

Creating Special Events

Second Edition

Lee J. deLisle

SAGAMORE
P U B L I S H I N G

©2014 Sagamore Publishing LLC
All rights reserved.

Publishers: Joseph J. Bannon and Peter L. Bannon
Director of Sales and Marketing: William A. Anderson
Sales Manager: Misti Gilles
Director of Development and Production: Susan M. Davis
Production Coordinator: Amy S. Dagit
Graphic Designer: Julie Schechter

ISBN print edition: 978-1-57167-730-3
ISBN ebook: 978-1-57167-731-0
Library of Congress Control Number: 2014942719

Sagamore Publishing
1807 N. Federal Dr.
Urbana, IL 61801
www.sagamorepublishing.com

This book is dedicated to my loving wife, Rhonda Larson.

You make every day a special event!

Contents

Acknowledgments.....	vii
Biographical Information	viii

Section One: Positioning Festivals in Community Life

Chapter One.....	3
A Short, but Interesting, History of Festivals, Fairs, and Special Events	
Chapter Two.....	23
Special Events = Community Benefits	
Chapter Three.....	49
Strategic Planning	

Section Two: Identifying and Managing Fiscal Resources

Chapter Four	75
Planning for a Positive Economic Impact	
Chapter Five.....	93
Accounting and Budgeting	
Chapter Six	109
The Nature of Sponsorship	
Chapter Seven	127
Marketing	
Chapter Eight	145
Risk Management	

Section Three: Human Resource Management

Chapter Nine	159
Organizational Culture: Staff and Volunteers	
Chapter Ten	179
Contractual Services – Entertainment and Special Services	
Chapter Eleven	197
Customer Service and Satisfaction	

Section Four: Physical Resources

Chapter Twelve	211
Site Planning and Selection	
Chapter Thirteen	221
Concessions: Bread and Circuses	
Chapter Fourteen	237
Event Safety: Traffic, Crowd, and Parking Strategies	
Chapter Fifteen	261
Technology	

Section Five: Evaluation & Career Development

Chapter Sixteen	273
Evaluation: The Path of Enlightenment	
Chapter Seventeen	289
Professional Opportunities	
Index	305

Acknowledgments

This project was conceived at the SPRE Teaching Institute at Oklahoma State University in 2006. The first edition, which took a little longer than I imagined, was published in 2009. Working with the staff at Sagamore Publishing for that edition and the current one has been a pleasure!

Just a few short weeks ago, I saw a Facebook post from a former student from Western Michigan University who landed her first job as an event planner. She was one of the first students to begin the event management minor at Western. The program now has over fifty students from various majors across campus, all seeing the benefits of enhancing their skill set with the event management minor.

I left that program in 2012 in the very capable hands of Ms. Deb Droppers, owner of the Event Company LLC in Kalamazoo, Michigan and a dedicated adjunct instructor who continues to bring energy, wit, wisdom, and innovation to her fortunate students. I thank her for the continued positive role model she offers to the students.

The fall of 2014 will mark the beginning of a new minor in event management at my current university, Southern Connecticut State University, in New Haven, CT. During the past two years, I have witnessed students' positive response to our event management class and their interest in learning more about the profession. I look forward to sharing the challenges and rewards of offering this new program to our students and serving the university community in their efforts to create meaningful events for our students.

This second edition includes a new chapter on career development and professional opportunities in event management. It is an important part of the responsibilities of an instructor to provide not only the tools for success but also a roadmap that may lead to professional fulfillment. I hope that this new chapter will help in that work.

The technology chapter has been updated as we continue to attempt to keep pace with the rapid developments in technology that both aid our daily efforts and challenge us to remain relevant to a new generation.

Research findings have been updated where appropriate and new pictures have been added.

And so, I invite you to enjoy this second edition of *Creating Special Events*!

Lee J. deLisle

About the Author



Lee J. deLisle

Dr. Lee J. deLisle is a professor and the graduate coordinator in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, Ct. He teaches courses in recreation administration, event management, and sport and entertainment management.

Dr. deLisle received his PhD in Social Science of Sport and Leisure from the University of Connecticut, in 2002. He also worked as a director of parks and recreation in Connecticut. Dr. deLisle has contributed articles to the *World Leisure Journal*, *Annals of Leisure Research*, *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, *SCHOLE*, and publications for the National Recreation and Parks Association and the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association. He co-authored the text, *The Story of Leisure in 1998*.

He currently serves as the chair of the NRPA Education Network, is a member of the Academy of Leisure Science, the World Leisure Association, the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, the North American Performing Arts Managers and Agents, the Midwest Arts Council, and the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association.

Section One

Positioning Festivals in Community Life

This section emphasizes the importance of festivals and special events in the development and progress of human culture. Given the significant role events play in contemporary societies, it is critical that we understand the need for strategic event planning.

Chapter One

**A Short, but Interesting, History of Festivals,
Fairs, and Special Events**

Chapter Two

Special Events = Community Benefits

Chapter Three

Strategic Planning

A Short, but Interesting, History of Festivals, Fairs, and Special Events

“

But the gods, taking pity on human beings—a race born to labor—gave them regularly recurring divine festivals, as a means of refreshment from their fatigue.

”

Plato, *Republic* 653.d.

Introduction

While the history of festivals and events spans the breadth of recorded history, during the last thirty years, special events and festivals have grown in number and significance in communities large and small. What was once a volunteer-driven, laypersons' effort at providing a diversion from the normal demands of living, is now considered to be of paramount importance to the identity and well-being of organizations, businesses, communities, and governmental agencies from the local to the international level. Event management has become a bona fide profession with courses of study, certifications, and an increasing number of opportunities for professional development and career advancement. This evolution comes as no surprise as the service sector and the emerging creative sector both seek new and innovative ways to contribute to the cultural capital of our communities in an environment of fiscal responsibility and sustainability. The International Festival and Events Association estimates that the global special events industry includes over one million regularly re-occurring events.¹

Beginning in the early 1990s, a concerted effort to formalize the teaching and administration of event management was initiated. One may turn to university programs such as those found at Napier University in Edinburgh, Scotland, the Event Management Program at The George Washington University, and the Purdue University Certified Festival Executive Certification program as evidence of the growing importance of this field. Over 250

colleges and universities provide curricula in event and festival management and have collaborated with working professionals to publish numerous texts and articles in support of this highly specialized aspect of management. Industry-specific organizations, such as the International Festivals and Events Association, the International Special Events Society, the International Associations of Fairs and Expositions, and others provide professionals with additional resources to expand their information base and improve their management skills with a particular emphasis on new and emerging technologies.

