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Unexpected Pleasures Check out Buffalo's slightly quirky festivals, parties and happenings

By Michelle Kearns

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The end of the glorious summer festival season looms. Still, there's reason to celebrate in August and the months ahead. Western New York's out-of-the-ordinary gatherings live on throughout the year. Take a chance. Try a few. Dabble in the pleasure of the unexpected.

Pine Grill Jazz Reunion. Martin Luther King Jr. Park, Fillmore Avenue. Jazz concert series. The first two Sundays of August (today, Aug. 5, and Aug. 12 this year) 4 to 10 p.m. 884-2013.

Named for a defunct nightclub on Jefferson Avenue, where Aretha Franklin and James Brown once sang. Now musicians come with six bands each day. The crowd, many over 40, chows on ribs and picnic fare.

"You're sitting there among the trees," says George Scott of the Colored Musicians Club. "It's like one big family, and you're listening to some great stuff."

Buffalo Infringement Festival, "11 Days of Art Under the Radar." The city's third annual series of avant-garde plays, films and art has its finale today, Aug. 5. Full schedule of 16 finale events at infringebuffalo.org.

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Montreal Fire Dancers will do a "squid ink" show in Day's Park near Wadsworth Street. Closing party, Staples bar, Allen Street.

Elmwood Festival of the Arts. Aug. 25 and 26 on Elmwood Avenue. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. **elmwoodartfest.org**. 830-2484.

The funky focus includes performances of Celtic music, African drum and dance, and rock from a solar-powered sound system. Try "alternative" festival food ? beans and greens and pan-fried artichokes. Final parade with jazz band and stilt walkers is open to all.

"I call it the festival of peace and love," says Angela Hastings, an organizer. "There's like this buzz of happiness."

ToyFest. Aug. 25 and 26, East Aurora. Fisher-Price's home town lures crowds with toymaking crafts, puppet shows; Saturday toy parade, Sunday antique car show. **toytownusa.com**.

Buffalo Brewfest. 2 to 6 p.m. Aug. 25. at the Central Terminal train station, 495 Paderewski Drive. **buffalobrewfest.com**. More than 50 brewers bring more than 100 kinds ? ales, lagers, pilsners and mead. The decayed art-deco terminal is being brought back to life as a haven for other vast and unusual happenings: **buffalocentralterminal.org**. Find beer on tap along with German sausage eating at Oktoberfest, Sept. 22.

FALL CONTINUES WITH:

The Hassenpfeffer Club. Named for Prohibition speakeasy gatherings, curious explorers gather the last Tuesday of most months at Ulrich's Tavern, 674 Ellicott St. 855-8409. \$20. **ulrichstavern.net**.

Outings include trips in a rented school bus to historic taverns in the city's old neighborhoods. The East Side's Ukrainian club with its arched Casablancastyle bar will be part of the Sept. 25 tour. Oktoberfest history and drink Oct. 23. "Everyone who goes is always surprised by how much fun it is," says Jim Daly, Ulrich's owner.

NOVEMBER

World's Largest Disco. Buffalo Convention Center 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. the Saturday after Thanksgiving, Nov. 24. Buy tickets, about \$25, in October.

worldslargestdisco.com.

A party for thousands steeped in 1970s kitsch. Bee Gees and Commodores soundtrack keeps the dance floor alive and packed with polyester, Afro wigs, platform shoes. People comb thrift shops all year for the right, dated skimpy dress.

DECEMBER

Victorian Christmas luncheons and candlelight dinners. Theodore Roosevelt National Historic Site, 641 Delaware Ave. Dec. 1-8. 884- 0095. **nps.gov/thri**.

An annual celebration at the unusual park site and mansion, where Roosevelt was sworn in as 26th president of the United States in 1901 after President McKinley was assassinated.

Volunteers throw retro parties in rooms with preserved turn-of-the-previous-century finery, old-fashioned ornaments and showings of vintage furs and dresses.

FEBRUARY

Post-Valentine's Day party. Racy, love-and-sex themed affair that's new each year. Find times and locations at **squeaky.org**, Web home for host Squeaky Wheel, the nonprofit devoted to creating and showing artsy films.

Champagne and pomegranate juice cocktails were poured at the door last year. Past soirees have included faux porn comedy performances and framed lip prints with kiss musings.

MARCH

Dyngus Day parties. a Buffalo version of a Polish tradition the Monday after Easter, March 24. **DyngusDayBuffalo.com**.

A local Mardi Gras-like celebration with squirt-gun pranksters, flirting with pussywillows, beer-drinking, polkadancing and sausage-eating. The old Polish neighborhood in the city's East Side is at the heart of things. The best: Adam Mickiewicz Library, 612 Fillmore Ave.

"It's a Polish matchmaking tradition," says organizer Marty Biniasz of the holiday. "We have documented Dyngus Day love stories."

FOR NEXT SUMMER ?

The "Bash." A Red Cross party has people dressing up as the military docs and crew from the old "M*A*S*H" TV show June 6. **redcrossbash.org**

Art Alive. Dress as paintings and compete at the Albright- Knox Art Gallery for best of show as Andy Warhol soup cans or the Last Supper. June 7.

albrightknox.org/artalive.

Waldfest. East Aurora enclave of cottages in the woods opens for a festival of Bavarian dancing and German food and drink. Check July date at **springarden.com**.

Queen City Jazz Fest. Bands play in front of the 73-year-old Colored Musicians Club on Broadway. Check July date at **coloredmusiciansclub.org**.