

Celebrating 1967 with sound: music education, media and memories from Northern B.C.

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Summary

How was Canada's 100 Birthday of 1967 celebrated in a small isolated town in Northern British Columbia?

Alcan (Aluminum Company of Canada) carved Kitimat from the forests at the end of Douglas Channel to house an ethnically diverse permanent work force, service industries. In 1966 the town began to plan for a park and memorial to mark the centennial. In the end, it was the draw of Expo 67, and the efforts by local high school band that won out. In this presentation, we explore why and how this band trip became THE Centennial project for Kitimat.



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

KITIMAT

VANDERHOOF

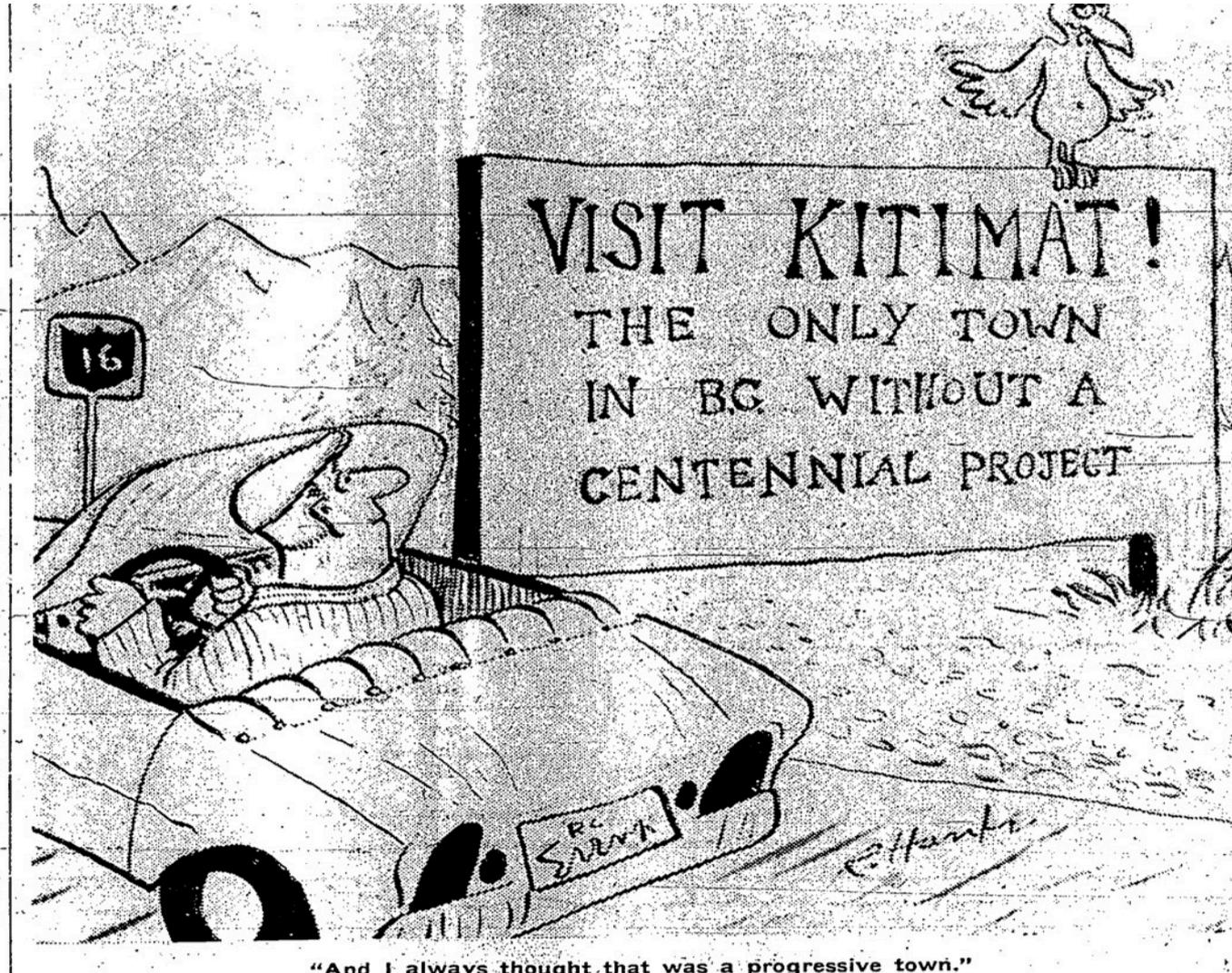
KEMANO

VANCOUVER

EDMONTON

ALBERTA

Northern Sentinel Wed. July 5th 1967



"And I always thought that was a progressive town."

