

STRUMMERFEST

-- a report



Strummerfest started in 2012. The intention? To commemorate the passing - from a congenital heart defect on December 21, 2002, at the young age of 50 - of Joe Strummer, the former front-man of The Clash, later performing with the Pogues, who dabbled with acting and movie scores, and lastly re-emerged in the late 1990's as a solo singer-songwriter with his back-up band, The Mescaleros.

The idea of commemorating Joe was easy to come by, and easy to receive people's interest and support. He was - still is - widely loved and admired. Amongst the things people love about him were two in particular: his love of all kinds of music, and his love of all kinds of people.

Joe was a people-person. He was renowned for the time he would take with fans, giving his full attention to every individual. He built community wherever he went; his campfire gatherings at the Glastonbury Festival became legendary. His widow, Lucinda Mellor (Joe's birth name was John Mellor) reflected, "He believed in the goodness of people".¹

It makes sense, then, that Strummerfest should reflect that optimism and respect for people.

That's one of the reasons that, in addition to remembering Joe by ensuring that Strummerfest is community-centred and musically diverse, we also ensure that its primary focus is on supporting and uplifting people, by supporting charitable organizations that seek to give hope and comfort to the vulnerable, lonely, and despairing among us.

We are proud of what this little, DIY music festival has accomplished over the years. We are grateful for every person and organization that has participated in, sponsored or otherwise supported it, who have *made* it happen, and who have helped make sure it retained the integrity of its founding vision. And we want that to continue.

This report is made to share with you a little about what Strummerfest has become, to thank you for being part of that, and, hopefully, to give you some reasons to continue with us.

Cheers always,



Michael Clifton

¹ Quoted in Salewicz, Chris *Redemption Song: The Ballad of Joe Strummer* (Faber & Faber Inc., 2006) p. 499

Our Charities

Joe Strummer said, "Without people, you're nothing." A simple thought, and true. Central to Strummerfest is its focus on charities that seek to uplift and support people at risk in our community and elsewhere. Since 2012, Strummerfest has helped raise awareness and more than \$10,000 for the following charities:



Waterloo Region
Suicide Prevention Council



WRSPC's Program Coordinator, Amanda Denmer, speaking at Strummerfest 2019.

WRSPC is a non-profit, voluntary council that promotes a community wide strategy to reduce the incidence of suicidal behavior through public awareness, education, skill development, and public health advocacy.

Learn more at www.wrspc.ca.



Your Life Counts

Your Life Counts is a national and international grassroots volunteer driven organization that seeks to help people in distress say "no" to suicide, restore hope, and reconnect them with their reasons to live, through over-the-phone and direct counselling along with online resources.

Learn more at www.yourlifecounts.org.



House of
Friendship

Since its beginnings as a "store front mission" in 1939, the work of Kitchener's House of Friendship has evolved into a charitable social service agency serving thousands, providing addiction treatment, food, housing, and community resources throughout Waterloo Region.

Learn more at www.houseoffriendship.org.

Our Performers

Over 100 performers of various experience and styles have joined the Strummerfest family, in a variety of groups, duos and solo acts, all of which are listed here (in no particular order). Even though some have donated their time and talent or taken a smaller fee than their skill and popularity demand, they have all taken part with enthusiasm, and many have returned again and again, loving to support the cause and celebration that the festival represents.

Stephen Stanley Band ★ The Wormwood Scrubs ★ Jenny Hows Duo
The Bosswich ★ Saint Cloud ★ Under Pressure ★ The Durrants
The 7's & 9's ★ James Skarnikat ★ Too Nice ★ Heirs ★ Mr.Jr.
Kensington Hillbilllys ★ Vienna D'Amatao Hall ★ Bad Hombres
The Namedroppers ★ The Unlikely Story ★ Holy Smokes ★ Jesse Weber
Jojo Worthington ★ Anthony Schmantony ★ Anti Social Surf Club
Backbreaker ★ The Green Morning ★ Hello Hopeless ★ Noiz A Noiz
Copper Crown ★ Crash Carnival ★ Time Giant ★ The Lucky Ones
Die Mannequin ★ Gentlemen Husbands ★ S*F*H* ★ T.C. Folkpunk
Prince Perry & The Gladtones ★ Rose Cora Perry & The Truth Untold
The David Clifton Company ★ The Baudelaires ★ Bethany Schultz
Credit Valley ★ Drew Leith & The Foundation ★ Mary 5E
Meghan Witzel ★ Mikie Bray ★ Mo' Kauffey ★ Ordinary Castles
Puncturevine ★ Sarah Bernardo ★ Sean Stockholm ★ Moonlight Desires
The Letdowns.ca ★ The Essential Letdowns ★ The Outliers
Third Plain ★ Todd Donald ★ Meghan Weber ★ Vera City Waves
Ben Malleck ★ Bethany Rose ★ Brad Brohman ★ Brie & The Boys
Danielle Robert ★ Dylan Creed ★ Eamon McGrath ★ Frank Chen
Harvesting Peace ★ J.b. Day ★ Jesse Parent ★ Meggi Faye
Michael Allerie ★ Josh Gabriel ★ Nikki Machin ★ Peter Ingram
Phil Nagy ★ Chemical Marriage ★ C.I.D. ★ Skylar Valli
Theoretically Nameless Band ★ Zook & Boots ★ The Nailheads
The Suburban Bicycle Gang ★ Craig Dubecki ★ Bad Raven Lucy
Craig Dougan Trio ★ The Dead Souls ★ Spirits

Our Sponsors

For all the energy of its crew, for all the talent of its performers, for all their time and effort put into it, simply put, Strummerfest would not exist if it were not for its sponsors. Corporations and individuals, local businesses and larger concerns - the sponsors of Strummerfest are some of its most special family members. Their generosity, their good will, and their community spirit, are the backbone that lets the show go on.

