

Canada Day festivities offer something for everyone



(Legendary rockers Lighthouse headline Dance in the Park this Sunday. Submitted photo.)

By Brock Weir

Whether you are a teen looking to showcase your musical talent, a more seasoned citizen looking to rock out to the tunes of your youth, a citizen at large looking for a stroll down memory lane, or looking to end the long weekend with a resounding bang ? this is definitely your weekend.

Aurora is pulling out all the stops this weekend for a three-day party to remember. Festivities get underway at the Aurora Community Centre with a Youth Band Showcase and MuchMusic Dance Party this Saturday afternoon running through 1 a.m.

The afternoon kicks off at 4 p.m. with live performances by local youth bands, performances by Tyler Shaw Music, and the MuchMusic Video Dance Party. Entry is free and organizers promise ?free giveaways, prizes and more.?

The showcase will feature five local bands from Aurora and Newmarket, ages 12 ? 19, playing everything from today's pop to classic rock. Social media will also be a big thing at the event, bringing in an Instagram booth to capture the fun.

?We have a full stage, lighting and sound system coming in, so it is a professional setup for these bands,? says organizer Jamie Macdonald. ?We're combining with MuchMusic and their Much Covers program and we have 2012 winner Tyler Shaw. That is a program between Much and Coca-Cola where they do an across-Canada talent search. Tyler will be coming out to perform and then we will have the video dance party to finish off the evening.?

This will also be the last performance of Taylor Mansillo as Aurora's Teen Idol, as 2013's Idol will be crowned Monday.

The party shifts over to Town Park on Sunday with Dance in the Park, the annual celebration hosted by the Rotary Club of Aurora, this time in conjunction with the Aurora 150 Committee and sponsored by State Farm Insurance.

The concert kicks off at 2 p.m. with local entertainment running throughout the day, before the iconic rockers Lighthouse take the stage at 9 p.m.

There will be no shortage of things to do on Canada Day itself, including the traditional Canada Day parade, which starts rolling south on Yonge Street at 10 a.m. from Orchard Heights, bound for Murray Drive. Afterwards, festivities take over Lambert Willson Park for a day of family fun.

Heading in the opposite direction is the opening of Aurora Collects: Revealing 150 Years of our Shared History, a new exhibition at the Aurora Cultural Centre hosted by the Aurora Historical Society (AHS).

Billed as a collaboration between the AHS, the Town, and community groups and individuals, it is intended to shed light on the people, events, and ever-changing landscapes that have shaped the Town of Aurora.

Through a sampling of objects, photographs and documents collected throughout its history, visitors are invited on a shared journey from the distant to near past, and are encouraged to remember and preserve their own community experiences by adding significant events to a visual timeline presented in the exhibition.

The show officially debuts at 1 p.m in the second floor Aurora Room.

It has been months in the making as the AHS has culled several unique and rarely seen items from their collections, as well as the collections of community groups throughout Town. As she has helped put everything together, curator Catherine Richards has developed a few personal highlights.

There is going to be a textile in the show that I am particularly attached to, she says of a piece that is clearly the start of something more ambitious, stitched together cigarette silks from the First World War depicting war heroes and world leaders.

It looks very folky and unfinished, but there is just something about it that this person collected the swatches and took the care to sew them together. We don't know the whole story around it, but that is what's interesting. You can glean a story from it.

We did really seek to find images and objects that really are different than what we typically see from our archival images that are presented within the community, whether it is through AHS or the Town or any other organizations.

Other highlights include an interactive map, pieced together from chart and topographical maps from the Turn of the Century, through to the present day showing how Aurora has grown and evolved.