

Bier to Bayerisch:
Kitchener-Waterloo's Oktoberfest Inc.
Danielle Matheusik

“If you drink, you’ll die. If you don’t drink, you’ll die. So drink!”¹ was the motto emblazoned on Concordia Club’s first posters advertising the 1967 festival’s main draw: beer. Although there were a number of reasons put forward for the club’s hosting of Oktoberfest, including raising money for charities², for many participants the traditional German *Getraenk* (drink) was the highlight. Indeed from 1967 to 1973, Oktoberfest was advertised as “Canada’s Great Beer Festival.”³ In 1974 the descriptor changed to “Canada’s Great Bavarian Festival” and has prevailed ever since, illustrating one of the ways in which the festival has been altered to fulfill certain social expectations, such as increased cultural awareness, within a broader Canadian context.

The overlying theme of my thesis is that K-W Oktoberfest was not an expression of the region’s German heritage so much as it was an assertion of the region’s German-Canadian heritage. For the limited purposes of this paper, the lens are turned towards the role of Oktoberfest, examining the decisions made by the festival’s organizers and participants in response to the evolving setting in which the festival was established and reconstructed. Through this, it is hoped to enable the reader to better appreciate the complex history of the K-W Oktoberfest and its role in the region’s sense of identity.

The festival serves as a reflection of the period in which it was implemented, that being from the late 1960s through to the mid-1970s. More specifically, the festival exemplifies two distinct state policies that impacted the postwar population at various levels. Alcohol polices increasingly met public demand in terms of liberalizing the

consumption of alcoholic beverages. At the same time, the influx of immigrants postwar created a demand for multicultural policies that better integrated immigrants while nurturing harmony within ethnically diverse communities. In the case of K-W's Oktoberfest, the festival's organizers took advantage not only of the increasingly liberal alcohol policies, but to an even greater degree, the multicultural policies by way of advertising and celebrating the region's ethnic background.

Some knowledge of Munich's Oktoberfest is helpful in understanding the origins of K-W's Oktoberfest. As part of the 1810 celebration for the marriage of eventual King Ludwig I to Princess Therese of Saxony Hildburghausen, a horserace was added to the royal wedding celebration at the suggestion of one of the Bavarian National Guard's coachmen.⁴ It was later decided that the horserace would be held on an annual basis.⁵ In 1811, an agricultural festival was added and in the following year, Munich's first Oktoberfest unfolded. The horserace remained the highlight of the festival's opening ceremonies until the twentieth century.⁶ After the Second World War, Munich mayor Wimmer founded the current official opening ritual, and since then, it is the ceremonial task of the city's mayor to open Oktoberfest with the tapping of the keg.⁷ Munich's Oktoberfest, like the K-W Oktoberfest, has evolved over the years, resulting in changes such as the addition of amusement rides and beer stands. Eventually, the focus on beer increased as noted by the construction of large beer tents and halls with the support of local breweries.⁸ Gerda Moehler addresses the significance of the beer tents, citing that foreign imitators align such beer venues with Oktoberfest's musical and festive accompaniments.⁹ Indeed, beer occupies an important position at Munich's Oktoberfest, a point that is well taken around the world. A 1957 article in *Holiday* described the

Volksfest as a “sixteen day salute to beerdom”, noting that a year earlier, the festival’s visitors had downed nearly 3,000,000 quarts of beer.¹⁰ The festival’s association with beer has not wavered as to this day, Munich’s Oktoberfest continues to be recognized not only as one of the world’s largest folk festivals, but also as the world’s best beer festival.¹¹

