

Canada Day around the corner

Several events celebrating the nation's birth planned at Centennial Park

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Canadian pride will be in abundance in Fort St. John tomorrow as the city once again hosts the annual Canada Day Celebration in Centennial Park.

This year, the City of Fort St. John is encouraging residents be more environmentally conscious when making plans to attend.

Sarah Tittlemore, the City's director of community services, said she wants to see people leave their cars at home and find another way to join the festivities at the park.

"Using two feet and a heartbeat is how we want people to come to the parade and the celebrations in the park," she said. "Fort St. John is recognized as a healthy city and we want people to find a more active mode of transport for Canada Day."

Residents may want to power walk down to 100 St. to get a good spot to watch the annual Canada Day parade, which starts in the North Peace Arena parking lot at 11 a.m. before making its way through the downtown core.

Walking will also make the parade route more visible, as it will reduce the number of parked cars on the streets, Tittlemore said.

Following the parade there will be an opening ceremony in the park at noon. The official celebration runs from noon until 4 p.m. with performances, food, art, vendors and classic cars.

Performances from Five Six Switch, tribal

fusion belly dancing, Last Chance Anna Pascal Egan's Ramblers, Latin dancing, and many more will be featured throughout the day.

There will be plenty of food and drink for hungry spectators, including ice cream, Thai food, hot dogs, hamburgers and cotton candy.

The Fort St. John Community Arts Council will also be hosting its Art in the Park event. Coordinator Mary Braaten expects this year's summer art showing to be one of the best ever.

"It's going to be a lot of fun. There will be all kinds of artists showing their work, crafts for the kids and lots of demonstrations for people to see," said Braaten.

Art in the Park will feature demonstrations from the North Peace Potters' Guild, who will be on site making pots and bowls, as well as the North Peace Spinners and Weavers Guild, who will have their spinning wheels on site.

People will also have the chance to see panels from the Fort St. John Community Arts Council's Art That Moves You project being painted on site in the park.

The event will also include a free Kids' Art Tent, with lots of fun activities and crafts for children to do, face and balloon painting, and an ice carving demonstration.

Residents who fill out the City's Canada Day survey will be entered into a draw to win a helicopter ride for four. The winner will be picked at the end of the festivities.

To cap off Canada's birthday, there will be a fireworks display at 10:30 p.m., with the best view being in Centennial Park, said Tittlemore.

ARTS

Art is everywhere we look

From mundane objects to YouTube videos, art can be found almost anywhere

What is art? This is a theme I often ponder. Perhaps it sounds a bit self indulgent that I even spend my time thinking of such things. Don't get me wrong, I hardly embody the 'dreamy artist type', if I may stereotype for just a moment. It's just that there is so much happening in our world, sometimes it's nice to escape the hum drum of life and contemplate something more interesting than what I'll be making for dinner tonight. Today, in my more inspired moments I like to imagine that art is all around us and that there is beauty in everything, only then to despair moments later when I see tragedies played out on the evening news, thinking once again that art is dead and ugliness prevails.

It seems to me that the term "art" is more of a conceptual theme than ever before. Perhaps it is more of a label or even a mindset. The word art once seemed simple to define, as one can think of any myriad of classic examples such as Michelangelo's David, DaVinci's Mona Lisa, or Andy Warhol and his infamous Campbell's Soup cans. Let us not forget how controversial Warhol's work seemed at the height of the Pop Art movement of the 60's when he challenged the very notion of what was considered art. Many people questioned how

images of mass produced commercial items such as Brillo pads or soup cans could even be considered art. Wasn't art supposed to be hard to do?

Tara O'Donnell



STATE OF THE ARTS

Something that only talented masters of technique could produce? From there perceptions began to shift the accepted notion of art away from rigid and defined to a more subjective entity.

I am intrigued by performance art and interactive art. Some of the street performances I've seen in my travels have moved me as much as anything I've seen in the Louvre or Broadway. The other day, I was struck by a video I watched on none other than YouTube. You may have even heard of it. It's called "Where the Hell is Matt". Matt Harding is a 31 year old man from Connecticut who essentially quit his day job to travel the world. He and his friend documented their travel destinations throughout Asia, but not simply with a picture or a video, but by dancing. It sounds absurd, and it is a bit, actually. Matt possesses an unbelievable gift for bad dancing and has filmed himself repeating his same silly dance moves at numerous locales throughout the world. Though it is truly laughable to see him break out

into a full jig in front of the Great Pyramids of Egypt, the turning point is when he produced his latest video which includes others dancing with him.

His latest video, released on June 20, 2008 is the product of 14 months of traveling in 42 countries. In the dozens of destinations he's been to, Matt has found others to join in his dance. I found the video at once hilarious and touching. Matt is using dance as a medium to transcend cultural boundaries. Sometimes it's funny like when a man in Montreal is gyrating seductively amongst a sea of other free spirits. Then at other times it's profound, like when he's joined by a tribe of indigenous peoples from Papua, New Guinea. I thought "Wow, isn't this the very nature of art?" Art has the ability to convey a thought or meaning through human expression, be it painting, pottery, theatre, music, dance, and so on. The simple act of dancing in an unorthodox setting has the power to transcend all cultures and languages and simply make people smile. Okay, so I am fully aware that I am contributing to the proliferation of an internet video that has now reached viral status (His second video ranked #30 - YouTube's Most Viewed Videos of All Time) (mattharding2718 Channel. YouTube. 2007-03-15.). However, I believe that this young man has a positive message, albeit delivered in a slightly quirky fashion. And you know what? That's art, and it's beautiful.



Submitted Photo

The Kids Art tent at Art in the Park on Canada Day was a big hit with all ages.