

Americans flock north, lured by exchange, venues

Visits from U.S. up substantially in December

BY ROB FERGUSON
BUSINESS REPORTER

We're a magnet for Americans.

The low Canadian dollar is combining with Toronto's south-of-the-border reputation as a haven for quality shopping, top-grade entertainment and fine dining to work some holiday magic.

From the Toronto Eaton Centre to the Ontario Science Centre, retailers, hoteliers and tourist officials agreed yesterday that business from Americans was up in the last couple of weeks.

Just how much is hard to say because exact figures weren't available.

"It's hard to pick those Buffaloniens out of a crowd," joked Elizabeth Garel, a communica-

tions officer at the Science Centre. "We don't ask for passports at the door."

But there's no doubt a major convention hosted by the Modern Language Association helped put more U.S. greenbacks in local cash registers.

The event at the Metropolitan Toronto Convention Centre drew about 12,000 academics, many of them Americans, for several days between Boxing Day and New Year's, said John Hamilton, director of communications at Tourism Toronto.

"A lot of hotels were very, very busy."

No wonder.

The dollar has been trading recently near 12-year lows in the range of 69 cents (U.S.) — although it rebounded yesterday to close at 70.17 cents, up 0.26 cents, still several cents below 1997 highs.

The lower the dollar goes, the more loonies Americans get for every one of their bucks. One American dollar was worth about \$1.40 late yester-

day afternoon.

Those hefty premiums along with the language convention helped the Delta Chelsea Inn become a temporary home to 25 per cent more Americans than usual in December, said public relations manager Joanne Lopez.

'It's a lot cheaper than going to Broadway because the hotels in New York City charge so much more'

And some 40 per cent of guests singing Auld Lang Syne at the hotel on New Year's Eve were American.

A few blocks north at the Four Seasons hotel in trendy Yorkville, the lure of shopping and theatre packages did the trick.

"Their dollars go so much

further," said public relations director Chery Kam, adding many Americans came before Christmas for combined weekend getaway and shopping trips.

She noted the hotel's "privileged shopper" package includes discount coupons for over 80 stores in addition to the tax rebates and currency premiums Americans enjoy.

The two-person package includes afternoon tea and costs \$235 per night — which works out to roughly \$141 U.S.

But the posh Four Seasons is one of the most expensive hotels in Toronto.

"Coming here for the theatre is good value as well," adds Kam. "It's a lot cheaper than going to Broadway because the hotels in New York City charge so much more."

Across town at the Science Centre, two special exhibitions on microbes and Lego plus the Omnimax movie theatre have helped lure an extra 400 to 1,000 people a day.

CABBAGETOWN GROUP SOFTBALL LEAGUE

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

May 11th, 1979.

Dear Member:-

Enclosed is your copy of the Cabbagetown Group Softball League Constitution, incorporating amendments made at the Open Forum April 1st.

Warren

Warren Shepell,
Chairman.

Jim

Jim Szakacs,
Secretary.