Equally important to understanding some of Munich Oktoberfest’s background is the history of the K-W region. Prior to the First World War, the terms ascribed to the German founders of the region implied that it was a proud community of industrious, resourceful, hard-working, business-oriented people.¹² The factories and its (largely German) citizens were putting “Busy Berlin” on the newly formed country’s map, and with the Grand Trunk Railway, were sending “Made in Berlin” products throughout the developing areas of the province.¹³ The advent of the First World War brought disunity to the community, resulting in the loss of the name Berlin and the acquisition of the patriotic name Kitchener.¹⁴ During the interwar period, Kitchener’s German heritage was largely downplayed. Bassler remarks that in the immediate periods following both of the world wars, the German-Canadians were judged not by their contributions to the country, “but by events in Europe.”¹⁵ Much effort was put into promoting a more acceptable image of the region’s past, including the fictional work on the Mennonite heritage *Trail of the Conestoga* by Mabel Dunham¹⁶ and the erection of the Pioneer Tower in 1926.¹⁷ Amiable, peace-loving and agriculturally-oriented, the Mennonites filled the desired image all too well.¹⁸ Postwar Canada experienced an influx of immigrants, presenting massive challenges to its once singular, master narrative. In accordance with the swiftly changing social atmosphere, the prewar self-image of Canada that was wrapped up in

Anglo-American ideals was no longer acceptable; the ‘other’ had to be included in the reconfiguration of the Canadian identity.¹⁹ This was also the case in Kitchener where hundreds of German-speaking refugees settled. The 1960s increased multicultural awareness, and the nation’s centennial year in particular attracted much attention and involvement from Canadian citizens of almost all backgrounds.²⁰ In 1969, the Report on the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism jumpstarted a shift in priorities, resulting in the acknowledgment of postwar Canada as a pluralistic nation.²¹ Moreover, in recognition of the contributions of various ethnic groups to Canada’s cultural development, the federal government established a policy of multiculturalism and allotting almost \$200 million in a twenty-year period to maintaining language and culture.²² Returning to K-W once again, it is important to note that local historians of the 1970s and 1980s followed the multicultural trend. By drawing on G. Elmore Reaman’s 1957 *The Trail of the Black Walnut*, they attributed the founding of the entire German-Canadian community to the Pennsylvania Germans, thus consciously fitting them into Canada’s multicultural mosaic.²³

Manfred J. von Vulte asserts that various groups promoted their culture as a “hyphenated heritage, part Canadian and part their own background.”²⁴ Because other ethnic groups were openly celebrating their cultural roots, the German-Canadians followed suit, improving their image and promoting such aspects as regional festivals. Before long, people began to associate the German-Canadian identity “with the merriment of Oktoberfest, beer, carnivals, and the Caravan multicultural festival.”²⁵ With respect to K-W and its German roots specifically, it is of particular interest to note that the new image promoted is one of friendship, sociability and coziness, captured in a

single German word that is heard almost non-stop throughout the festival's duration: *Gemuetlichkeit*. The other favourite word is beer, although as established in the following pages, its involvement in Oktoberfest has been controversial, particularly during the festival's growing years.

The awarding of Bier Doktor buttons indicates that beer played a central role in the first years of Oktoberfest. As described in the 1969 K-W Oktoberfest pamphlet, participants were encouraged to drain their steins of beer upon hearing the notorious Oktoberfest song 'Ein Prosit.' The song's tradition stems from Munich's Oktoberfest where it has long been used to "encourage visitors to the beer halls to celebrate *Gemuetlichkeit*."²⁶ In K-W, those who succeeded in draining their steins received a button and the title of 'Bier Doktor.' Finishing off half of one's stein denoted the status of a 'Burp Meister.' 'Small Schluppers' drank shamefully little, managing to down less than half of a stein of beer in one attempt. The pamphlet came complete with the warning that "Small Schluppers are very rare in Waterloo County and are regarded with suspicion by the local 'Bier Doktors.'"²⁷ As suggested in this leaflet, drinking beer, and lots of it, was a normal K-W Oktoberfest activity and one at which the area's locals were particularly adept. Within a few years, however, the mock competition was, as former Oktoberfest Inc. committee president J.D. Bishop described, "squashed" by the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario (LLBO).²⁸