Each of Strummerfest's past sponsors is listed on these two pages (and in case you don't recognize them, the categories not only reflect their impressive respective statuses, but are based on the titles of Clash songs).

The Leader



MOMENTUM

PARTNERSHIP

Move up.™

Our lead sponsor every year since 2012!

Four Horsemen

McINTOSH PERRY



An Associa® Company

Movers & Shakers



Community
Partnerships
Program



CLARKE STARKE
& DIEGEL LLP

Jon Fear
Keith Smout

The Call Up

CITY OF KITCHENER

KITCHENER DOWNTOWN BIA

SUTHERLAND KELLY LLP

MF PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

KW REVIEW

MARSHALL ZEHR GROUP

WOODHOUSE GROUP

WEIGEL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

COHEN HIGHLY LLP

MORTGAGE ALLIANCE FIRST CHOICE BROKERAGE

MORRISON HERSHFIELD

STANTEC

IRIS ENTERTAINMENT CORP.

VELVET ROPE MAGAZINE

VINYLITE PRODUCTIONS

All the Young Punks

RLB LLP

STANTEC

CITY CAB

SMITH VALERIOTE LLP

HIRA HOMES

GRANVAL

YNC LLP

CLOUD REALTY

SHERWOOD SYSTEMS

WATERLOO NISSAN

STRIK BALDINELLI

ENCORE RECORDS

MILL CREEK MANAGEMENT

STEPHANIE KRUG

DARRYL TAYLOR

CLAIRE COCHRANE

TONY NGO

AND OTHER ANONYMOUS SUPPORTERS

Strummerfest City Rockers

ALEXANDRIA'S SHOES

THE SUGAR CUBE

THE SOCK FACTORY

EMPRESS OF INDIA

ARRANGED WITH SUPPORT FROM THE UPTOWN WATERLOO BIA

Other Support

Strummerfest enjoys attention from around the globe through social media, but there's really nothing to compare with local kudos, encouragement and, of course, advertising. Over the years, we have enjoyed being interviewed and promoted on CTV, in the **Waterloo Region Record**, the **Waterloo Chronicle**, the **Kitchener Post**, on **CJ1Q FM** (the Conestoga College radio station), and in the podcasts, **Everything and The Kitchen Sink** and **Ska Party Radio**. In 2016, we were pleased to be part of the **StrummerJam** initiative of **The Joe Strummer Foundation**, based in the UK. In 2019 we received stellar support from **CKWR-FM** in Waterloo Region, whose DJ's attended and participated in the show. We've also appreciated the supportive words of some of Canada's musical and civic leaders.

— CHARLIE —
ANGUS
NDP+NDP

July 20, 2017

Dear Strummerheads,

I was 17 when I heard the first Clash album. Joe Strummer made me realize that there was a bigger world out there waiting to be discovered. His driving desire for change; his willingness to mix things up; and his deep love of music, ideas, and people continue to inspire me.

Strummerfest brings together that mix of punk and social action today. I'm sorry I can't play this year, but you know my heart is with you.

I know you'll hear some fantastic music, bring needed attention and support to deserving charities, and I hope you have a fun, safe, and very cool festival to remember. In the words of Joe himself, "Don't forget you are alive."

All the best,
Charlie Angus

Member of Parliament for Timmins-James Bay
Bass and vocals, L'Etranger as well as The Grievous Angels
NDP Leadership Candidate

Charlie Angus is the MP for Timmins-James Bay and a former candidate for national leadership of the NDP. Why would he pay attention to Strummerfest? Charlie is also an old Toronto rocker, having been in the popular 1980's punk band, **L'Etranger**, and currently still performs with his band, **The Grievous Angels**.



Hon. Bardish Chagger, PC, is the former Government House Leader and current Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth. She's attended Strummerfest regularly since 2017 (pictured here with Strummerfest volunteer, Marhee Clifton). About that, **Waterloo Region Record's Joel Rubinoff** wrote, "**Even Bardish Chagger, two decades younger than the punk demographic, found herself unable to resist Strummerfest's pervasive charm on Saturday... 'It's the arts and culture coming together and bringing out the best of people,' she notes as the crowd begins to grow. 'Every year it gets bigger.'**" (in *Waterloo's punk music festival Strummerfest scores points for originality*, August 5, 2019)

Blue Rodeo's **Bob Egan** wrote:

"Strummerfest takes what music is all about back to its roots, back when artists like Woody Guthrie used their voices to advocate for the common man, for the good of society. This tradition of using music to care for each other had a champion in Joe Strummer, and now his legacy is a call to action for all of us. Strummerfest is good music for a good cause."

