

Getting Around

By ETHEL SIMMONS

Fireworks devotees gather at the river

There are fireworks fanatics who wouldn't miss the annual extravaganza in downtown Detroit for anything. And there are those who figure, fireworks, why bother?

The 45-minute pyrotechnics was the 19th annual one presented by the J.L. Hudson Co., now co-sponsoring the event with Stroh's.

All the vantage points along the river were taken up by 250,000 metropolitan Detroiters and visitors, of an anticipated 500,000. The fireworks, rained out Thursday night, went off spectacularly Friday, but probably caused some of the expected crowd to fizzle.

I hadn't been to the fireworks in years but with an opportunity to see them from the 70th floor of the Detroit Plaza, it was well worth the logistics.

HAVING A PLAN of action is half the fun (?) of seeing the fireworks. Once you get there, the battle's nearly over—until you try to challenge the traffic after the show.

Ah, but in between bursts of color that dazzle the sky. From three

barges on the river, explode one red, one white, one blue. The pattern repeats.

Other fireworks twinkle with the combined colors of Christmas tree lights. Some descend like silver rain—one viewer thought they looked like fishes, falling.

But the ones that excite the most glow like planets, with bright centers of contrasting hue, looming high in the air and seeming to move toward you before they dissolve.

Who wouldn't ooh and aah over this magic?

BEHIND THE fireworks, across the river, you could see bleachers full of people, in Windsor's riverfront park.

After the show, applause broke out from within the Lake Ontario Suite where I watched, almost at the top of the Plaza in the new Renaissance Center.

WHAT'S HAPPENING in the city across the river? That is, on the night scene? Detroit area residents are still among Windsor's most popular visitors.

Some years back, when nightclubs were in their heyday, the Elmwood Casino, the Metropole and the Top Hat Supper Club were where big-name entertainers reigned.

Meanwhile in Detroit, the Roost-etail on the river and the Act IV across from the Fisher Theatre were other scenes of top night-club shows.

Times have changed, and though the Roostetail's back, the Act IV is no more. In Windsor, the Elmwood Casino and the Metropole also are extinct. But Mike Drakick (whose brother Nick used to run the Metropole) once closed his Top Hat Supper Club just before the night club business went under.

(Stars who played the Top Hat Supper Club included Ed Ames, Rick Nelson, Bobby Vinton, Roy Clark, Rich Little, Theresa Brewer and Sarah Vaughn.)

TODAY Mike Drakick is continuing to present entertainment at the revamped, resampled Top Hat Steak and Lobster House. Singer Nan Brennan

belts out a lively lyric, accompanied by the Steve Drakick (Mike's son) Orchestra. Ms. Brennan does contemporary, romantic ballads including hits by Neil Sedaka.

Originally from Houston, Texas, Ms. Brennan brought the sparse mid-week crowd into the act, asking them in a folksy way about their home towns and the occasions they were celebrating.

Weekends, I'm told, the Top Hat is jammed for the two nightly shows. There's dancing in between. Showtime is 9 and 11:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

The Top Hat, which opened in 1959, includes the completely made-over Executive Room and the Old Country Room, main dining room first facelifted in 1973.

Both rooms are joined by a folding wall, at showtime. The Executive Room's decor is an assortment of design including hand carvings in the walls that depict the Norman era, a massive stained glass lighting fixture, and mosaics of chryseleon clam shells.

For dinner and a show, without frills, the Top Hat makes a nice night in Canada. It's located not far from the tunnel.

Festival adds night

Kris Kristofferson fans who couldn't get pavilion seats for his Aug. 9 concert at Meadow Brook Music Festival now have a second chance.

Tickets go on sale at 1 p.m. Tuesday for a newly scheduled extra Kristofferson appearance at the festival's Baldwin Pavilion, on the Oakland University campus. The added concert is scheduled for Monday, Aug. 8.

Tickets for the added Kristofferson evening go on sale at 1 p.m. Tuesday, at the Meadow Brook box office and at ticket services of Sear's, Ward's and Hudson's.

Further information is available from festival box office: 377-2010.

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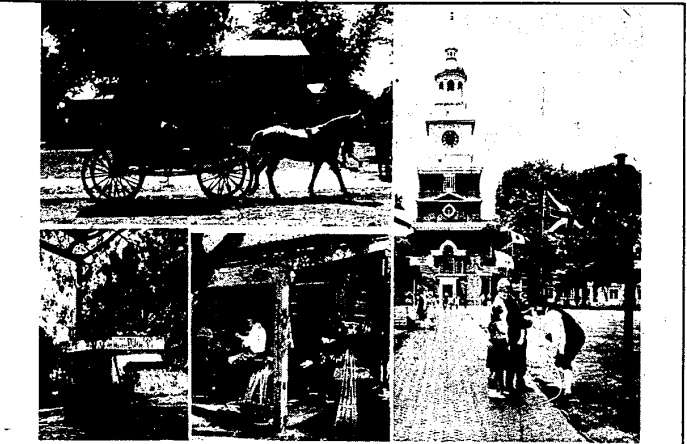
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Rides
Stern-wheeler steamboat "Suwanee" glides over the quiet lagoon. Cornage and Model's travel shady Village streets. Antique steam trains puff along the picturesque 2-mile Village circuit, stopping at Main Street and

Suwanee Park. Give our old time merry-go-round a whirl at Suwanee Park—turn-of-the-century family entertainment center complete with fun-filled penny arcade.

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14 acres (under one roof) of our American heritage on display, rain or shine, in adjacent Henry Ford Museum.

Buildings and Homes
Visit the restored, interpreted shops stores and homes of famous Americans like Lincoln, Edison, Henry Ford, and the Wright Brothers.

Festival Fare
Complete meals are available at the Clinton Inn, Riverfront Restaurant in Suwanee Park, and Heritage Hall in Henry Ford Museum.

Snacks are served at the Feed-bag and Pond 'n' Coop lunch stands, Suwanee Ice Cream Parlor, Sweet Place snack stand, "Owl" night-lunch wagon and the Popcorn Wagon. A picnic area is available by raft on Suwanee Island.



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