Part of the initial desire to associate beer-related activities with Oktoberfest may be connected to the larger social context of the country with respect to the public's attitude towards alcohol consumption in the late 1960s and early 70s. At the time of Oktoberfest's conception, alcohol consumption was on the rise as the Canadian masses

pushed for more liberal liquor regulation laws. Psychologist Reginald Smart of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health regards the post-war period as the point at which social attitudes to drinking changed in Canada. Historian Craig Heron concurs, noting in *Booze* that in the 1970s, “Consumption reached a new post-prohibition peak.”²⁹ Part of the increase may be attributed to the increased availability of alcohol from 1948-1975 as Canadian politicians responded to the public’s more liberal attitude towards alcohol.³⁰ In addition to the liberalized state policies concerning alcohol, Heron attributes this shift in attitude towards alcohol to the revamped marketing of alcoholic goods and the ethnic component. He notes that postwar immigrants, including Italians, Greeks and Portugese, self-confidently promoted “multiculturalism” as state policy, and more specifically, looked at the European culture in which alcohol consumption was more integrated into everyday life from an early age with the hopes of imitating it in Canada.³¹ While these circumstances do not fully account for the initial focus on beer at Oktoberfest, they do offer other explanations for the importance given it by the organizers, apart from beer’s links to German culture.

The organizers of K-W’s earliest Oktoberfests emphasised the importance of providing visitors with a genuine German beer experience. A letter to Honourable W.T. Robb, Chairman of the LLBO dated August 13, 1968 from Concordia Club president Werner Metzger signaled one such push for authenticity. He wrote:

In keeping with the native custom, beer is to be served in appropriate steins. During the last festival (1967), beer was only served in bottles and for the 1968 festival permission is being asked to use draught beer, not only for convenience but to maintain the Bavarian atmosphere the Concordia Club is trying to create.³²

In his letter, Metzger drew attention to the way in which not the beer, but the actual container from which it was consumed, could be employed to generate a sense of

authenticity at the German-Canadian festival. In an effort to convince Robb of the importance of his request, Metzger pointed out that while it would be convenient to serve beer in steins, it was primarily the German authenticity of the festival that was at stake here. Beer bottles, which were used the year previous, strayed from “native custom”, thereby detracting from visitors’ perceived genuine experience of German drinking culture. Metzger appealed to the emotive side of the situation, arguing that, for the sake of the Bavarian atmosphere, “appropriate steins” were a necessity.

The 1970 annual souvenir program was explicit in linking Oktoberfest to beer. In its first pages, an article decreed that from its “outset it was agreed that the K-W Oktoberfest would be a truly genuine German beer festival.”³³ The program advertised the Bier Doktor awards as well. It was also during this year’s event that the Pied Piper from Hamelin, Germany made his appearance at K-W Oktoberfest and led “the beer festival parade.”³⁴ In various advertisements spread throughout the 1970 program, thirsty attendees were encouraged to visit the German-Canadian clubs’ *beer* halls. Furthermore, the Holiday Inn in Kitchener advertised an Oktoberfest-related event at which “Beer, Deutsch smorgasbord and more beer make this a noteworthy splash.”³⁵ In all of these instances, the program encouraged its readers and the festival’s participants to make the connections between Oktoberfest, beer and an authentic German experience.

Four years later however, there was a notable shift away from beer as the primary festival attraction. Indeed, the terminology used to indicate the festival’s watering holes is as significant as the caption used to describe the altered Oktoberfest itself. From 1974 onward, programs invited festival-goers to the *festhallen* or festival halls to sample hearty German fare, not to the *beer* halls to consume steins of beer. Moreover, beginning in

