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# VOICE ГЛАС

## OF CANADIAN SERBS КАНАДСКИХ СРБА



Publication of the Serbian National Shield Society of Canada

Орган Српске народне одбране у Канади

### 72nd SERBIAN DAY AND CANADA 150

## IN NIAGARA, AN EXCEPTIONAL CELEBRATION

Although it seems like yesterday, it's been three months since the 72nd Serbian Day weekend June 24-25 in Niagara Falls, an exceptional weekend in many ways, a triple celebration of Serbian Day, Vidovdan and Canada's 150th birthday.

In December 2016 a fire in the small Serbian hall on the grounds of the St. George Church completely destroyed the interior leaving the community without a gathering place for events and posing a problem for Serbian Day food preparations. But, as they say, necessity is the mother of invention and the resourceful Niagara community had to find ways to tackle these challenges. The first question at hand was whether to mark Serbian Day at all this year. An extraordinary meeting of the Church and the Odbrana decided that it was vital to uphold the tradition without interruption, even if it meant having to do some things differently. In other words, the commitment to the 72-year tradition was strong. Plans were put into place to rent a large tent and prepare the barbequed and grilled food – lamb, pork, chevaps, fries – salad and coffee, while the lenten lunch and dinner were prepared by a restaurant. It worked perfectly.



Mayor Predrag Terzic of Kraljevo, Serbia

After Saturday Vespers in the St. George Church dinner was served to the honoured guests. The folklore program featured the "Hilandar" ensemble of Niagara as well as the Third and Recreational Ensembles of the "Academy of Serbian Folk Dancing Miroslav Bata Marcetic". Moma and Dodir supplied the music both days. Draga Dragasevic served as emcee.

On Sunday His Grace Bishop Dr. Mitrofan and Rev. Dejan Obradovic celebrated the Hierarchical Liturgy in the St. George Church with responses by the St.



Niagara's Studenica Ensemble

George Choir under the direction of Milka Stanar of Hamilton. After lunch the program at the pavilion commenced at 2 p.m. with the opening prayer read by Bishop Dr. Mitrofan. The "Bozuri" vocal group of Kitchener sang the Canadian and Serbian anthems. Emcee Draga Dragasevic introduced each of the speakers. Danica Mirovic Mateyk, President of the co-host St. George and St. Archangel Michael Congregation extended her greetings and thanks to all. Niagara Falls Mayor Jim Diodati congratulated Niagara Serbs and welcomed Mayor Predrag Terzic from Niagara's twin city, Kraljevo in Serbia. Ontario MPP for Niagara Wayne Gates spoke energetically about Serbian contributions to Canada.

This year there were more Serbian diplomats on stage than ever before. HE Ambassador Mihailo Papazoglu, Ambassador of Serbia in Canada, has represented Serbia and Serbs in Canada well and has participated at all major events. The new General Consul of Serbia in Toronto is Vasilije Petkovic whose very first contact with the Serbian community was at this Serbian Day. Retiring Consul Spasoje Milicevic and his wife Ljiljana were thanked for their good work. Kraljevo Mayor Predrag Terzic greeted the crowd and thanked Niagara.

HE Ambassador Koviljka Spiric, Ambassador of Bosnia-Herzegovina in Canada, was introduced. Members of the Cabinet of the Premier of the Republic of Srpska were on stage as were Republic of Srpska representatives in Washington, Obrad Kesic and Drina Rajic. Last of the guest speakers, the Hon. Zeljka Cvijanovic, Premier of the Republic of Srpska, addressed the people encouraging them to love Canada, but to continue to love and help the land of their birth. She was in Canada on an economic mission and hoped to have an official representative in Canada in the future.

Acá Pantelic, President of the co-host Serbian National Shield Society, had the final word thanking the distinguished guests and everyone who came to Niagara to celebrate the 72nd Serbian Day and Canada 150.

As part of Canada 150, throughout the program the emcee highlighted numerous prominent Serbs who had been recognized for their contribution to Canada. Their names appeared in the June issue of this newspaper. Representatives of Serbian organizations were also introduced. Thanks were extended to: Sandy Rusic for promotional work, to Ljiljana Mistic Douthwright for photogra-

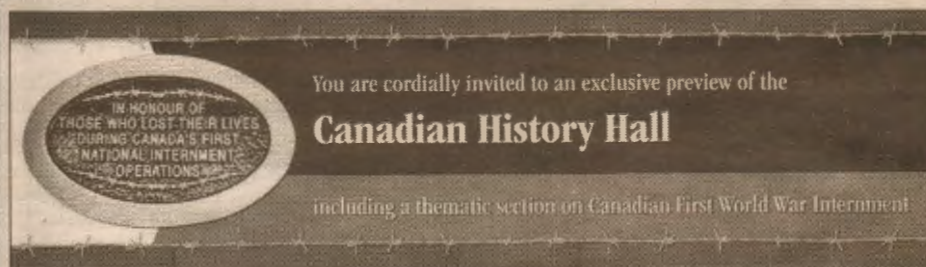
phy, and to all the Serbian media.

As always, the folklore segment of the program evoked a lot of enthusiasm. Program details are in the Serbian section. In keeping with tradition, Niagara's youngest dance group "Decani" opened the program. Appearing twice on stage was this year's honoured guest folklore ensemble "Opanak" from Windsor. The female vocal group "Bozuri" from Kitchener sang a number of old traditional songs. Niagara's older ensemble "Studenica" entertained the crowd. Finally, the combined First and Second Ensembles of the "Academy of Serbian Folk Dancing Miroslav Bata Marcetic" wowed the audience when 70 dancers danced the final kolo! The program concluded with the songs of Kordun sung by "Sinovi Korduna". We can all be proud of the beauty and rich variety of our choral sounds and folklore choreography on this Serbian Day program.

Thank you to all who pulled together to maintain the tradition and make the Serbian Day and Canada Day weekend an exceptional one. God willing, until the 73rd Serbian Day June 30 and July 1, 2018. By then, let's hope the new hall is almost completed and a new Serbian Day chapter begins in Niagara.

Draga Dragasevic

### CANADIAN HISTORY HALL



You are cordially invited to an exclusive preview of the  
**Canadian History Hall**

including a thematic section on Canadian First World War Internment

In honour of Canada's 150th anniversary an exhibit on the World War I internment was previewed at the Canadian History Hall in the Canadian Museum of History on June 12, 2017 and a memorial service for the internees was held in the St. Onuphrius Church in the Museum in the presence of diplomats, community representatives, clergy of several Christian denominations, and representatives of the Museum and the Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund. The internment section consists of one panel within the exhibit.

The Serbian National Shield Society (Srpska narodna odbrana) was instrumental in liberating Serbs from the camps in 1920, two years after the Armistice. Research by our Serbian-Romanian professor, Dr. Marin Mandres, is proving the immense role of the Odbrana during those war years and he is confirming the names of Serbs who were interned.

Miodrag Sekulic, Counsellor at the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia; Rev. Aleksandar Gujanicic of the St. Stefan Serbian Orthodox Church in Ottawa; Stanko Vuleta, president of the Ottawa Serbian Heritage Society; and Slobodanka Borojevic, representing the Serbian National Shield Society of Canada were in the audience.

Slobodanka Borojevic