For the majority of recreational service professionals, event management is one of many responsibilities that require time and expertise during the course of the year. Some agencies are fortunate to have a marketing department or even a special events division, with full- and part-time employees, whose job it is to promote events and activities that serve residents and guests. Others may contract for professional services to manage single-use or annual events. Many, however, must allocate precious limited resources toward the success of such events while managing many other equally important priorities.

Organization of the Book

This book is written to provide the busy professional with an organized and systematic approach to festival and event management. Students seeking a career in event management or who wish to enhance their academic experience in this particular area of programming will also benefit from the contents of this book.

The book is designed to allow the reader to choose a topic or chapter without regard to the order of the chapters as they are presented. For example, if your main concern is managing contractual services, you may skip to that chapter in order to gain additional information. It should be pointed out, however, that the chapter order presented attempts to prioritize issues that, when taken in total, will help to assure the successful planning and implementation of the event-management process. The newest chapter on the event profession and career opportunities is at the end of the book but may be presented earlier to students in order to help them to explore career paths.

The book presents event management as the means of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling limited resources in order to achieve specific goals and objectives that are in concert with the mission of your organization. For each organization, the goals might vary greatly, but all projects of this nature will in some way address the need to provide goods and services and most importantly, experiences, in an effective, efficient, and pleasing manner.

What remains constant in this specialized area of management is the resource pool. That is to say, the management of projects, including festivals and special events, involves three categories of resources: fiscal/financial resources, human resources, and physical/material resources. Acknowledging the universality of this principal, the book is organized by way of these three resource areas. Many aspects of event management require the interplay of these resources at varying levels and are so noted in the text. Whenever possible, current and useful references are provided that allow for greater analysis of a particular element of the planning and implementation process.

It is readily acknowledged that the information contained in the following chapters is but one approach to the multitude of challenges presented by a festival or special event. You are encouraged to combine your existing knowledge with whatever useful information found in the text, and to seek out additional resources, to help you to achieve the greatest

level of success in this rewarding area of professional service. With this in mind, an extensive bibliography of texts and online resources is provided. It is also evident that one text cannot address all the particularities of event management as these activities can range in scope from a birthday party, a professional conference, to the Olympic Games.

This text analyzes and presents event management from the perspective of an outdoor event with entertainment, concessions, and merchandise made available to the visitors. It is intended for service providers and students who may devote a portion of their time to special event management. The tasks associated with this type of effort are representative of many types of events that one may encounter in a professional career.

Let the Reader Beware!

The remainder of this chapter offers a look at the philosophical, historical, and anthropological significance of festivals and special events. If you are only looking for a how-to approach to an upcoming event that you need to manage, skip to Chapter 2! If, on the other hand, you would like to enhance your understanding of the historical and cultural significance of special events and would like to understand your event's place in the history of civilization—read on!

Some Philosophical Perspectives on Festive Activity

From the earliest moments of reflective human existence, our ancestors attempted to understand the unknown causes of natural, physical experience. They likewise tried to influence these experiences through their own limited powers. Science, in later times, attempted to do the same through a more in-depth and systematic analysis of the underlying principles of the natural order. In this broad sense, not much has really changed over the millennia. We continue to participate in many rituals—religious, social, and otherwise in order to deepen our understanding of human existence. We also continue to explore our understanding of reality through the sciences. In the face of staggering scientific and technological advances, we may also seek to retreat to a simpler, less threatening time, one that can be captured through ritual, embodied in special events and festivals. Recreational pursuits, now more than ever, provide a necessary haven for the wearied travelers of the 21st century.

Central to the human desire to create meaning is the development and expansion of ritualistic behaviors. Ritual, as a form of symbolic language, sought to physically express the aspirations, fears, and longings of the human condition. Ritual also seeks to reach out to others, be they the unseen forces of the universe or peripheral members of the existing social structure. With the evolution of ritual came an order to the world that was previously unknown. According to Rappaport (1999), language, both spoken and through symbolic gesture, allowed humans to “explore the realms of the desirable, the moral, the proper, the possible, the fortuitous, the imaginary, the general, and their negatives, the undesirable, the immoral and the impossible.”² Ritual events, as much as the control of fire or applied use of the wheel, were critical to the evolution of humanity. Human culture is, in effect, the result of many forms of language. Ritual and ceremony and other symbolic behaviors, often



Food festivals are very popular with all ages.

Photo Credit: Deb Droppers Event Company

expressed through special events and festivals, are another form of language central to our understanding of humanity.

The basis of culture is said to originate in the human experience we call leisure. Furthermore, according to Josef Pieper, the genuine significance of leisure is rooted in both contemplation and celebration (Pieper, 1952).³ While the earliest forms of celebration might have been seen as requisite for survival, the continuance and codification of these events surely suggests a significant and appropriate use of leisure. Celebration can be experienced individually, but it is realized more profoundly in significant social settings. At the heart of celebration are social group interactions commonly experienced through festivals and special events.

