

Celebrate your Canada Day your way this Tuesday



By Brock Weir

As she puts the finishing touches on this year's Canada Day Celebrations, Shelley Ware, Aurora's Special Events coordinator, is doing so, as she does every year, while eating her words.

While plans for the traditional parade on Tuesday morning have been finalized, as has the eleven hours of celebrations planned at Lambert Willson Park from late morning through the evening fireworks, one thing that is still something of a wild card are the auditions of budding local talent vying to be Aurora's 2014 Teen Idol.

"Every year I say it can't get better, and it does," says Ms. Ware. "Every year I say I can't get further surprised by the talent, and I am. The genres of music the youth choose to take always impresses me. In the audition round, we had Broadway music, but we also had Leonard Cohen. These are very mature songs for the youth to take on. I think when a lot of people look at vocal competitions, they think of the Top 10 songs, but these youth are very mature in their delivery, and very mature in their musical performances."

The Top 8 finalists are due to take the stage at Lambert Willson Park on Tuesday at 5 p.m., but while they are spending the intervening seven hours preparing for show time, Canada Day celebrations officially kick off at 10 a.m. as the Canada Day Parade begins making its way down Yonge Street from Orchard Heights Drive in the north to Murray in the south.

With the additions of a few new floats, as well as a new marching band in the form of the Ramses Drum Corps, Ms. Ware promises the 2014 Canada Day Parade is due to be Aurora's longest.

"I think it is going to be really spectacular this year," she says. "It is going to be the longest Canada Day Parade we have had in terms of the number of entries. It will be hard to predict how long that translates to, but we're hoping it hits almost the 30 minute mark. Aurora Home Hardware always does a spectacular job, as does Marquee Theatrical Productions. This will be something that will make Aurora proud."

"Although we are still pulling a few of the fine details together, we really have to put some faith into Mother Nature that we have good weather!"

Additional features of this year's parade will once again include the Governor General's Horse Guards, and numerous floats from schools, camps, and community organizations. Also featuring in the parade this year will once again be the First Nations Presentation who will continue their interpretation and education of First Nations dances and culture at Lambert Willson Park.

Traditionally, the Park is awash with music and "Canadiana" and this year is no exception.

“One of the things we really pride ourselves in is providing all families and patrons with really fun, educational interactive activities that will teach them more about Canada,” says Ms. Ware of their “Canadian Passport” which will lead party-goers through a series of activities tailored to each province and territory.

Those activities will be followed by a bash on the main stage featuring the “Fab Four” tribute, following on the heels of The Beatles 50th anniversary.

“We also have, for the first time ever, an urban art canvas, which is in the form of graffiti art,” says Ms. Ware. “It is being done by a team of youth from Aurora, who have spent several hours just getting to the point of being able to make the 30-foot by 5-foot canvas, which is going to be sprayed live in front of the public.”

Additional activities include a classic car show, Birds of Prey, and, joining the First Nations Presentation, the Chinese Lion traditional dance.

“The park is going non-stop from 11 a.m. straight through to 10 p.m. that evening,” says Ms. Ware. “We have saved the Teen Idol to start at 5, because it is such a huge anchor. We think that families will stay for dinner to see that and segueing right into that is a really good band called The Core.

“Right after that, a tribute to Stevie Nicks, Tom Petty and the Heart Breakers, and Fleetwood Mac is on the stage. I don't know how you could miss out to that. Following right from there is right into the fireworks. I think from there, with all the things to do, and ending on such a strong note, I think it is all going to go by in five minutes and people will be surprised they were in the park for more than 10 hours!”