

January 8, 2018

MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GREY HIGHLANDS – Mayor Opens Time Capsule

It was an exciting afternoon at the Centre Grey Recreational Complex as people gathered for the Grey Highlands Mayor and Council's New Year's Levee, where Mayor Paul McQueen opened a time capsule discovered when the municipality removed the historic gates to Markdale a couple of years ago.

"It was such a mystery to us," said Mayor McQueen. "I am so pleased we had the opportunity to open the capsule to peer back in time for our community."

The time capsule, a tin box soldered shut, took a while to open as it well sealed. With the help of Ben and Darren Patey, a hacksaw, chisel and sheer strength Mayor McQueen finally pried it open to reveal its contents to the over 30 people huddled around to watch their efforts.

The box, encased in the stone of the southern entry gates, was installed as part of centennial celebrations for the town in 1949. The contents included items commemorating the Markdale Centennial, including committee ribbons and membership cards; the historic booklet produced for the occasion, a poster and programs; the letter of invitation to former residents and "old timers" - including a note on the opportunity to contact the billeting committee for the chance to camp in tents and cots provided for the occasion.

There was a copy of the Owen Sound Sun Times from the week of the centennial celebrations held July 31st to August 3rd. A copy of the Toronto Telegram, complete with photographs, in the time capsule reported 10,000 people attended the celebrations. The event permit for the occasion from the Liquor Control Board of Ontario licensed 3,000 ounces of liquor and 600 12-ounce bottles of beer.

A souvenir coin from the Bank of Montreal and a Canadian Silver dollar from 1949 were also included. A mysterious sealed letter about the retirement of C.S. "Stew" Ballard, who was Vice President of the Gruen Watch Company,

was dated June 8, 1961. It was written by Gordon Beaton of the Oliver Funeral Chapel thanking Ballard for donating so many watches to the community over the years for prizes.

“Gord Beaton was a real joker,” said long-time Markdale Mayor Stan Baker, who was on hand for the opening of the time capsule. “He probably wrote that letter with a later date on it just to confuse people who opened the box.”

After the opening and an examination of the contents, the Mayor announced the time capsule will go to the South Grey Museum in Flesherton for further research, conservation treatment and interpretation in an exhibit at the museum.

“This will be a fun exploration of our local heritage,” said Curator Kate Russell on receiving the time capsule. “If people want to see the exhibit, it should be prepared by next week.”

Also at the levee were copies of the seven new experience tours to guide residents and visitors through the Grey Highlands community of communities. Composed by the museum, in partnership with local community groups, volunteers and history books and archives, the tours lead people through self-guided tours of the area. There are specific tours for Eugenia, Flesherton, Kimberley, Markdale, Osprey, Priceville and Rocklyn.

“We are so proud of our community and our heritage,” said Mayor McQueen. “We are so lucky to have the museum and libraries working together to promote our heritage and culture.”

The experience tours were part of the Canada 150 committee program, which saw the South Grey Museum, the Grey Highlands Public Library and municipal council – through liaison Councillor Lynn Silverton – work on special events, community promotional projects and the poet laureate legacy book to commemorate the national and provincial sesquicentennial.

“We all work together so well,” said Grey Highlands Public Library CEO Wilda Allen. “Our community got so involved. We also got lots of video at events and look forward to posting more online and on our community cultural channel.”

The poet laureate’s book – Grey with a Silver Lining – is a collection of stories and poems written by local residents and people with history in the area. It is a great compilation and is available for purchase at the Flesherton, Kimberley and Markdale branches of the Grey Highlands Public Library. A celebratory reading of the book will be held in the spring.

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“We had a very busy year in 2017,” said Councillor Silverton about the Canada 150 committee. “It was a great year for bringing our community of communities together in celebration. Now we need to continue on from this amazing year of collaboration.”

The Canada 150 projects were supported by grant funding from the government of Ontario through its ON150 fund and the government of Canada through the Canada 150 fund. The municipality, museum and library also supported the initiatives, working together for the betterment of all of Grey Highlands.

A community passport, promoting visitation to the seven identified communities and bonus attractions, offered a contest for people to enter photos to win prizes. The winners were announced at the levee.

The first prize – a weekend getaway for two sponsored by the Grey Highlands Tourism Advisory Committee – went to Mimi Dhar of Mississauga. The second prize – a Flesherton & District Farmers’ Market gift basket – went to Catherine and Steve Plener of Flesherton. The third prize – a Canada 150-coin collection – went to Bob Gould of Edinburgh, Scotland.

There are more opportunities to promote the community coming up in the New Year. If you want to get involved and learn more, follow the municipality on Facebook or connect with them to get the regular news at the municipal website at greyhighlands.ca.

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