The concept of festivity arises from its inherent divergence from daily life activities. Festivals marked special times in the ancient lunar calendar, times that were sacred, (*sacroset* apart), from the rest of the year. Some festivals annually commemorated past events, oftentimes agriculturally based religious celebrations, providing a link between the natural, cyclical character of the seasons and a human interpretation of time. This created enormous advances in ancient culture. What makes these festival times special is the cessation of normal daily activities in order to allow for access to something extraordinary, superstitious, and even otherworldly.⁴

Celebrating a festival, as we know, involves a great deal of planning and coordination that may actually exceed the rigors of one's usual, daily, work-related responsibilities. What differentiates this type of work is that it is planned and accomplished for its own sake. The activity is staged for its own intrinsic meaning rather than as a means to some greater end. While there might be benefits that extend far beyond the timeframe of the event, economic impact certainly comes to mind, the focus of all effort is toward the meaning and experience of the event itself. Pieper (1999, p.15), suggests that the celebration of a festival encom-

passes the “fulfillment of human life and the form in which the fulfillment is to take place.”⁵ This effort toward fulfillment requires sacrifice, the sacrifice of time away from more useful or pressing activities.

The Romans saw festivals as a time set aside for exclusive use by the gods. Renouncing labor and potential profit suggests that festivals celebrate the “existential richness” of humanity in the face of the constant demands of material existence.⁶

Festivals are deeply rooted in the history of humankind, defining communities and relationships to their environment. The next few pages illustrate a few examples from ancient times that help to position our present-day experiences in the course of history.

Anthropological Foundations

The special events of antiquity provide us with a unique insight into the values, mores, and recreational interests of past generations. To study celebration is to understand the basic needs and aspirations of a civilization. Celebrations defined what people considered beautiful or attractive as well as what was forbidden or taboo. Celebration exalts the colors, textures, tastes, and odors of daily life. Celebrations highlighted traditions, heritage, beliefs, and fears. Festivals and special events were primary outlets for both the rich and poor to avail themselves of experiences outside the norms of daily living.

These events included such dire activities as human sacrifice and the bloody appeasement of the forces of evil, yet also celebrated human excellence through competitive games, music, dance, and artistic endeavors. Accounts of these events are often found to be fascinating because they provide both a link to our past as well as a more profound connection to our most human elements. Ritualistic behaviors, including those expressed in special events, are said to be *the* social act that is basic to humanity.⁷

One may go as far to say that these special events, as a communication and further development of culture, are deeply connected to, and an extension of, the original act of creation. In this sense, creating a festival is analogous to the creation of the world. This proposition is not to be taken lightly, as it certainly elevates the primordial importance and cosmic connectivity of such events. *Ritual and festal activity seek to bring traditions of the past forward to present and future generations.* They provide critical and irreplaceable links to the past, not merely as reflections, but as living recreations of events, people, and ideologies that come to have equal significance in the present.

Our understanding of the earliest forms of festival must start with the spiritual intentions of ritualistic or symbolic behavior. Humans sought to symbolically “control” their environments by appeasing the gods or other perceived forces of nature. Events and concepts such as rain, fertility, harvest, successful hunts, war, death, and the celebration of significant events in the communal life of a group all became the object of ritual, or festive behavior. Repeating these behaviors shaped time and human experience, adding depth to short and sometimes difficult lives. Festive behavior was often co-opted by those in power, adding political weight to the otherwise religious designs of these special days. Critical to the establishment of the nuances of power in the festival environment was an understanding and manipulation of the roles played by both participants and observers.



Ancient religious practices are remembered in contemporary festivals.

Photo Credit: deLisle

Ritual vs. Performance

Celebrations have performers and audiences with different roles affecting different outcomes. Some forms of celebration attempt to blur the lines between performer and audience, bringing each group to a level of shared participation. Audiences can become congregations, as community may be a primary goal of the activity. By identifying the role of individuals in relation to the activity, we can differentiate between ritual and performance. Ritual describes an attempt to prescribe behaviors with intended results such as conformity or adherence to an accepted way of thinking or behaving. The accurate repetition of the ritual evoked power and security, familiarity and mystery. Ritual seeks to bring about a sense of unity through symbolic or actual participation.⁸

Festivals and other special events, while sometimes ritualistic, often were intended to maintain the dichotomy between performer and audience, between athletes and fans, based on the performance activity of the former group versus the passive involvement of the latter. The spectator is drawn to the event partially by the sense of uncertainty as the outcome of an artistic performance or athletic event is not predetermined. The spectator's level of identification with the performer creates a bond, a loyalty, determined to some degree by the unpredictable nature of the event. Spirits rose and fell with the success of an athlete, the performance of an actor, or the successful completion of a symbolic task by one with whom the spectator was vicariously joined. This *psychic income* remains an important factor in the mass appeal of public staged performances and events.

Festivals, fairs, and similar events were central to the development and maintenance of culture throughout the course of recorded history. There are many specialized texts that describe the festivals of past civilizations in minute detail. These works provide great insight into the role of festivals in ancient times and lend a sense of relevancy to our contemporary efforts at celebration. We will, in the next few pages, take a brief look at the role of festivals and celebration in several familiar social contexts of ancient times.

Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egypt is perhaps the best known of the ancient civilizations having a profound impact on Western civilization. Ancient Egyptian history begins around 3150 BCE and continued until approximately the fourth century CE. Egypt contributed advancements in agriculture as well as systems for construction, mathematics, religion, and communal celebration. The many festivals of ancient Egypt were designed to celebrate and honor the numerous gods that were a part of this highly evolved culture. These events appealed to the special powers of a god to influence a fertile planting season, a successful harvest, the actions of the pharaoh, or the emergence of a new year. The cultural pervasiveness of death was addressed through the honoring of dead relatives or the gods of the underworld. Other celebrations were strictly political in nature, serving to advance the agenda of the pharaoh by recounting an important victory or the special bond between the pharaoh and a particular deity. Taken together these festivals contributed to a full calendar of annual festivals during the Dynastic Period.