1974, the advertisements had K-W Oktoberfest as “Canada’s Great Bavarian Festival” and the festival content reflected the change. In addition to sampling German cuisine, guests were invited to attend events such as the parade, the archery competition, the Oktoberfest Pied Piper Ballet, the German Shepherd dog show, Rocktoberfest and even a yoga demonstration, as outlined in the festival’s list of events. One remarkable component of the program was the Oktoberfest song sheet. Although the 1974 program’s designers played down the festival’s prior beer-heavy emphasis, the song sheet seemed to have slipped under the radar. In addition to *Ein Prosit* (A Cheer), which was a signal to drink beer and was directly linked to the former Bier Doktor competition and Munich’s Oktoberfest, song titles included *Bier her Bier her* and *Trink, trink Bruederlein, trink* (Drink, drink, brother, drink).³⁶ Because of its inclusion, one may surmise that the songs were directly associated with the German heritage on account of language and tradition, thus emphasising the festival organizers’ desire to ensure that Oktoberfest served as an expression of the region’s German roots.

One of the more interesting stories to come out of the history of K-W’s Oktoberfest was the poster scandal of 1970. The more than 1000 banned posters depicted the “well-endowed” blond model Yvonne Thomas dressed in traditional Bavarian attire holding mugs of foaming beer.³⁷ Although LLBO Chairman James Mackey did not cite the image as the most inappropriate component of the poster, it certainly did not help the situation. The committee was prepared to overlook the young woman’s costume because it was traditional and considered essential to the ethnic festival.³⁸ More significantly was the assumption that the word ‘beer’, which was in the caption, would attract the most attention and thus Ontario’s LLB and the LCB ordered that the posters could only be put

up in licenced drinking establishments if the word 'beer' was removed. As one LCBO official told the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, ““you can't invite people to a beer bust.””³⁹

In a letter to the editor of *The Globe and Mail*, T.H. Backhouse of King City expressed mock fear of using the word beer in advertising for Oktoberfest. He wrote:

The very word beer might indeed inflame the alcoholic desires of those unfortunate enough to gaze upon such depraved posters and could cause untold heartbreak and family suffering as fathers, sons and (liberated) mothers slither down the rocky road to ruin, clutching a glass of that iniquitous beverage.⁴⁰

This quotation is significant because it demonstrates the widespread awareness of the situation in the Twin Cities, both in terms of the upcoming beer festival and the poster ban. It also indicates the negative public reaction to the poster ban. The liquor board lacked the foresight to recognize the potential of such a ban to act as an unintended advertisement for the upcoming festival. In a 1978 article, managing director Fred Ryan attributed the festival's success to the 1970 poster ban, saying that ““The festival really took off after that ... That's what really did it for us.””⁴¹ Rather than hindering Oktoberfest's publicity attempts, the ban attracted attention from *TIME Magazine*, *Newsweek*, *CBC* and most Canadian newspapers, considerably increasing awareness of the K-W fall event world-wide.

In addition to this involvement in the festival's development, the liquor board refused to allow the use of outdoor beer tents, as previously requested. While Oktoberfest publicity Chairman Owen Lackenbauer found the banning of the posters a nuisance, he did not feel that it would affect attendance because “people are aware of what's happening and will come anyway.” However, as he told the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, he did find the rejection of the request for tents upsetting because ““tents are part and parcel of the atmosphere of a beer festival,””⁴² a statement that is supported by

German historian Gerda Moehler in her study of Munich's Oktoberfest. From Lackenbauer's response, we are to gather that the Oktoberfest committee aimed to provide its visitors with an authentic German festival, and in the early 1970s, that meant less restricted access to beer.

In J.D. Bishop's 1976 President's report, he mentioned the LLBO in connection to Oktoberfest. He commented on the success of the year's opening ceremonies, pointing out that they were once again permitted to go ahead with the official keg tapping ceremonies. Bishop noted that it "was a tradition that was sorely missed the previous year and the LLBO are to be congratulated for allowing us to again resume this ceremonial event."⁴³ The tapping of the keg is an important cultural event linking directly back to Munich's Oktoberfest. That it was not allowed to take place the year previous denoted the LLBO's influence on controlling the direction of the festival. Although the request for serving beer in steins was met in 1968, the LLBO banned the 1970 poster with the word 'beer' on it, denied the request for beer tents, and forbade the tapping of the keg at Oktoberfest's 1975 opening ceremonies. The LLBO's responses and reactions to the beer-related aspects of Oktoberfest and the resulting adjustments to the festival's content suggest that the LLBO had a part in shaping the focus of Oktoberfest.

