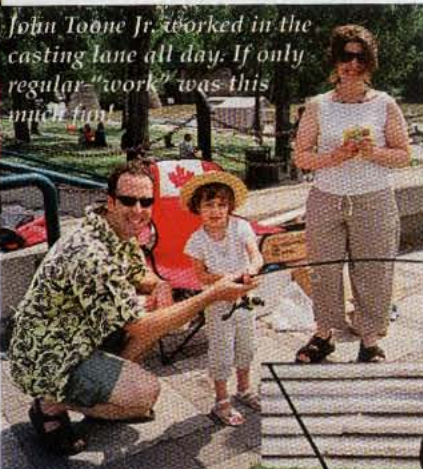


FISH FESTIVAL



The casting lane was a big hit with the kids.



John Toone Jr. worked in the casting lane all day. If only regular "work" was this much fun!



Gary Morlock



Some of the younger folk needed a little help getting the hang of casting.

Rob Cunniff from Manitoba Fisheries manning one of the many booths.

The 2008 Winnipeg Fish Festival was once again held at the Forks and was a huge success. The festival is one of the many angling programs offered through Winnipeg's Urban Angling Partnership (UAP) over the summer. Part of the UAP mandate is to get people (especially kids) fishing and to make them aware of the great fishing opportunities right here in Winnipeg!

During the festival, the Manitoba Wildlife Federation had our kids casting lanes set up for all to enjoy. The casting lanes were so busy we had a line up of kids for pretty much the whole day! The casting lanes had targets of all kinds for the kids to cast at and lots of participation prizes were given away. Some of the children seemed to enjoy it so much that their parents had to pull them away so the next in line could get up and have a turn! Quite often kids came up and asked "how much does it cost to go and try?" You should have seen their faces light up when they were told, "No charge, it's free, just get in line!"

Staff from Manitoba Water Stewardship (Fisheries), along with a number of enthusiastic volunteers, companies and organizations, all played an important role in helping organize this year's festival. Derek Buedderfeld, a summer student hired by Fisheries to help coordinate this year's event, took the bull by the horns (so to speak) and did a supreme job at making this event happen.

Todd Longley of City Cats Guiding Service also played a major role in making the festival a success and an event to be remembered. Todd brought down his fishing boat and kids fishing pond, provided a first-class fishing seminar on how to land the big Cats, and secured thousands of dollars worth of prizes that were given away throughout the day. In addition, Todd coordinated the World Championship pickerel rig tying contest for kids, and arranged a visit by some Winnipeg Blue Bombers players to sign autographs for kids.

The City of Winnipeg (a partner in the UAP) was again on-site with a fish arts and crafts centre and the kids' fish painting van. The fish artwork on the van was something to see and the smiles on their faces made it all worthwhile.

Jon Ljungberg from City TV's Breakfast Show did a fine job of emceeing the festival and dazzled them with his fishing stories and tales. Jon certainly has a flair for getting the crowd going and it's always a pleasure working with him at this annual event. The CKJS radio crew was also on-site broadcasting live play-by-play action of the day's events. Much to the delight of the kids, there were also guest appearances by

mascots Freddy the Fish, Putka the Polar Bear, and Buzz and Boomer of Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

July is an especially hard month to find volunteers to help out at the festival with so many people away on vacation. I would like to express my gratitude to John Toone Jr. for helping out all day (in the hot sun) with the Manitoba Wildlife Federation casting lanes. This was not John's first year at the festival but I don't know what I would have done without his help.

Another exciting thing that happened during the day was a visit from the Burton family. Mr. and Mrs. Burton along with their daughter Meaghan participated in this year's "Learn to Fish" program. They were all down at the Fish Festival in the morning participating, and in the afternoon they all came back to help out as instructors! Two weeks ago they were learning how to fish, and now they are helping out by teaching—amazing! It shows that these programs are making a difference.

I would also like to acknowledge other festival volunteers and sponsors that made this day one to remember. Volunteers: Allen and Helen Crane, Stephen Yuffe, Don Lamont, Oak Hammock Marsh and crew (Critters and Bugs display), and Auxiliary Coast Guard (Jim Foster and Rose Fahl). Generous product donations and/or staff time were from Cabela's/SIR, Wholesale Sports, the Fishin' Hole, Berkley Canada, Zebco, Galaxy Comics, Kelsey's, Lund, Teleco and the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

Without the help of all our volunteers, sponsors and the other people who believe in these grassroots events, this great festival just would not happen. Thanks to all of you for your help in making the 2008 Winnipeg Fish Festival the success that it was! •