Other supportive letters from **Waterloo Mayor Dave Jaworsky**, former **Waterloo Region Chair Ken Seiling**, former **Kitchener Mayor Carl Zehr**, **Your Life Counts CEO Ruaraidh Butler**, and **House of Friendship Executive Director, John Neufeld**, are posted at www.strummerfest.ca/support.html

Other Support . . .

In addition, Strummerfest has been more than blessed by a number of people who have volunteered their time and energy to help each show go on, or, well, just to help. In fact, in the first years of the festival, everyone - literally, everyone - who took part, did so on a voluntary basis.

So it is truly impossible to name them all, from Phil N., who volunteered doing sound a few times in the early years (as well as being one of the performers), to Steve M. who handled sound for Ska'ncert in Year 2, and Sam K. who has helped with set up and sound in later years...



...to all the folks who collected entry donations at the doors of venues in 2012 and 2013, to the more recent support of Christine and Tyler D., who have helped watch merchandise tables and collect donations for the charities at Waterloo Public Square, along with Reagan G., Mushure R., Marhee C. and others. Heck, even the City of Waterloo has volunteered some of its facilities, staff and services, as did the City of Kitchener for the first Strummerfest, which was held outdoors at its City Hall in December 2012.

We've also had a couple of volunteers step up to help out taking videos or pictures. Kevin H. and Joe G. (who also donated significantly to our 2019 auction!) each made and posted videos of a few performers that have been a pleasure to share, and special mention needs to be given to Andrew Stewart, who spent all his time at Strummerfest 2019 taking, and later editing and donating, a vast array of photos - some used on the cover of this report, and which can be found at https://www.strummerfest.ca/2019_photo_gallery.html.



Lastly, Carrie Humphries and Michael Clifton also have to be named, as the co-founders and producers of Strummerfest, neither of whom has ever been paid for their effort, or wanted to be.

← Carrie - AKA "Care" - brought to bear her extraordinary energy and commitment to help make sure the first two annual Strummerfest festivals were a success, and is the reason for so many other voluntary contributions drawing on the array of local artists, sound techs, and venue operators she knew to donate time and talent to the

early shows. Today, Care is a popular DJ on the 93.5 FM country radio station broadcasting out of Kingston, Ontario.

Michael - a local lawyer and the Strummer/Clash fan who originated the concept for Strummerfest - continues to manage every show (and is the grateful author of this report). Michael has designed most Strummerfest t-shirts and all of its posters. The 2019 t-shirt design was made by his son, David - also volunteered.



Promotional Stuff

T-shirts, buttons and posters are just an essential part of any rock cultural thing. For Strummerfest, this also includes the occasional print ad and even a short-term blog. Here's just a sampling from over the years.

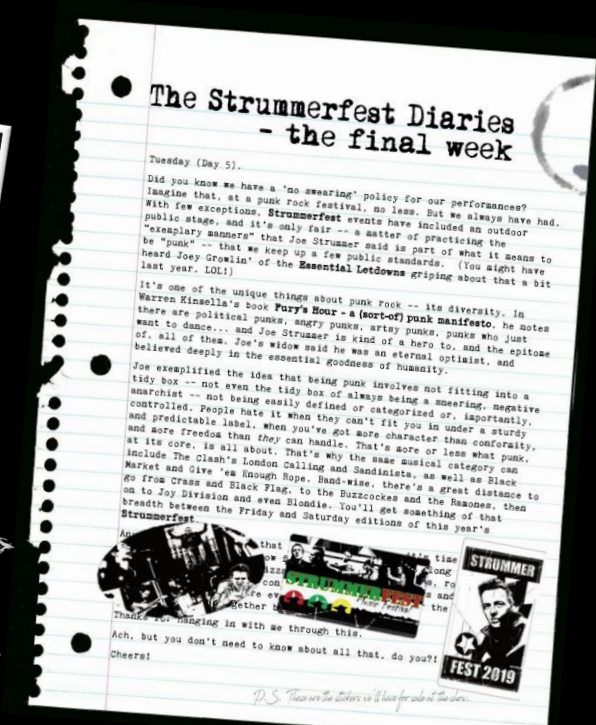
Posters and ads, clockwise from the middle: 2012; 2014; 2016; 2016; 2016, 2019.



Samples of our 2012, 2018 and 2019 t-shirts.



The Strummerfest Diaries was a 'punky' looking blog that chronicled the day-to-day progress of the week before the festival in 2019.



"Punk ain't the boots or the hair dye... [It's] the attitude that you have... I go straight in, see what's wrong, and I fix it... I like to be completely aware of what's going on at all times... This is punk rock. In fact, punk rock means exemplary manners to your fellow human being."

■ Joe Strummer (1952-2002)

Thanks !

Thanks for reading.

Thanks for caring.

Thanks for being, or considering being,
a part of our Strummerfest family.