The Festival of Opet

This annual festival, held during the second calendar month, lasted twenty-seven days. It celebrated the link between the pharaoh and the god Amun. Amun evolved into the highest god amongst many in this polytheistic cosmology. The festival honored Amun but also acknowledged the renewed transfer of power from this god to the reigning pharaoh. Amun was envisioned as the physical father of the pharaoh, intervening in the activities of the pharaoh, including being able to impregnate the pharaoh's wife to ensure the continuation of the dynasty. This deific impregnation scenario is later found in the Christian tradition of the immaculate conception of Jesus by Mary.

The festival coincided with the annual flooding of the Nile River, which rendered agricultural tasks all but impossible at that time each year. The festival began with a procession commencing at the Temple of Amun and ending at the Luxor Temple, one and a half miles away. A statue of the god was adorned with jewelry and precious gems and placed on a shrine that was then fixed to a ceremonial boat. This forerunner to the parade float was then carried through the crowded streets by eager government officials who vied for the honor of being closely associated with this ultimate symbol of power. The practice of political hopefuls clamoring for highly visible positions in community events and parades continues in many locales to this day! The procession was accompanied by the nonstop rhythm of the military drummers, dancing Nubians, and singing priests all performing in the haze of incensed air. The pharaoh greeted the entourage at the reviewing stand outside the Temple of Luxor. Due to this symbolic act suggesting acceptance and renewal, the citizens were obliged to forgive any missteps committed by the pharaoh during the previous year. Perhaps a few were heard shouting "four more years" as they welcomed their leader. The pharaoh responded with unparalleled generosity. Records indicate that during one



The pageantry of the Festival of Opet is depicted on an ancient papyrus.

Photo Credit: www.touregypt.net/feature-stories/festival.htm
www.touregypt.net

festival in the 12th century, BCE temple officials distributed 11,341 loaves of bread and 385 jars of beer to the enthusiastic citizens. The Egyptians were fastidious record keepers, providing us with the first indications of event management strategies. Ancient festival calendars often included detailed lists of the endowments or offerings necessary for the appeasement of the deities. Further lists, such as those found at Medinet Habu, offer detailed accounts of the exact quantity of breads, cakes, beer containers, meat, fowl, incense, charcoal, and other resources necessary for the event. These manifests also included the amount and types of grain neces-

sary for specific breads or blends of beer. From this data, one can ascertain the relative fiscal status of an event based on the allocation of resources that were associated with its staging. The records were also the basis for budgeting for the subsequent years of the festival.⁹

Concurrent with the mighty pageants of the Egyptians were less ostentatious but equally significant celebrations held by small agricultural communities and great city states throughout the Mediterranean basin and beyond.

Greece

Plato (Laws 653d2) referred to a festival as *anapaula*, a breathing time, a break from the necessary work of survival. The foundation of all Greek festivals was the desire to honor the gods. In the ancient Greek cosmology there were many gods available for festive worship. This pantheistic approach to religion created a calendar that was full of festivals and events dedicated to the honor of the gods through the efforts of man. In an attempt to emulate the gods who took on human forms and characteristics, the citizens strove to master particular activities or events motivated by a sense of *arête* or excellence.

The study of these festivals, *heortology*, provides us with great detail concerning the motivations and administration of these events. Accounts of festivals and their social significance are found in the writings of philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, as well as many of the historians of that period. In addition, festal activities are depicted on thousands of works of art ranging from simple clay pottery to elaborate sculpture, all displaying activities associated with festival life.

While festivals were celebrated year round, the most significant included not only the requisite animal sacrifices and processional elements but also the opportunity for men and young boys to display their prowess in a series of skill events.

The Sacred Games of Olympia

Around 800 BCE, Greece emerged from a difficult time, their own Dark Ages (1100 – 800 BCE). Coinciding with this evolution was the initiation of a festival dedicated to Zeus, featuring competition of various sorts. In 776 BCE, the games of Olympia were first cel-

brated. The participants competed for the *athlon* or prize, in the form of a victory crown, shields, money, or for some, meals provided for the rest of their earthly lives. The competitors competed *gymnos*, in the nude. Our understanding of a gymnasium as a place to participate in sport and athletics is derived from this practice. The *gymnikos athlon* or naked competitions were performed in front of the assembly or *agon*. The *agonia* referred to the struggle for victory performed in public, and is the source of our word agony immortalized in the *Wide World of Sports* visual description of the “thrill of victory and the agony of defeat.”

This religious sports festival included footraces, boxing, archery, the pentathlon, and acrobatics. Adding to the diversity and colorful nature of the festival, the competitions were accompanied by dancing, singing, and other musical skills, poetry, and equestrian events. Athletic festivals addressed the Greeks’ need to honor their deities, celebrate excellence, mark a special event such as a funeral, and to provide respite from the daily routines of work or war. Due to the renaissance effort by Pierre de Coubertin in 1896, we are fortunate to be able to witness a continuation of the Olympic Games in modern times. While the magnitude of the games has grown and the number of events has been greatly expanded, including full competition for women, the underlying themes of competition and excellence remain. The logistical and political efforts required to stage the modern Olympics are enormous but also find their roots in a very detailed strategy that originated in the ancient games of Greece.

By the year 573 BCE, the Olympic games had combined with the Pythian Games, the Nemean Games, and the Isthmian Games to comprise the *stephanitic* or crown games of Greece. Miller (2004) tells us that the Olympic Games rose to the forefront as the names of the winners of the *stadion*, or 200-meter foot race, were used to identify specific years. For example, the year 490 BCE was commonly referred to as the third year of the Olympiad in which Tisikrates won the stadion for the second time.¹⁰

The administration of these all-important games was well planned and controlled down to the smallest details. Preparation for the games took place in the nearby town of Elis, 40 kilometers, about 25 miles, away from Olympus. The judges elected to supervise the upcoming games would move to the *Hellanodikaion*, the judges building, approximately ten months before the games. Also present was the Olympic Council of approximately fifty individuals who were the final arbiters of any disputes associated with training, eligibility, or athletes. Subcommittees were formed to coordinate and oversee the various athletic competitions. A nationwide truce, or *ekecheiria*, was arranged in order to ensure the safe travel of athletes and spectators to the game site. Envoys were sent throughout Greece to announce the truce and to instruct local representatives in the administration of the days of peace. These regional leaders served as the local representatives for the games, creating a very well organized support and marketing system for the games.

