

## Revelstoke Homecoming Committee

Three years ago, a small group of committed individuals got together and said, "Let's do it again!" Only two years had passed since the 2004 Revelstoke Homecoming, so the group knew what they were up against. But they also knew that since the first community celebration in 1974 to commemorate Revelstoke's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, they would be building on the rewards of past successes. The dates were chosen, and the work began.

Looking at the events scheduled from July 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup>, it doesn't take much to realize the time, energy, and dedication these Revelstokians have put in to make the Homecoming Celebration not only a success but a meaningful experience for all who participate. At the centre of the planning is the "Revelstoke Book" – a database of contact information for the many people who no longer live in the area but still consider Revelstoke their 'home'. Updating the book is a task unto itself. Last September, the invitation went out with a call to pass on the invitation to family or friends whose addresses may have changed or is unknown. It came with a reminder that "the Homecoming is for anyone who has ever lived in Revelstoke, presently lives in Revelstoke, and for those who have never lived here but just want to visit and have a good time".



Each person on the executive committee is at the helm of a particular area of focus, and as Alan Chell (chair) emphasizes, each group is self-sufficient and very good at putting together their aspect of the celebration – whether it's the Revelstoke Museum, the Vintage Car Club or the Child Care Society. Most of the committee has been involved in past homecoming celebrations. Still, the physical organization of setting up chairs, tents, electrical supplies, getting permits, and coordinating musicians, printed materials, dinners, and special events, is a feat unto itself.

It is apparent that the dedicated committee members represent the tip of a vast pyramid of between 400 to 500 volunteers, with key organizations like Rotary, the Seniors' Association, Service Clubs, Italian Canadian Club, sports groups, Churches, Quilters' Guild, Visual Arts Centre and Parks Canada coming on board. The City of Revelstoke has also donated staff time (Heather Duchman has done an enormous amount of work), the use of facilities, and support for events like the free swim at the pool. Mayor David Raven points out that Homecoming is an opportunity to showcase all that has changed in the community since 2004, like the Aquatic Centre. Many members of the business community have also gone out of their way to support the events and will be working hard over the weekend, with Mt. Begbie Brewery and Revelstoke Equipment Rentals leading the way.

Although the schedule for the weekend contains many events that have been offered at past celebrations, like the Family Tree Display at the Fire Hall, dances, and the heritage home tour, there are a few exciting additions to the agenda. After a couple of years of correspondence with Cathy English of the Revelstoke Museum, and a special invitation from the City, the present Lord Revelstoke is visiting all the way from England and will share in the celebrations. As well, Revelstoke Mountain Resort is opening its doors to the community, offering everything from gondola rides to an art show, sunset dinner and mountain bike race (*up not down!*). For those who didn't get a chance to ride the gondola last winter, the spectacular view of the valley and surrounding mountains from the top of the gondola is not to be missed. Also, there are already over 120 people registered for the South Revelstoke reunion and more on the way.

The 2009 Revelstoke Homecoming epitomizes what volunteerism is all about – the spirit of community. There is *something* about Revelstoke that is unique, that makes people proud to live here, or for those who have come and gone, of having spent part of their lives here. Hats off to the many community volunteers who will make Homecoming a success - and for those who are on their way, you'd better hang on to your hats and get ready to have fun!