While Ontario's liquor board did influence the direction of Oktoberfest, the initiative to make the festival into a cultural, community-oriented event appeared much earlier and originated from within the festival's organizing body. Indeed, in the opening remarks from the first meeting of the 1972 K-W Oktoberfest Inc. Board of Directors, Darwin Clay recommended that Oktoberfest "be turned into more of a cultural and ethnic

event rather than just Canada's Great Beer Festival."⁴⁴ Inga Puhlmann, Oktoberfest Inc.'s first secretary originally from Germany, noted the difference between Munich's Oktoberfest and K-W's in that the liquor laws in Canada demanded the organization of cultural activities to take the emphasis away from the beer drinking.⁴⁵ Oktoberfest Inc. president J.D.Bishop echoed their sentiments in 1973. Although Bishop linked the festival's decrease in profits to the increase in the administration budget for cultural and sport events, he suggested that this was all to the good because the committee was "trying to de-emphasize 'beer' and provide a wider range of activities for our visitors to participate in while in Kitchener-Waterloo."⁴⁶ Despite financial setbacks, the organizers drew attention away from the beer drinking, focusing instead on the cultural aspects to appeal to a larger audience.

The results of a survey conducted by Oktoberfest organizers in the early 1970s indicated that area residents wanted more varied activities and more events not related to beer drinking at Oktoberfest.⁴⁷ These examples demonstrate the organizers' awareness that in order to promote the festival as a cultural and community-oriented event, they would have to underscore Oktoberfest's cultural aspects, including food, dance and song. Furthermore, the organizers recognized that maintaining community support and gauging the residents' reactions to the developments of the festival were integral components of ensuring the success of Oktoberfest in K-W.

Although beer contributed significantly to expressing part of the heritage component of Oktoberfest, the creation of a semi-authentic experience for visitors was accomplished through a variety of other means and for various reasons. Historian David Lowenthal suggests that we intervene and direct displays of heritage to root us within the

culture. He asserts that “The past is always altered for motives that reflect present needs. We reshape our heritage to make it attractive in modern terms; we seek to make it part of ourselves, and ourselves part of it.”⁴⁸ Keeping his words in mind, it is indeed interesting to note one of the articles in Julius Rauchfuss’ scrapbook, which highlighted the early tension in the K-W region with respect to its German-Canadian heritage. The author suggested that “[p]rior to Oktoberfest, Kitchener and Waterloo citizens had an inferiority complex about their Germanness” as a result of enduring the two World Wars.⁴⁹ Demonstrating the community’s unity, and pride in its German roots was certainly a reason for making the expression of the region’s German heritage a priority in the late 1960s and early 70s. Conveying a sense of authenticity was an important consideration as well as noted by former president Carol Sherban who recognized that if the festival organizers wanted to offer “a German festival we had to use more of their history and their culture.”⁵⁰ A further incentive for expressing the region’s heritage with the festival was connected to Canada’s Centennial. Multiculturalism was in vogue and thus cultural events such as Oktoberfest played important roles in illustrating Canada’s acceptance of the various ethnicities during its one-hundredth nation-wide birthday celebration. Guenter Jessat, president of the 1988 Oktoberfest concurred, adding that the festival was the region’s Centennial project.⁵¹ In the 1990s, an article from *Exchange Magazine* picked up on the point that Oktoberfest had a central role in promoting the German-Canadian heritage of the region. The author concluded, “Oktoberfest is more than a beer drinking festival, but rather ‘a celebration of one culture that develops a tolerance and appreciation for all cultures.’”⁵² In addition to attributing the success of the festival to its cultural aspects, it was made clear that the festival’s connections to the alcoholic

beverage were increasingly downplayed. Overall, this process coincided with Ottawa's goal of establishing Canada as a multicultural nation through the 1970s, and K-W's intent to concentrate on the festival's identification as community-oriented cultural event, all while attempting to fulfill the desires of the diverse group of visitors.

