

SPECIAL REPORTS

SEATTLE HISTORY: A FAIR TO REMEMBER

Seattle Center at 40

Century 21 introduced Seattle to its future

What if you gave a party and everybody came, from astronaut John Glenn to cosmonaut Gherman Titov, from Sammy Davis Jr. at the mike to Van Cliburn at the keyboard?

Ten million people did come. Seattle's Century 21 Exposition was a golden opportunity to put the Pacific Northwest on display just as jet travel was beginning to shrink America.

Poster: 40 Years of Change (223K PDF)



The Space Needle: From start to finish (Click on a photo to explore)



Art/Architecture

City's arts history began a new chapter in 1962

When President Eisenhower pushed the button to signal the countdown to the first World's Fair in the U.S. since World War II, the spotlight hit Seattle. Art had little to do with it, and yet art was the big winner.

Century 21 remnants found new homes

Recycling wasn't a lifestyle, or even much of a vocabulary word in 1962 Seattle. That was the year the city hosted a world's fair featuring futuristic buildings, cars, transportation systems and scenarios of what life might be like in



century 21 -- the theme and title of the exposition. Recycling, in fact, wasn't even on the agenda.

Build to last: Many Century 21 structures assumed public duties

To get a glimpse of how magical Seattle Center appeared when it opened on April 21, 1962, as the Century 21 Exposition, rent the movie "It Happened at the World's Fair."

History

Recalling the time of their lives

The 1962 Seattle World's Fair was more than just a fair. For many who visited the fair site, it was a deeply personal, sometimes even life-changing experience.

The future isn't what they thought it would be back in 1962

How people managed to live like this is beyond us. Back in 1962 -- the year Seattle played host to the World's Fair -- humans were clearly primitive creatures who knew nothing of the wonders of the Internet or, for that matter, the wonders of the Post-It note (which wasn't invented until 1974).



Space Needle work a high point in welder's career

In 1961, Harold Kresge ascended the Space Needle in a crane, welding massive steel beams 500 feet off the ground. On the 40th anniversary of the World's Fair, Kresge still marvels at the symbol of Seattle.

>> Seattle Opera House time capsule opened

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A Fair to Remember

Still alive and kicking, the Seattle Center celebrates its 40th year since its birth at the 1962 World's Fair

Postcards from the Past

Go back in time as we present more than 100 images from Seattle's past

Seattle Century

Seattle's history is rich in stories undertaken during the last century

Seattle's Leaders

Celebrating Seattle's 150th Birthday with profiles of 10 people who shaped the city

Seattle's Black History

Explore the personalities and events in the history of blacks in Seattle

100 Years of Nordstrom

2001 marked Nordstrom's 100th year of business in Seattle from humble beginnings on Pike Street

See All About It

The Museum of History & Industry presents photographs from the Seattle P-I 1930 - 1970

Historic Novella

The Misadventures of Skukum Kilay is a tribute to Seattle that's part story, part history, part mystery

Mount St. Helens From the Ashes

On May 18, 1980, Mt. St. Helens erupted, causing widespread damage

Ghosts of Rainier

Mt. Rainier's beautiful yet dangerous landscape holds the remains of 65 men entombed by ice

Kingdome

Last days & demolition of a sports storehouse for more than two decades

Seattle History Home

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Former governor Locke likely to be named commerce secretary

• **Pop Culture**

Value of Seattle World's Fair memorabilia is in the heart

Nothing evokes the future like a piece of the past. Ask any 21st-century collector of memorabilia from Century 21 -- the fair that envisioned a sleek new tomorrowland inspired by science and human ingenuity.

>> [Elvis! At the Seattle World's Fair](#)

• **Commentary**

World's fairs are a dying breed

Bill Virgin: World's fairs are fun. But to be honest about it, world's fairs are also not very good at what they do -- which may be why ... no one is clamoring very loudly, at least in this country, to hold another.

>> **Joel Connelly:** [Century 21 introduced Seattle to its future](#)

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Century 21 in Photos (Click on a photo to explore)



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