

Museum Musings December 2012

The Great Expo Trip - Part 2

It was late at night Wednesday, May 10, 1967, when sixty-six Texada High School students, their teachers and chaperones finally arrived at Montreal's CN train station. Buses from their camp (Elmsville Expeditions) transported the weary but excited crew to their "chalet-type" dorms which turned out to be more "barrack-like" (later nicknamed Stalag 17). Kids formed four teams for food preparation and generally looked after themselves.

The world's fair was impressive - its size, multinational pavilions, the people, but most of all - La Ronde amusement park (the Gyrodon, Flume, Drunken House and Carousel were favourites).

A day trip to Quebec City left the Texada crew with strong impressions of the Plains of Abraham and its fortifications. One student commented that this field trip was "more useful than 50 to 60 pages of history from a book."

The last day at Expo 67 resulted in a panic to see any pavilions missed so far followed by the train trip to Ottawa. Their local MP Tom Barnett had arranged for a tour of Parliament Hill (including Question Period and the parliamentary cafeteria - "a full meal for 68 cents!"), the National Gallery and a radio station.

A very exhausted but happy crowd boarded the train at 1:30 am and slept most of the way home, no doubt! A student reported: "May 18: This was a routine day...one of the girls fainted and one of the boys is very sick." A derailment at McLure caused a 12 hour delay but many students "sweated it out" by walking to a nearby ranch to see calf branding.

The students' transistor radios buzzed with the familiar sounds of CKLG as they at last approached the coast and home. A large crowd was on hand at Blubber Bay to welcome them back that night.

Was the trip a success? In the words of the students: "We got to know each other and a friendly atmosphere prevailed." "During this whole trip the students looked out for each other." "All in all this was a once-in-a-lifetime trip...something we'll remember the rest of our lives."

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