The tourist imperative occupies a prominent position in the dialogue that addresses the decisions on the events offered at Oktoberfest. From its inception, the goal of Oktoberfest's organizers had been to provide the festival's visitors with an authentic German-Canadian experience. A recurring statement that is found in former Oktoberfest President Bishop's reports signified the importance of recognizing the festival's role in the community. The 1973 goal of K-W Oktoberfest was "to encourage tourism by providing visitors with genuine Waterloo County hospitality, good value and *gemuetlichkeit*."⁵³ Two years later, he voiced a similar message, noting that the "sole objective is to encourage tourism, thereby increasing tourist revenue for the benefit of our community."⁵⁴ The importance of these quotations resides in the fact that in both instances, Bishop clearly expressed the priority of presenting the festival as a tourist destination. However, in the first statement, he emphasised the importance of providing the visitor with an authentic Waterloo County experience, including *Gemuetlichkeit*, as a means by which to encourage returnees. The second example suggests a slight shift in the organizers' hoped for outcome of promoting the festival, focusing on the financial benefits to the community rather than the experience offered to the visitors. Despite the slightly different messages offered by Bishop, the tourist imperative retained its place of prominence in guiding the development of Oktoberfest into a nationally recognized event.

The idea of promoting the festival as a regional tourist attraction began early. A 1967 letter from Concordia Club president Renato Chirincelli to Kitchener Mayor William Butler announced the club's expectations of its own Oktoberfest. The group intended to establish a festival that would "rival the original Oktoberfest of Munich, Germany, and in so doing add another tourist attraction for the City of Kitchener, which we hope will become a popular attraction during the fall season each year."⁵⁵ It was established at the outset that Oktoberfest was not merely an event at which the region's German-Canadians could openly celebrate their heritage; it was expected that visitors would travel to the region to participate in the festival's events which were to take place on an annual basis. Indeed, Chirincelli made it clear that K-W's Oktoberfest was not to imitate Munich's famous Oktoberfest, but rather to rival it, suggesting that its original organizers had high hopes for the festival's success and that K-W's Oktoberfest was to be an event in and of itself. Richard Hermansen, one of the festival's three initial organizers, expressed the same sentiment, noting:

Oktoberfest here is K-W Oktoberfest and the proof of the pudding is that after 23 years of doing it different from Munich, we're still in business... That should be made quite clear for the record, that Oktoberfest here was designed, kicked off and carried through to its ultimate destiny by people who were all non-Germans.⁵⁶

One could travel to Germany to experience Munich's Oktoberfest, but one should also make the trip to the Twin Cities to experience K-W's Oktoberfest because it would prove to be an experience all on its own. An additional point to note was the tension between the non-German festival organizers and the *Old Stock* Germans of the community namely because Oktoberfest in K-W became a Canadian invention and interpretation of a one night affair that was originally practiced only by the Germans at their clubs prior to 1967.⁵⁷ In 1969 Darwin Clay, after observing the German clubs' smaller versions of

Munich's Oktoberfest, remarked to Bill Renaud, who was involved with the Kitchener Chamber of Commerce at the time, that "Those Germans got something going here and you guys aren't tapping it."⁵⁸ Later that year, Clay, Lackenbauer and Hermansen proceeded to 'tap' into the community's German resource, and the tourism project succeeded as K-W's first official Oktoberfest. The *Old Stock* Germans initially resented the involvement of the non-Germans in their cultural tradition, particularly when the organization of the festival was arguably taken out of their hands in 1967 when Concordia Club manager Rauchfuss persuaded his board to open that year's Oktoberfest to the public. Renaud, later 1981-82 Oktoberfest president, suggested that the replenished coffers helped to change the attitude of some of the "hard line" German club members to accept the non-German involvement in the organization of the festival.⁵⁹ Despite the stringent German members' later shift in opinion towards the early non-German festival organizers, the tension is noteworthy because of its potential influence on the collective memory of the community and its connection to the region's proclaimed heritage and sense of identity.

