

Numerous celebrations planned for Canada's 150 year anniversary

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"It's something that all libraries across the country want to celebrate and I think that is reflected in the Summer Reading Club as well because it has a different theme every year and this year it's Canada," said Rhonda Jessup, public services manager at the Whitby Public Library.

"To (be able to) showcase this amazing country in so many different ways is a terrific opportunity."

Discussions on featuring the work of Canadian authors and illustrators during the 150th year began last year, she said.

"We have so much talent in this country when it comes to creativity ... so it's not just a matter of Canada-themed programs but what are the authors, illustrators, poets and artists doing in this country and how can we draw attention to it?"

Information on upcoming programs and events can be found at www.whitbylibrary.on.ca or by signing up for the library newsletter.

Another Whitby organization with big plans to commemorate the sesquicentennial is the Lynde House Museum and Visitor Centre. The site will have performances and workshops by Live History -- a theatre company that specializes in bringing local history to life -- running throughout July.

"We are busy researching and working with Live History to create special programming representing Canada's sesqui-



RYAN PFEIFFER / METROLAND

BROOKLIN -- Finn Verzyden played with some LEGO Duplo during the Junior Builders of Tomorrow program at the Brooklin Community Centre and Library.

centennial and Whitby area," said Trina Astor-Stewart, museum vice president and board liaison.

The Whitby Historical Society that operates the museum is also celebrating its own milestone this year: The group was founded as a project for Canada's Centennial in 1967, making 2017 its 50th anniversary. Visit www.lyndehousemuseum.com to learn more.

Over at the Town of Whitby, which generally hosts Canada Day festivities in conjunction with its annual County Town Carnival, the focus is on making the event bigger and better this year.

"Canada Day for Whitby includes not only a celebration (of) Canada's birthday, but it's also County Town Carnival, so we do activities for families during the day -- everything from children's activities to entertainment on a stage -- and then in the evening, we do the fireworks display, sponsored by Community Connection, and that's the culmination of the Canada Day aspect," said Peter LeBel, Whitby's commissioner of community and marketing services.

Town staff is currently exploring how to expand some of those activities and offer more variety. A report was recently

presented to council recommending that this year's Harbour Day -- an annual family event held in the summer to showcase Whitby's harbour facilities, including the Port Whitby Marina and Whitby Yacht Club -- be combined with the Canada Day/County Town Carnival event.

"It's still early but we're working on some ideas and looking at our budget to see how we can make this happen," said LeBel.

The County Town Carnival has been running in Whitby for more than 20 years. It was previously a standalone event that took place in the downtown and later Cullen Gardens. In 2011, it was blended with Canada Day on July 1 and moved to Victoria Fields, across the street from the Whitby GO station and Iroquois Park Sports Centre.

LeBel said the decision to hold both events together has been successful, drawing thousands of people each year. One of the main highlights of the event is a citizenship ceremony to swear in new Canadians.

It's crucial that all municipalities offer opportunities for residents to take part in Canada 150 commemorations, he added.

"This is an amazing country, and we are part of that fabric. We provide services, as do other levels of government, to our residents and to our visitors who come from other parts of the world ... so I think it's very important to recognize how fortunate we are to live here."



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