Methods

Contextualization -> why did the band trip marking the Centennial become so important to this small isolated diverse community?

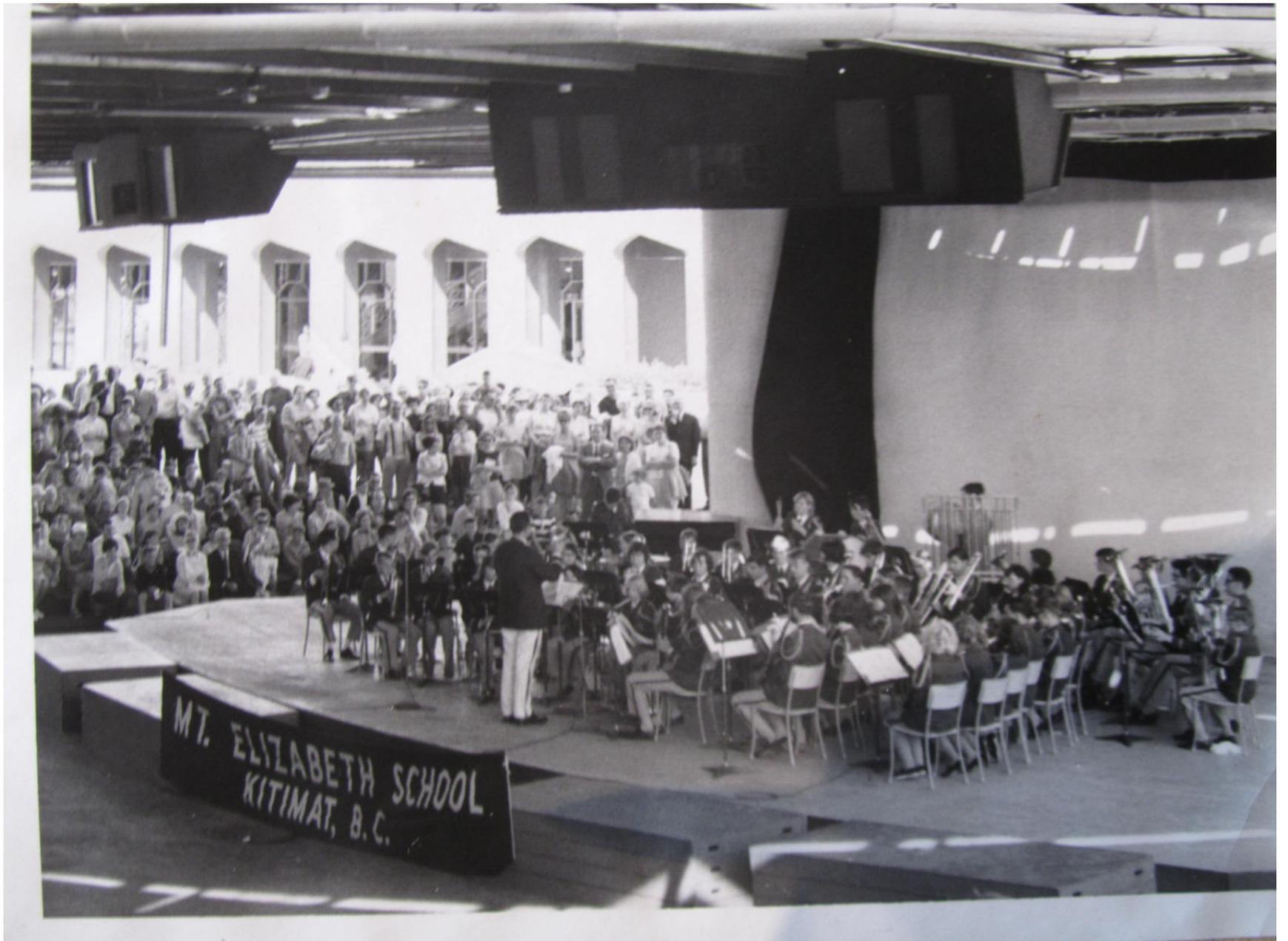
Sources of information: radio excerpts, Dennis Tupman interview, local newspapers, photographs and other sources.



