varying conditions.

Along the lines of "it takes a community to raise a child," it also follows that "it takes cooperation to make a community." The Lions certainly get the cooperation of the Francis Street residents for this annual event!

The Lions look forward to seeing you on Francis Street on Saturday, May 11 this year!