The 1969 Oktoberfest pamphlet offered a slightly different perspective on K-W Oktoberfest's relationship to Munich's. Furthermore, because of the promotional nature of the pamphlet, nothing was said of the tension between the Germans and non-Germans in the community; indeed one was led to believe that the community was fully united in its support of making Oktoberfest a public celebration of the region's heritage. Opposite the description of the Bier Doktor awards, the summary of K-W Oktoberfest read:

K-W Oktoberfest is a Waterloo County adaptation of the warmth and excitement of the original Oktoberfest held in Munich, Germany, annually since 1810. This **MADE IN CANADA** (emphasis in original) version of a traditional German beer

festival was made possible by the enthusiastic co-operation of our German-Canadian population and the members of our area German clubs.⁶⁰

In the above account, the K-W Oktoberfest organizers were truthful in advertising that the festival was an adaptation of Munich's Oktoberfest. The idea was adopted from Germany and was 'Canadianized' by the German-Canadians and non-Germans of K-W. While it was advertised as a "traditional German beer festival", it would not be mistaken for being anything other than, at best, German-Canadian as stressed by the capitalization of "made in Canada" and the participation of the region's German clubs, German-Canadians and non-Germans. Although it was not explicitly stated, the latter description of K-W's Oktoberfest suggested that one could visit the local festival and experience a semblance of the original Munich Oktoberfest. However, it would be the German-Canadian version, and would offer the appearance of agreement and complete cooperation between the Germans and non-Germans of the Twin Cities. In contrast, Concordia Club president Chirincelli's letter to Mayor Butler implied that the Oktoberfest of which he and his fellow club members spoke was not to be an *ersatz* of Munich's Oktoberfest, German-Canadian or otherwise, but a competitor thereof. Regardless of the varying promotional techniques employed by the organizers of K-W's Oktoberfest, the message remained clear: K-W Oktoberfest was, and arguably still is, a German-Canadian regional tourist attraction.

While the initial draw to partake in K-W's Oktoberfest occupies a less prominent position than that established at the outset, beer drinking remains an important, yet controversial, component of the festival to this day. One example demonstrating its complex part in the festivities is the presence of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)'s Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere (RIDE) program in the region during the nine-days

of Oktoberfest. The official Oktoberfest Inc. website estimates that 8,000 drivers are screened during the event and if deemed sober, “receive a booklet jam-packed with gifts and discount coupons provided by our many sponsors.”⁶¹ Furthermore, since 1995 K-W Oktoberfest Inc. beer drinkers have taken advantage of the ‘Take the Bus on Us’ free bus ride campaign, courtesy of the Molson Take Care Program, Grand River Transit and the *festhallen*.⁶² Although beer is one of Oktoberfest’s attractions, the festival’s organizers recognized that drinking and subsequent drunk driving would detract from the festival’s image. Moreover, they realized that it would take more than foaming steins to promote the festival as a tourist destination. Admittedly, the LCBO and LLBO influenced the shift in focus of the festival from beer to Bavaria, but the prime motivation originated from the organizers and community members themselves who envisioned the promise of Oktoberfest as a leading provincial tourist attraction. The K-W Oktoberfest ultimately served as an expression of the region’s German-Canadian heritage through the adoption of various cultural events. While the opening words “If you drink, you’ll die. If you don’t drink, you’ll die. So drink!” may still ring true for some, for the community and the festival’s organizing body, Oktoberfest occupies a more important role than offering a good excuse to drink. The festival is the means through which the residents of K-W reached a compromise on their heritage. It’s German-Canadian, and for the time being, proud of it.