exp067















The Ingot, Feb 17, 1967

100% Band Aids



Foreman Ray Massey's group, shown above, is backing the high school band to a man as evidenced by the 'band buttons' they are wearing. In a recent canvass for donations to assist in sending the band to Expo the group contributed 100%.

Color Me COOL



by Julie Nichol

In spite of all efforts, it would seem some people still have a mental block when it comes to Centennial. I mean, the message doesn't seem to be getting through.

Take the woman who phoned the open-line program the other day, saying, "I'm getting sick of all this repetition - especially that song." At first, I thought she was referring to one of the singing commercials we've had around for years, but no, it seems she meant the Centennial song - "Can-a-da," etc.

"We've heard little else for two months now," she went on, "and we've still got ten to go. Everyone's going to be fed-up with Centennial if you repeat everything so much."

Well as Jack Benny would say, I tell you, I nearly stopped right in the middle of cutting out my Centennial dress, and phoned in to give her a piece of my mind.

Of course, whether you like the song or not isn't the point. I'm not absolutely crazy about singing commercials, but we put up with them because they are a cog in the larger machinery of advertising, which keeps the wheels of Big Business turning, which keeps industry going, which keeps us fed and housed and buying the products advertised in the singing commercials. I mean, the whole system could fall apart if we didn't have singing commercials. Bad for the country. You could even say it would be unpatriotic to criticize singing commercials. If you didn't feel patriotic about the Centennial song any other way, you could try looking on it as a type of singing commercial.

But other people, too, I feel haven't quite captured the true spirit of Centennial. For instance you will be exchanging a few pleasantries on the street, and the conversation moves around to Centennial. You say, "And have you chosen your material for your Centennial costume yet?" They give you a look that in itself would be enough to deflate your bubbles of enthusiasm, and reply, "Centennial costume? Why?"

WHY? Holy Fathers of Confederation - why NOT?

Unfortunately, persons whose imagination can't give them one reason why do a thing, are very imaginative when it comes to reasons why not do it. Oh "It would cost too much money," "Where would you wear it?" "What good would it be AFTER?" "And anyway, it's hard enough to keep the children in underwear without going in for tom-foolery like that."

