

Westbank Express...



Remembering Canada's Centennial Year in 1967 By Gordon Ficke

Canada will celebrate 150 years as a nation on July 1st, 2017. Many different events will be featured across this great land of ours, from sea to sea to sea. From free passes to discover our national parks, special concerts and festivals, community infrastructure programs to Canada's National Ballet School Sharing Dance Day events. It is shaping up to be an exciting year!

For those Canadians who were born in the 1950s or earlier, where were you when Canada turned 100 years old in 1967? I was in grade 9 at George Pringle Secondary School in Westbank, B.C. What a jubilant year of celebration that was, and everyone played a part in it!

John Fisher, Commissioner for the Centennial Commission that worked with government at all levels, private citizens, service organizations and corporations to help arrange all the celebrations to commemorate Canada's one-hundredth anniversary of confederation, stated. "We have had no precedents to guide us. This is a unique celebration. No nation has ever celebrated a centennial on such a grand scale across seven time zones throughout the year."

The official logo, designed by Stuart Ash, consisted of a stylized maple leaf comprised of 11 equilateral triangles, represented the ten provinces and the Northwest Territories. The official centennial theme song Canada (Ca-na-da) was composed by songwriter and trumpeter Bobby Gimby. It was written as a children's marching song with English and French lyrics. We heard it played often on the radio during that year.

Canadian Centennial coins were circulated in 1967. The penny featured a dove in flight, the nickel had an embossed rabbit, the dime had a mackerel stamped on it, the quarter featured a bobcat, the 50-cent piece was struck with a howling wolf and the dollar had a Canada goose in flight. I started my small coin collection with these centennial coins.

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Westside Daze June 29 - July 2



Join us at Westbank's biggest annual festival, Westside Daze! Jam to live music, be bamboozled by a magician, enjoy a dog agility show, and so much more! Children can enjoy many free activities at the Kids' Fair. Celebrate Indigenous culture on Sukanagin sxeixalt (Okanagan Day) on Saturday, July 1 from 12 - 4pm. There will be Eagle Dancing, stick games, arrowhead making, and many more fun events for the family.

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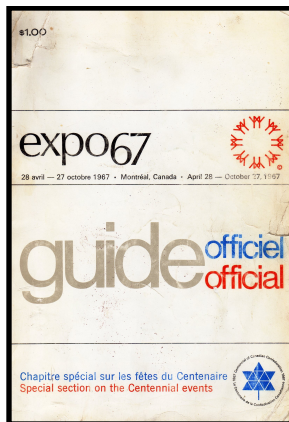
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I vividly recall the excitement and buzz surrounding the various events I had the opportunity to either participate in or see. The first event was the arrival of the Confederation Caravan, consisting of eight purple and white tractor-trailer combinations that arrived in Kelowna on February 7th, and stayed for two days. This gave everyone in the surrounding communities an opportunity to take in the exhibits depicting Canada's vibrant history and culture. Simultaneously, a Confederation train travelled from Vancouver to Montreal, stopping at the larger cities where there was train service. The train's horn trumpeted the first four notes of O' Canada upon arriving and as it was leaving to head to the next town or city en route across Canada.



The federal government thought it was a good idea to encourage students to be physically fit and engaged the schools in a nation wide competition. The incentive was to win beautifully embroidered gold, silver or bronze patches. Students performed mostly callisthenics exercises, like push-ups, sit-ups, running, etc. during our P.E. (physical education) classes. I won a silver patch for my accomplishments. It was a great idea to get the students involved in a fun atmosphere.

Of the myriad of local events and activities that were planned for communities across Canada, a fun one was the pioneer beard-growing contest. My older twin brothers Frank and Henry grew centennial beards. Later that summer they got together for a family event and were surprised to learn that they both had the same idea without telling each other. Their beards were different though, as my dad remarked. "One looks like a preacher, while the other looks like a gambler!"

My dad, mom and older brother sold part of our ranch and the Hereford cattle herd in the spring of 1967. That signalled the end of an era and as a reward for all their hard work, my folks took a 3-month vacation. The first leg of their journey took them to Montreal and Expo 67. This world's fair was the signature event to celebrate Canada's 100th birthday. The theme was "Man and his world" and the venue was situated on two islands; Ile Sainte-Helene and Ile Notre-Dame just south of Montreal, on the St. Lawrence River. Expo 67 was the most successful world's fair up to that time, with 50 million visitors from around the world attending this six-month event. While visiting Expo 67 my parents stayed in their first B & B, hosted by a French Canadian family. The gentleman had an executive position with Readers' Digest and spoke English, while his wife spoke only French. Nevertheless, dad and mom had a wonderful time in Montreal and they formed a lasting friendship, continuing to write letters and exchanging Christmas cards for many years afterwards.

Canadians have never experienced a year of diverse celebrations as they did in 1967. Every aspect of life in Canada, from arts & culture to sports, was celebrated. Special events included a 100 day Voyageur canoe pageant following time honoured routes from the Rockies to Montreal; a joint alpine expedition with mountaineers from the ten provinces and two territories to climb the highest peak in Canada; and hosting the Pan Am Games in Winnipeg. The citizens of our vast country mobilized to celebrate our first century and usher in the next. Pierre Burton, Canadian author and historian was inspired to write a book entitled: "1967: The Last Good Year," (later renamed to "1967: Canada's Turning Point") that captured the essence of our centennial year. This year, let's capture some of that excitement in helping to celebrate Canada's 150th year of confederation.



WHAT'S HAPPENING

WESTBANK

Go Fish

Shannon Lake Regional Park,
Sundays until June 18, 10am - 3pm

Learn to fish at Shannon Lake! Youth 15 years and younger can fish for rainbow trout and take home one catch per day. Please bring your own rod if possible. There will be limited fishing supplies that you may borrow for free. Great activity idea for Father's Day!

Westside Daze

Various Locations, June 30 - July 2

Westbank's premiere community event will feature lots of live music, a midway, food, arts and crafts, a show & shine, and much more! Admission is free, but please bring a donation for the local Food Bank.

Art in the Park

Various wineries throughout July,
10:30 am - 4pm

Experience creations by local artists while you sip wine!

July 1 - 2: Grizzli Winery

July 8 - 9: Volcanic Hills Estate Winery

July 29 - 30: Indigenous World Winery

SUMMERLAND

The Grand Sommelier

Express

Kettle Valley Railway Station, 18404
Bathville Rd, Summerland, June 24

Now is your chance to enjoy the ultimate Okanagan experience: sipping wine on the Kettle Valley steam train! Summerland's Bottleneck Drive members will treat you to their wines while you enjoy a 90 minute train ride on the Kettle Valley Railway. The reception starts at 4:30pm and runs until 10:30pm. Tickets are \$150 and are available online. For more information, go to wp.bottleneckdrive.com.

Kelowna

Kelowna Museums Birthday Bash

Okanagan Heritage Museum, 470
Queensway Ave, June 10

Kelowna Museums is turning 50 years old! From 11am - 3pm, you can enjoy museum tours and family activities at Okanagan Heritage Museum. Admission is a donation of \$5 per family.

National Aboriginal Day

Okanagan Heritage Museum, 470
Queensway Ave, June 21

From 10am to 1pm, learn about Indigenous plants and participate in hands-on activities. All ages welcome.

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**Apple Blossom
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Phone: (250) 212-8581
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West Kelowna, BC
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Indigenous World Winery
2218 Horizon Dr.
Phone: (250) 769-2824
indigenousworldwinery.com

Wine Country Tai Chi Society
Phone: 778-755-0987
Email: dougrwaines@shaw.ca
winecountrytaichi.ca