

# Covering All Festivals

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Festival Information Service



For every regional celebration about which the average American knows there are dozens of which he knows nothing. We are working to correct that by giving free publicity to all kinds of tourist events from apple festivals to yacht races. Our media are calendars of events and stories, and we try to give the calendars genuine appetite appeal by going beyond the traditional what-where-when and listing outstanding attractions at each celebration. How much appetite appeal we can give the calendars depends on the amount of information we have gathered.

Naturally, civic leaders like the free plugs for their fiestas because they help to increase attendance. Editors subscribe to the service because it is an efficient, economical way to report upcoming events.

Festival Information Service grew out of a hobby that started in 1938. Small-scale research on American festivals developed gradually into large-scale investigations of celebrations abroad.

Covering festivals is work! But it is fun, too, because even serious celebrations have their light moments. For example, you would hardly expect to find laughs in connection with an Easter sunrise service, yet Joe Garcia and I found lots of them when we covered the one in Hollywood Bowl.

Spectators began arriving at midnight and their irreverent, party-like attitude until 6 a. m. set a new style for religious pilgrims. By 4 a. m. all benches were filled with early arrivals, many of them sleeping stretched out under blankets. Latecomers shook the sleepers, urging them to wake up, sit up and move over. Some obliged, but one early bird said to a man who disturbed him: "Listen, Bud, I might have been fool enough to come here at midnight, but I am not such a damn fool I'll get up and give you my place. Get away from here and let me sleep!"

When I hit the road John Dean takes over at headquarters, and he loves to spot unusual mail. One interesting letter came from a missionary working the Indian territory, and another from a State highway official in the East. The missionary bawled us out for publicizing Indian ceremonial dances because he considered them pagan. There is no place for such nonsense in our advanced civilization, he intimated, and suggested that we devote our energies to more constructive things.

The highway official's note was in happy contrast to the reformer's, and he went all out to give advice about a junket I was to make in his State. In fact, he was positively overwhelming when he wrote: "Under separate cover I am sending you our latest highway. Please let us know what you think of it." He was really sending a road map.

Most clients are editors, but we also supply informa-

tion to others who have to know what is coming up. A cross section of subscribers includes Westways, Travel Items, the New York Times, and the Civil Affairs Division of the Army.

Westways, published monthly by the Auto Club of Southern California, is a good example of a regional magazine publicizing events in its own territory, southwestern United States.

Travel Items, a newspaper for the travel industry, lists top-ranking events in this country and Canada.

The New York Times, of course, covers the world, but travel conditions limit calendars to events in this hemisphere and Europe.

The Film Section of the Civil Affairs Division uses festival information as a guide in making special newsreel stories about our way of life. The material also is used by CAD's publication and press sections when preparing "Heute," the CAD magazine, and news releases.

All these things show democracy in action, and it makes one feel pretty good to have a part in that important work.

## Appreciate Your Own!

The residents of (fill in the name of your State) would stand aghast if they were told just how many tourist dollars race down its highways and out of the State every day. Most of these travelers leave in a hurry simply because no one has taken the trouble to tell them where they should go or recommend what they should see within its borders.

The most valuable commodity any State has to sell is the State itself as a tourist center. Yet it is a well-known fact in business that you cannot do a first class selling job unless you know enough about your product to sell it with intelligence and enthusiasm. Selling the travel trade is no different than any other commodity in this respect. We cannot sell our tourist attractions unless we really know and appreciate them. It is almost a tragedy that we live so closely beside our natural wonders that, through proximity and usage, they seem commonplace. Yet to the traveler these same things are worth traveling thousands of miles to see.

A great travel trade will favorably affect the living standard of all residents of (fill in your State). This increased volume depends, in a measure at least, on how effectively the State residents sell their State. Why not become better salesmen of your State's scenic wonders through visiting them this summer instead of going to distant areas to see something less magnificent or fascinating?—David H. Mann, Dir. of Publicity.

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