Athletes were instructed to appear at a predesignated time for training and were fined or flogged if they were late. The athletes spent several months in training and evaluation prior to admission to the games. Wrestlers were matched according to size and weight, boxers sparred, and runners trained at their selected distances. All athletes trained with, and often against, their competitors prior to the games. The best athletes were selected from this protracted training period to participate in the games. This is similar to our contemporary practice of Olympic trials in participating countries. With the arrival of the athletes came family, friends, trainers, and other spectators who spent weeks prior to the games watching the athletes in a spring training atmosphere.

Besides the preparation of the athletes, there was a permanent staff that attended to the grounds and facilities and services. Miller (2004) describes a staff that included priests, flutists, a libation pourer, dancers, a woodsman, butchers, cooks, bailiffs to ensure order, and a host of groundskeepers. Site management included the renovation of buildings and sanitary facilities, the track surface was turned and regularly wetted down, the jumping pits were prepared, and running lanes were marked with white lime. The hippodrome was made ready for the equestrian events, and the vast campground area designated for overnight guests was prepared. A parade, beginning in Elis and lasting two days, would bring the athletes and many spectators to the sacred site of the games. The number of parade participants is said to have numbered in the thousands.¹¹

It was also the case that poets, musicians, painters, and sculptors would be in attendance, seeing the opportunity to sell their talents and wares to the large crowd of visitors. These commercial activities were kept away from the religious center of activity housed in the Sanctuary of Zeus.

The Olympic judges made final determinations of eligibility, and the athletes recited the sacred oath. The first day of the games featured very little competition, as the athletes prepared for the days to come. The crowd was summoned by the trumpeters for the initiation of the competitions of the second day of the games, which included chariot races and horseback riding followed by the footraces held in the stadion. The pentathlon was the featured event of the day followed by an evening of celebration for the victors. Religious ceremonies were held day and night during these high days of the festival. Great processions to the altars of the gods and animal sacrifices were the order of the day. The competition for the younger males was held on the third day, as the adults rested from the previous night of partying. The adult athletic competition resumed in full on the fourth day. The judges were on guard against bribery, corruption, and cheating, all of which took place during the games on a fairly regular basis. Those who committed fouls were whipped, while others were fined significant sums, which contributed to the upkeep of the festival grounds. The final day of the festival was marked by extravagant ceremony, with each winner receiving a crown of olive leaves cut with a golden scythe by a young boy whose parents were both alive. Those athletes fortunate to be winners were welcomed in their hometowns with parades and continued celebration, and were often the recipients of special honors, such as guaranteed meals for the rest of their lives, statues, and their names included in the official records of the town.

The Olympic site and the many administrators of the games were faced with traffic congestion, sanitary issues, wear and tear of grounds and facilities, and the need to begin the process for the next games, a mere four years away. The living conditions for the visitors were not as comfortable as their daily environs. The experience of attending the games seemed to outweigh the inconvenience of the setting. The writer/philosopher Epictetus (Miller 2004, p.120), made the following observation:

There are unpleasant and difficult things in life. But don't they happen at the Olympia? Don't you suffer from the heat? Aren't you cramped for space? Don't you bathe badly? Don't you get soaked whenever it rains? Don't you get your fill of shouting and other annoyances? But I suspect that you compare all this to the value of the show and endure it.¹²

The highest ideals of the Greek games, directed toward religious worship and honoring the ideals of *arête* and amateurism, slowly gave way to professionalism. This evolution, rem-

incent of our own experience of sport in the latter half of the 20th century, had become politically expedient for those who sought to use the games for personal gain, a development not lost on the Roman occupiers of the time.

Ludi Romani

The Roman Games, or *Ludi Magni* (Great Games), were considered the major religious festival of ancient Rome. Part of the genius of the Roman Empire was its ability to incorporate traditions and cultural practices from conquered nations into its ever-expanding military and social sphere. Initially, the Romans did not find the Olympic-style competitions of Greece particularly interesting; they did, however, note the fervor and loyalty that the games produced in the residents. The Romans sought to support the concept of citizenship and subsequently adopted the structure of the games from the conquered Greeks, as well as adding practices of the Etruscans who inhabited areas of central and southern Italy.

The later Roman emperors embraced the Greek Olympic competition, often personally competing in events such as chariot racing, exemplified by the efforts of Nero. These games, established solely for entertainment and propaganda purposes, were often rigged to ensure victory to favored individuals. Ancient lore claims that the Emperor Nero was awarded a prize for a chariot race that he did not even finish due to falling out of his chariot. Nonetheless, athletic competition in the Olympic style became a mainstay of the Roman festival calendar.

At the time of the games, the center of Rome, the *Forae Romanum*, was the focus of religious, governmental, and commercial activity for residents, and a place that inspired awe and respect on the part of the many visitors who passed through the gates of Rome. The existence of countless perfectly proportioned buildings, arches, and manicured roadways all set the stage for the expression of Roman prowess and excess that were characteristic of their games and celebrations.

The great autumn festival games in Rome included a procession of significant local and national leaders marching from the Capitol to the Circus Maximus, a feat that would today require dodging quite a bit of city traffic. The government officials who led the parade were generally followed by horsemen, charioteers, athletes, dancers and impersonators, and musicians. These groups preceded the bearers of religious icons, statues, vessels, and material offerings, lending a religious tone to the procession. Finally came the animals intended for slaughter in honor of the many gods, both domestic and imported, that were included in Roman cosmology. Ritualistic bathing and the purification of priests and animals preceded the slaughter of the animals. The blood and the smoke of the burning meat was thought to have a cleansing effect on the participants and spectators.



The Roman Forum was the site of religious and governmental celebrations during the empirical period.

