**Grand River Blues Camp Report**

2017 Update

I am happy to report another smooth and successful Grand River Blues Camp in 2017. Organization of this year’s camp was improved with the addition of Neil Tarswell as our 3rd Camp Director – joining George White, Janet Wendell and Dennis Cuomo.

This year we had 47 campers at our 10th Grand River Blues Camp. It was probably our strongest contingent of young musicians yet. Approximately 70% were returning which helps to maintain a high quality performance.

We had 11 instructors again this year, with Chuckie Zehr replacing Alana Leondard. Chuckie was a great addition to the camp and fit in wonderfully. Andy Gingerich, Don Featherstone, John Lee, Jay Burr, John McKinley, Mike McDonald, Chris Latta, Cheryl Lescom, Matt Wiedinger and Colin White returned and worked their usual magic with our Campers.

We also had great interest in our internship positions and ended up with 4 intern/volunteers. While we were a little uncertain about the number, it proved to be very helpful during the week, as the 4 assisted the instructors, campers and directors.

Our location changed this year, as there was construction under way at Courtland Public School. Kitchener Collegiate (KCI) proved to be much better set up for us (everyone on one floor, close to washrooms, elevator access for George, lots of parking and transit at the door) and we will attempt to return to that location again next year.

Adult Camp Proposal

Neil and I have met to brainstorm plans for an adult blues camp. We have yet to finalize details but this is our current thinking.

Purpose of the adult camp will be to make money to fund other youth and education projects. This could include, one day blues camps on school PA days, instructional videos performed by our camp instructors, a bursary program to support campers that are either pursuing post-secondary music education or a professional career (eg. Help with a demo CD/studio time or help with first tour expenses as they start their career), funding to assist our youth representatives to get to the IBC.

Based on the costs of other blues camps (Hornby Island and Crossroads) $300 would appear to be a reasonable fee for a 3 day camp (instruction/practice on all three days, performance on the third day).

We are considering a multi-weekend (2 or 3) camp which would take place likely on Sundays (full day), and which would culminate in a performance at an event sponsored by the Grand River Blues Society. Our Blues Camp show could be the opening act for a tribute, AGM or another event.

Location has yet to be determined. Schools would be available on weekends, but there would be a cost for rental as this is an adult program. Although we recognize that the Lancaster Smokehouse presents some accessibility issues, Chris Corrigan has offered it up as a venue for the camp – use upstairs and downstairs on Sundays for camp sessions and then performance on main floor. Chris has attended a number of other blues camps and Neil and I plan to seek is assistance in organizing our camp whether we use his place or not.

March or April of 2018 is our target date for the Camp. This would allow for planning, organization and advertising. Based on this timing we could consider having the first adult camp performance as part of the AGM.

Instructors could include some of our core group from our kids Camp, and allow us to bring in some other local musicians that have expressed interest. It would allow us to grow our pool of instructors and make it a little more inclusive.

A different name will be necessary to distinguish this camp from our current youth program;

Grand River Blues Experience

Grand River Blues Break

Grand River Blues Woodshed Sessions

…. Open to suggestions