

Week of September 23/18

ESTONIAN CENTRE PROJECT UPDATE

The Estonian Centre (EC) in downtown Toronto will be a dynamic hub showcasing our rich heritage and promoting Estonian innovation. It will be a vibrant gathering place for Estonians of all generations and backgrounds to connect, celebrate, and share our culture and achievements with each other and the world. (Opening 2021)

Ignite your imaginations! Announcing time capsule project

Estonian life outside of Estonia has a rich and storied history, and we are turning a new page with development of the EC in downtown Toronto. What better way to honour the present and the past than by developing - with the ideas and imagination of the community - time capsules for the new building.

The current plan is to develop two time capsules, one within EC to be revealed 50 years after its doors open (in 2071) and the other will be buried by the foundations of EC to be unearthed in 100 years' time, in 2121.

Leading the time capsule project will be Priit Vesilind, retired editor, writer, and head of the Expeditions and Adventure Department at National Geographic magazine and Ellen Valter, chair of the EC project steering committee.

Priit has extensive knowledge of Estonian history in North America and Estonia itself. He just finished editing the book *Estonians in America* on behalf of the Estonian American National Council. He also wrote and photographically illustrated three books about political and cultural affairs in Estonia, including *The Singing Revolution*, which tells the story of Estonian history and resistance to Soviet occupation.



Ellen, lawyer and chair of the Estonian Credit Union board is completing post-graduate studies in cultural heritage conservation on a research internship at the Estonian National Museum this fall in Tartu, Estonia.

Why is it important to have a legacy project such as a time capsule?

History matters! Priit Pirsko, National Archivist with the National Archives of Estonia, was in Toronto last weekend for the Baltic 100 celebrations. In a keynote address at Tartu College, he spoke of the importance of honouring and preserving the past.

“Each society needs memory and archives,” he said. “Archivists try to determine what information will be important to future generations.”

Priit described how part of the work at the national archives is connecting with the community so that that everyone has pride in their heritage.

“Archives must be visible in society,” he noted.

We can all become archivists by participating in this innovative time capsule project.

What should be put into a time capsule?

What information should be included in the time capsules that would describe the Estonian community both locally and internationally? How can we speak to the people who will be opening them?

“We are no longer just small grievance groups advocating freedom,” Priit Vesilind said. “We are active partners to the evolution of one of Europe’s most dynamic nations. It’s a new era, and the Toronto centre will symbolize that energy. The artifacts that we choose for the time capsules should synthesize our culture. Who were we, and what were our goals, motivations and desires?”

We would like your thoughts! All ideas are welcome, whether you have an idea for a specific item or a general suggestion for a type of item that could be included.

As organizations begin their activities for the coming year, please consider including brainstorming for ideas in your activities plan so that we can include your suggestions for the time capsule project. This invitation goes for all Estonian diaspora communities around the world.

“The more ideas, the better, this way we can create the best message for a future generation,” noted Ellen.

“Time capsule items must be thought through as a whole, taking into consideration the dimensions of the capsule and the other items for inclusion,” Ellen continued. “For example, certain materials promote deterioration in other objects and so they should not be housed in the same microclimate. Accessibility requires some thought as well -

if including a CD, we'd also need to include a CD player as data retrieval may not otherwise be possible in 100 years' time.”

Some guidance on the creation and contents of time capsules is provided by the Canadian Conservation Institute at <https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/conservation-preservation-publications/canadian-conservation-institute-notes/time-capsules.html>.

Ignite your imaginations, and participate in this exciting initiative!

Please send your thoughts and ideas to info@estoniancentre.ca. We look forward to hearing from you.

Building our international cultural centre: next steps

As the project moves forward with design work, a community engagement session is scheduled to be held later this fall. Toronto Estonian House user groups will be contacted for input to advance the design requirements. The capital campaign will soon be underway and more details will be available soon. To find out more, please check the website at <http://www.estoniancentre.ca> and connect with our Estonian Centre facebook page.