Photo Credit: deLisle



The Circus Maximus was the site for chariot races, battle reenactments, and the martyrdom of many Christians.

Photo Credit: deLisle

The Circus Maximus, still visible in a very rough form today, had a seating capacity of 150,000 and was frequently at capacity for those who enjoyed the thrill of chariot racing. Spectators could eat and drink freely, mix with the opposite sex to whatever level pleased them, and place bets on their favorite teams of horse and driver. Between the major racing events, entertainers would take to the circle to offer music, dance, juggling, acrobatics, and athletic events, such as foot races, wrestling, and boxing. Other sites around the city of Rome, such as the Circus of Domitian and the Circus Vaticanus, held similar events. Concurrent with these games were the spectacles offered the public in the amphitheater of Flavius, which is usually referred to as the Coliseum. Sophisticated stages were erected for events as diverse as gladiatorial combat, military reenactments including naval battles, and a host of shows dedicated to the destruction of human and animal combatants. The Coliseum featured a retractable roof fashioned after the mechanics of the human iris and using the rigging technology of early sailing ships. The floor was also removable, allowing for the flooding of the area to accommodate scale models of ships for the naval battles. The coliseum represented a prototype of the multiuse indoor arenas that are present in many modern cities.

Festival after festival was added to the calendar in an effort to win the favor of the people, ensuring the longevity of political careers. The glory of Rome was offered to the citizens through brutal “blood sports,” with



The amphitheater of Flavius, known commonly as the Colosseum of Rome, was a multi-purpose arena allowing for the flooding of the floor for mock sea battles, racing, gladiatorial battles, and all forms of entertainment.

Photo Credit: deLisle

food and entertainment, the “bread and circuses,” that filled over 120 days of the Roman calendar. The logistical demands of such event management indicate advanced methods of planning and administration of large numbers of people, animals, and props that served the goals of the Roman leaders. Pacifying and engaging the populace in various forms of less than wholesome entertainment was central to the political well-being of the ruling class. While chaos may have been the order of the day for the spectators, the rulers and organizers were generally pleased with their ability to provide such festivals and events.

Early Christianity: A Period of Transition

The rise of the religious sect that came to be known as Christianity would have profound effects on the festival culture of the latter Roman period and the subsequent period of the Holy Roman Empire. The practice of *agape*, love for others and respect for life, prevented the Christians from embracing the festival culture of the Romans. Christians refused to participate in the popular forms of entertainment, including activities at the circuses, the amphitheaters, and the public baths. Asceticism and the anticipated second coming, or *Parousia*, of their savior caused early Christian communities to live focused on the promise of salvation with a general disdain for the baser practices of Roman culture. With the ascension of Constantine to the role of Emperor and the declaration of Sunday as the Christian Sabbath in 324 AD, Christian beliefs and rituals became, in principle, the norm in the civilized western world. With this came additional acculturation throughout the empire. As Christianity spread and became Catholic, or universal, the cultural practices of diverse groups found their way into the Christian lexicon of practice and belief. For example, the celebration of Christmas on December 25 is more the result of the pre-existence of nature-based celebrations, such as the winter solstice, than on the historical accuracy of the early Church in determining the actual birthday of Jesus.

Festivals held an important place in the life of the Church with its increasing number of followers. Agriculturally based societies maintained their connection to the land through celebrations based on the seasons and the bounty of the earth. Planting festivals coincided with the theology of new life afforded by the Easter season. May Day, the secular paschal precursor, celebrated the end of the work of planting and the expectations and hopes for a fertile growing season. These days were marked by dancing, singing, and licentious behavior. Harvest time required hard labor and the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of that labor; wine festivals, olive festivals, beer making, and great feasts marked the completion of this important cycle of life. Harsh winters were softened by the celebration of Christmas and the revelry of the New Year, each allowing some respite from the realities of everyday living.

Societies were distinctively hierarchical, with the noble class controlling both the economic and ritual activities of the working-class peasants. It was through the beneficence of the nobility and the rulings of the Church that days were set aside to commemorate the lives of the saints, the victories of the lords, and the unending toil of the citizenry.

Carnivale!

With its roots in the Roman festivals devoted to the gods Bacchus and Saturn, Carnivale has flourished over the past 600 years, gradually accepted by both religious and communal authorities. The ancient Roman festival included the wearing of masks, feasting, and the inversion of societal roles. Slaves became masters, and nobles mixed with the commoners in the street. The people elected a King of the Feast, later termed the King of the Fools, who reigned over the festivities. It was a time of enthusiastic overindulgence. With the inversion of normal societal roles associated with the carnival season, the concept of misrule became the norm. An illiterate commoner might temporarily become the ruling bishop, a farmer would assume the role of governor, and the poor of the land took on aristocratic airs. This abandonment of tradition was a great enticement for rich and poor, as all enjoyed the suspension of the normal order of living. This is perhaps why Carnivale retains such an appeal to contemporary revelers and is celebrated with particular intensity in places such as Venice, Rio de Janeiro, and New Orleans. The Catholic Church wrestled with this and other pagan feasts, frequently incorporating them into the liturgical calendar. During the Middle Ages, after many unsuccessful attempts to eradicate pagan festivals completely, the Church finally assimilated Carnivale into the Christian calendar, associating it with the Lenten season. The Roman celebrations to the gods became a period of free-spirited revelry that took place between the Feast of Epiphany, January 6, and the beginning of Lent, forty days before the celebration of Easter.

Lent was a period of enforced sacrifice, a time of fasting, abstinence, penance, and repentance, and a renunciation of the flesh. Carnivale, *carne vale*, literally, farewell to meat, was the last opportunity to enjoy the things of the flesh, including the last reserves of meat that were stored over the winter prior to the austere time of Lent. Easter welcomed spring, the renewal of life, and would be celebrated with the preparation of a new lamb for the paschal feast.

