

Time capsule sealed, Aurora 150 draws to a close



By Brock Weir

On February 3, 2013, hundreds of people braved the frigid temperatures of Town Park to take in at least part of the Mayor's Sesquicentennial Levee.

As kids played broomball outside of the former Wells Street Public School, gathered around a bonfire, played traditional games like tug-o-war, or stood vigil at the end of the evening in a multi-faith candlelight service, it was the start of a year to remember as Aurora celebrated its 150th anniversary.

Exactly one year later, on Monday night, those who helped make Aurora 150 a reality gathered, this time in the warmth of Town Hall, to place a year's worth of memories and mementos into a time capsule, which is now sealed until 2063.

Mayor Geoffrey Dawe lead the way as members of the Town's Aurora 150 Committee, Councillors, and representatives of community groups like the Aurora Seniors' Centre, came forward one by one to place items into the capsule, which now has pride of place on the first floor at Town Hall.

Items include the official Sesquicentennial Flag designed by local student Victoria Harris, DVDs and USB drives featuring videos and photos from each of the four community parties organized to mark the anniversary, copies of local newspapers, and an exquisite wood pen carved at the Seniors' Centre woodshop.

"I am glad we are inside tonight because the first event they kicked off was rather chilly in Town Park," said Mayor Dawe to members of the organizing committee. "This is really a testament to your community spirit and we could not have done it without you."

After that "chilly night", celebrations continued through the spring and summer. Designed to celebrate Aurora's past, present and future in the spring, summer, and fall, the next event was the Aurora 150 Tattoo in May, which brought together military bands and musical displays from the breadth of southern Ontario and, in conjunction with the Queen's York Rangers, military displays and a "tough mudder" for kids at Machell Park.

The party kicked into high gear at the end of June for a three-day bash to mark Canada Day, which included a "Youth Music Extravaganza" featuring a Much Music Video Dance Party, over 6,000 people descending on Town Park for a concert by the legendary Canadian rock band "Lighthouse", and culminating on Canada Day itself with the traditional parade on Yonge Street.

The year, however, ended on a soggy note when the Community Cultural Celebration bringing together various traditions practiced in multicultural Aurora from Aboriginal traditions to Falun Dafa rituals and dance, was washed out by torrential downpours in September.

For Committee Chair Alison Collins-Mrakas, Monday night's informal ceremony was bittersweet nearly a year and a half after they put their heads together for a year to remember.

?I think the time capsule has turned out to be amazing and we were really hoping it would turn out to be something great,? she said. ?It is the perfect location and the artefacts are really, really neat.?

In considering the legacy of the Aurora 150 celebrations and what people might think 50 years from now when the time capsule is opened, she said she believes people will see how a community came together ?in celebration in a truly remarkable series of events.?

?They will see photos of people having a great time and hopefully it will be the first in a series of similar events,? she said. ?We hope the Tattoo will be continued and the Cultural Day will be continued. I think that when it is opened it will be a picture slideshow of a fantastic year.?