

THE CANUSA GAMES

(By Department of Leisure Services)

The Canusa Games, in formal terms, are the Eastern Seaboard's only annual international, social, cultural, and athletic exchange.

Riverview, New Brunswick and Brewer, Maine alternate hosting the games each year. This year from July 31 to August 3, Brewer is the host.

The Canusa games originated 18 years ago when Ray Drake, then the Riverview Recreation director, heard of such an exchange between Hamilton, Ontario and Flint, Michigan. The idea intrigued him so much that he wrote to various cities on the eastern seaboard and got a few replies, one of which was accompanied by an enthusiastic telephone call from, of course, Brewer, Maine.

Canusa is an event for both the young and old. Participants ages range from six years old to senior citizens. While in Brewer, children are billeted.

Some events for the games include: basketball, volleyball, flag/touch football, soccer, tennis, a track meet, a swim meet, golf, badminton, and softball. Though Canusa is a competitive event, the most important thing about the games is the strong bond of friendship that has been developed over the years between our two great nations and towns. Approximately 150 people will be travelling to the Canusa games this year.

Highlight events during Canusa are a civic reception, parade, adult and teen dances, a pancake breakfast, and, of course, the lighting of the Canusa flame. This lighting of the torch is the climax finish to the torch run.

Since Canusa's beginning, each year the torch has been run the 340 km between Riverview and Brewer. The carriers of the torch alternate in a cycle between the two towns. One year Riverview runs the torch, while the next Brewer does. Both boys and girls run; two years the boys run and two years the girls run.

With boys running this year, the four day torch run leaves on July 28th at 6 a.m.

Following the # 1 route, the first day the boys run as far as Saint John. The next two nights they stay at campgrounds in Maine.

The coach of the 1986 torch runners is Lisa Murphy. She has been active in track and field for many years, and two years ago she trained the girls torch runners as well as ran the torch herself.