During the Middle Ages, particularly in Venice, masks became central to the celebration of Carnivale. Masks allowed for anonymity and a sense of freedom, creating a surrealistic atmosphere of excesses. The behaviors of these masked revelers became so outrageous that mask wearing was prohibited outside the weeks of Carnivale in order to return to



The Carnivale in Venice is a time for outlandish costumes and behavior.

Photo Credit: www.leics.gov.uk/venice_carnival_beaks.jpg



The Battle Between Carnivale and Lent by Brueghel depicts the excesses of Carnivale on the left and the austerity of Lent on the right.

some sense of moral order. The mask was a great social equalizer allowing for the mixing of the very distinct social classes and a license for moral misbehavior that included drinking, gambling, and sexual escapades. As Venice lost its position as a political power, it became known as the pleasure capital of Europe, mainly for the liberal delights of the pre-Lenten carnival.

Current research into the politics of Carnivale describes this type of event as both a safety valve for social pressures and popular energies, and as a source for social change in the repressive climate of the Middle Ages.¹³ Festival making continues to represent a means of positive recreation, bringing together people from all strata of society in a sense of celebration, freedom, and equality. Festivals also create an environment for change and can be a catalyst for growth.

The Renaissance Feast

The Renaissance is considered the golden era of celebration in western culture as the wealthy nobility sought to recapture the glory of the Classical wonders of ancient Greece and Rome through the elevation of the arts and the exaltation of heraldry. Parades and other communal celebrations became the means of reconnecting to these ancient traditions, as well as providing the masses with unique opportunities to experience events outside the realm of normal life. Jousting tournaments were at their height of popularity in the 15th century, celebrating physical prowess and the ideals of chivalry.

Feasts were a significant means of celebration that preserved the hierarchical structure of society. These lavish events included detailed job descriptions for twenty or more specific responsibilities related to the service and entertainment of the guests. These positions included those directly related to food service, including that of the *Butler*, who protected

and mixed the wines, the *Cup Bearer*, who served wine to the honored guests, the *Saucer*, who made sauces and glazes, the *Quistron*, who turned the spit to roast the meat, and the *Dresser*, who carefully arranged the food on platters. Others served ceremonial or entertainment functions. The *Laverer* saw to the ceremonial hand washing, and the *Almoner* collected alms and food for the poor who typically waited outside the banquet hall. Oftentimes the poor were given the cold shoulder, the portion of the roast that was least desirable for consumption by the honored guests and would otherwise be thrown away. Jugglers, mimes, minstrels, musicians, pages, and others were supervised by the *Surveyor of Ceremonies*, who directed all the feast activities. Strict social order was demonstrated by the seating and serving order of guests. Important attendees were seated at a higher table, literally head and shoulders above the rest of the guests. The *Pantler*, or bread server, was sure to give the finest portions of the bread, the upper crust, to the honored guests.¹⁴ The feast was both a celebration of the largesse of the nobility as well as the honoring of the traditions of hierarchical lifestyles. Dining traditions have certainly evolved over the centuries, with a real feast of medieval proportions only found in specialty restaurants, yet we still understand the connotations of “cold shoulder,” “upper crust,” and being “head and shoulders” above the crowd.

The most anticipated event of any celebration, however, was the fireworks display that often punctuated the closing night of a festival. It was here that the local rulers could display a sense of theater, power, and awe that inspired the crowds and solidified their affection and loyalty.

Festivals and the Commercial Economy

Merchants realized the monetary potential of these events as audiences were drawn from far afield to the town or city square. Food and drink were in demand as was the longing to experience things that could not be found in more rural settings. In an environment of increasing wealth and a growing middle class, there was the desire for exotic foods and imported, one-of-a-kind items, in addition to the necessary staples of life. The evolution of the fair or festival as a trading event and cultural exchange was greatly expanded during this period. The local lords and rulers sponsored these events, exacted a tax from each vendor, and reaped great benefits from this nascent marketplace. The lords provided protection for safe passage for both the vendors and the populace, ensuring the success of these events. Trade fairs attracted all types of buyers and sellers and, over time, vendors elected to remain in areas that provided the most financial reward, contributing to the growth of towns and smaller cities. In addition to the goods offered for sale, one might encounter dancing bears, wrestling contests, musical and stage shows, and the occasional hanging or other form of public punishment that added to the spectacle of the event. The Leipzig Trade Fair, officially sanctioned by Kaiser Maximilian I, in 1497, and further supported by the decree of Pope Leo X in 1514, continues today in a new trade fair exhibition center constructed and dedicated on the 500th anniversary of the original founding of the fair.¹⁵

The economic rise of the local community was accompanied by the growth of a more independent-minded middle class, resulting in the demise of the feudal system and the initial efforts toward self-rule, individual freedom, and democracy. The guild system became the cornerstone of social and recreational life in many towns. Guilds bonded merchants and

craftsmen who supported local, centralized authority, embraced the emerging work ethic associated with the new forms of Christianity, and sought a stable, capitalist environment contributing to their desire for a better life. Guild members staged special events, athletic competitions, and other celebrations to the benefit of their membership and the general population. These events, combined with more traditional agricultural events and the remnant religious holidays, provided communities many opportunities for celebration and the associated economic benefits.

Those who grew rich from the commercial activities of fairs and local commerce built schools and churches, became patrons of the arts, collected manuscripts, commissioned musicians and painters, and invested their wealth in the emerging banking system to the benefit of their posterity. Post-medieval civilization flourished due to the commercial success of the fairs and festivals. Societies experienced a marked revolution in societal norms as the hierarchical structure of the first millennium gave way to a more secular, rational, horizontal, and enlightened approach to living. Just as the Church sought to accommodate the nature-based rituals of non-Christian communities, the Holy Days of the Middle Ages were either dropped from the calendar or were transformed into the holidays of modern Europe. While maintaining a sense of tradition, the world sought new experiences through trade and travel that would eventually bring them to the shores of the new world.¹⁶

Celebration in the New World

Colonial America was a new beginning for the first groups to venture to this *terra incognita*. While the reasons for coming ranged from religious piety to commercial gain, the newly arrived brought with them traditions and celebrations from their homelands.