¹ Oktoberfest Inc. Archives, Background Binder, Julius Rauchfuss’ Oktoberfest Scrapbook, 1967 Concordia Club Oktoberfest poster, p.61.

² Oktoberfest Inc. Archives, Background Binder, p.125 and 154.

³ Oktoberfest Inc. Archives, Finding Aid, 3.3 Posters section includes descriptions of the posters used for advertising the event.

⁴ Oktoberfest Inc. Archives, Background Binder, “Oktoberfest Facts.”

⁵ Karl Baur, *The “Oktoberfest”: Portrait of a Fair*, Munich: Verlag Georg D.W.Callwey, 1970, p.33.

⁶ *Ibid*, p.29.

- ⁷ “Die offizielle Zeremonie begründete Oberbürgermeister Wimmer nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg, und seither ist es feierliches Amt des jeweiligen Münchner Oberbürgermeisters, das Oktoberfest mit dem Fassanstich zu eröffnen.” Translated by author from Gerda Moehler’s *Das Münchner Oktoberfest: Brauchformen des Volkfestes zwischen Aufklärung und Gegenwart*, München: Kommissionsbuchhandlung R. Wolfe, 1980, p. 218.
- ⁸ Heather Daly et al. “A History of K-W Oktoberfest Inc.”, p.7.
- ⁹ “Diese Bierzelte wurden so weitgehend zum Charakteristikum des Oktoberfestes, dass der Weltweit bekannte Begriff sich in der Gegenwart bei ausländischen Nachahmern mit einer solchen Bierausschankstelle mit ihren musikalischen und geselligen Begleiterscheinungen deckt.” Concept translated by author from Moehler, *Münchner Oktoberfest*, p.231.
- ¹⁰ Article from *Time* 83, no. 34 (28 February 1964) found in Oktoberfest Inc. Archives, Background Binder, Munich Oktoberfest Fact Sheet, p.116.
- ¹¹ As cited by numerous travel websites and guides, including aboutgermany.org found at <<http://www.about-germany.org/festivals/oktoberfest.php>> and Andrea Schulte-Peters et al. *Germany: Oktoberfest*, Lonely Planet, p. 341.
- ¹² See John English and Kenneth McLaughlin, *Kitchener: An Illustrated History*, Toronto: Robin Brass Studio, 1996, p.79 and Gottlieb Leibbrandt, *Little Paradise: The Saga of the German Canadians of Waterloo County, Ontario, 1800-1975*, Kitchener: 1980, p.80.
- ¹³ English and McLaughlin, *Kitchener*, p.32 and 79. See also Leibbrandt, *Paradise*, p.81-82.
- ¹⁴ English and McLaughlin, *Kitchener*, p.131.
- ¹⁵ Gerhard P. Bassler, *The German-Canadian Mosaic Today and Yesterday: Identities, Roots and Heritage*. Ottawa: German-Canadian Congress, 1991, p.4.
- ¹⁶ Geoffrey Hayes, “Berlin to the Trek of the Conestoga: A Revisionist Approach to Waterloo County’s German Identity”, p. 10.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.12.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 13-15.
- ¹⁹ Jean Leonard Elliott and Augie Fleras, *Unequal Relations: An Introduction to Race and Ethnic Dynamics in Canada*, Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1992, p.275.
- ²⁰ English and McLaughlin, *Kitchener*, p.198-200.
- ²¹ Elliott and Fleras, *Unequal*, p.275-76.
- ²² Elliott and Fleras, *Unequal*, p.276-277.
- ²³ Ross Fair, “Theirs was a deeper purpose: The Pennsylvania Germans of Ontario and the Craft of the Homemaking Myth,” *Canadian Historical Review* 87, no.4, December 2006, p.678.
- ²⁴ Manfred J. von Vulte, *Where have all of Toronto’s Germans gone?* Ottawa: Borealis Press, 2004, p.2.
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