Northern Sentinel, Feb. 22, 1967

The Ingot, April 7, 1967

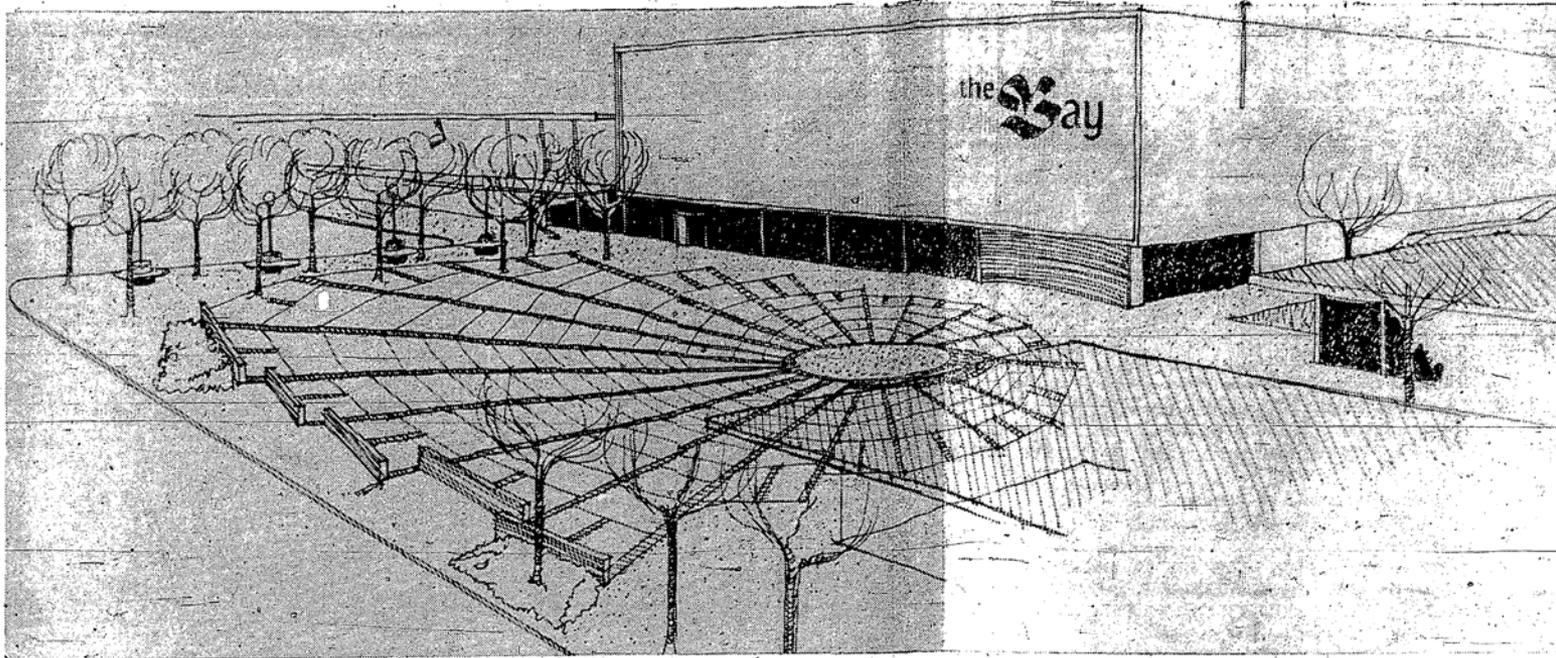


Mrs. Keith Armour, convener of the Centennial Ball, attempts to pretty-up Wilf Thebes with a well-worn bow tie donated to the Music Parents Assn. by Prime Minister Pearson. Looking on and giving helpful advice are 'auctioneer' Merlyn Williams and Mrs. Dougal McFee. On the table are contributions by other famous Canadians. The souvenirs are to be Chinese-auctioned off at the Centennial Ball. Proceeds of the auction go towards sending the High School Band to Expo '67. The Ball will "get rolling" at 8 p.m. Saturday, April 8 in the Catholic hall.

Northern Sentinel, Wed. July 26, 1967



“well Gang, how do you feel now that it’s all over? Gang? ... Girls... Fellows?”



Council Votes Square Funds

At a special meeting of municipal council Thursday night, council voted 6-1 to grant \$37,200 in municipal funds towards the establishment of the Centennial Square sketched at left.

Earlier last week, at a regular council meeting, the vote for the grant was 4-3, not sufficient to pass, and the project seemed in danger. Federal and provincial grants will bring the funds available to \$50,000.

The sketch is one of several which contributed to the changing of two councillors' votes — Don Stickney and Ken Strachan — from "no" to "yes". Councillor Mrs. Edith Angle cast the only "no" vote as she has throughout.

Members of the Centennial Committee under chairman Bert Lange attended the special meeting and made direct appeals to the councillors for support. Mr. Lange later expressed his pleasure that the way had been cleared for the project.

Only one problem was left: the site of lower City Centre parking lot which Alcan has offered to sell for \$9,000 and which several councillors and members of the Centennial Committee contended the company should donate.

Northern Sentinel Feb. 1 1967

Credits

- Dennis Tupman interview March 2016
- Photographs – *Northern Sentinel* (Kitimat Museum and Archives); *Ingot* April 7, 1967.
- Editorial cartoons from *Northern Sentinel* (July 5 and 26, 1967).
- CBC/ CFPR radio fonds, City of Prince Rupert Archives (train whistle, Centennial Diaries cd#60 tracks 3 and 4)