The colonists also saw the opportunity to cast off the ideas of the old order and establish a unique tradition of celebration representative of their new home. Some sought to abolish traditional celebrations such as Christmas, while others even suggested changing the names of the months of the year.¹⁷ Between the hardships of the voyage, the demands of survival, and the natural evolution of a new culture, festive behavior adapted to new priorities.

In a continued effort to reject the old order, the colonists loyal to the Crown and Church of England retained the celebration of November 5, a day of anti-catholic demonstration. Guy Fawkes Day, or Bonfire Night, was an English anti-popish event that took the form of large bonfires set throughout the countryside to capture the sense of vigilance against the perceived threats posed by the papacy of the Roman Catholic Church. For the early Americans, this recurring reminder of the rejection of the dominance of the Church eventually became associated with the celebration of Election Day, which has traditionally fallen on or about November 5.

Much public activity in the colonies was of either a religious or political nature. The masking tradition of Europe became a method of expressing symbolic disdain toward the enemies of the new cultural order and a means of political resistance.¹⁸ Wearing the mask of an opponent or enemy gave license for heightened forms of ridicule and derision. Parades, processions, protests, and riots marked the calendar of the colonial period. New traditions were being formed that celebrated the process of cultural and political revolution resulting in a new order, new holidays, and a distinctly new way of life.

Forefather's Day, celebrated on December 21, was first observed in the colonies in 1769. This day commemorates the landing of the Pilgrims in 1620 on Plymouth Rock and is generally observed in New England. George Washington, who was born on February 22, 1732, was honored with a commemorative day first officially celebrated in 1782. Its observance took the place of the customary birthday celebrations of the various sovereigns of Great Britain. Patriot's Day, the third Monday of April, commemorates the first battle of the Revolutionary War on April 19, 1775. Also known as the Battles of Lexington and Concord Day, the celebration is a state holiday in Massachusetts, known as Patriot's Day, and is the traditional date of the Boston Marathon.

The American experiment included the commercialization of what had otherwise been religious events. With pressure from Reform Christians to limit religious holidays in deference to the Sabbath, it was the merchant sector of society that saw the potential benefit of the traditional religious holy days. It was the merchants who rediscovered the holy days, transforming the religious communities through the commercial marketing of feasts such as Christmas, St. Valentine's Day, and Easter. This pattern continues today as businesses as diverse as car dealerships and furniture stores "celebrate" Christmas, Easter, St. Patrick's Day, Presidents' Day, and more. Few if any national holidays have escaped the designs of the commercial sector!

Summary

The history of human culture can be documented and analyzed through an understanding of the basic need for ritual, celebration, and festivity. A sense and ordering of time, the declaration of values, the realization of relationship, and the expression of faith are made present in feast and festival, in self-denial, and in self-indulgence.

Pieper (1999, p. 35), again provides us with an interesting perspective on the celebrative nature of societies. "What really matters is not the mere preservation and conservation, but a constant succession of new, creative re-shapings, which give contemporaneity to the content of festivals."¹⁹ Pieper is suggesting that human nature, in addition to honoring the past, seeks to move forward with new and more meaningful forms of behavior that capture current desires, longings, and achievements. We are inventive by nature and this creative impulse will continue to find expression in the many events, festivals, and personal forms of celebration that we undertake throughout our communal and individual existence.

As those charged with providing this important source of meaning in the lives of so many, we better serve ourselves and our communities by attaining a thorough understanding of both the cultural significance and the professional challenges of festival and event management.

The following chapters provide a systematic approach to event management that specifically addresses the particular demands of this critical element of service that so profoundly impacts the quality and meaning of contemporary life. Thankfully, much research has been accomplished in the past few decades that directly impacts the effectiveness of modern event management. These findings are incorporated into the procedures and practices presented in this text.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did ancient civilizations celebrate festivals?
2. What role did symbolism play in ancient celebration?
3. What were the dynamics between performer and audience in ancient celebrations?
4. Which ancient civilization kept precise records of their festival resources?
5. To what extent did the Ludi Romani emulate the games of the Greeks?
6. How did fairs and festivals exert an economic and political impact during the Middle Ages and Renaissance periods?
7. Describe Pieper's understanding of the role of festivals and leisure.
8. What became of religious holidays in modern Europe?
9. Why were masks so important to medieval celebrations?
10. What is meant by "giving someone the cold shoulder" in historical and modern terms?

1. www.ifea.com downloaded from the worldwide web February 18, 2006.
2. Rappaport, Roy. (1999). *Ritual and religion in the making of humanity*. Cambridge, UK : Cambridge University Press. p.5
3. Pieper, Josef. (1952). *Leisure: The basis of culture*. New York: Pantheon Books.
4. Pieper, Josef. (1999). *In tune with the world: A theory of festivity*. South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine Press. p.7
5. IBID p. 15
6. IBID p. 19
7. Rappaport. Op cit. p. 31.
8. Rappaport. IBID p. 45.
9. www.touregypt.net/featurestories/festival.htm downloaded from the worldwide web June 2005.
10. Miller, Stephen. (2004). *Ancient Greek athletics*. New Haven: Yale University Press. p.118.
11. IBID. p. 119.
12. IBID p. 120.
13. Humphrey, Chris. (2001). *The politics of carnival; festive misrule in Medieval England*. Manchester UK: Manchester University Press. p. 23.
14. Cosman, Madeleine. (1981). *Medieval holidays and festivals: A calendar of celebrations*. New York: Scribner. p. 11.
15. Shivers, J., & deLisle, L. (1997). *The story of leisure*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. p. 59.
16. IBID. p.77
17. deLisle, L. (2002). *Leisure and theology: An analysis of the impact of the Protestant Reformation on the perception and use of leisure*. Storrs, CT :University of Connecticut: Unpublished doctoral dissertation.