

Happy 151st Birthday Canada

Melita & Area had a big Happy 151st Birthday Canada celebration last Sunday, July 1st. Festivities kicked off with a sumptuous pancake breakfast prepared by the newest service club, NXTGen SouthWest. Everyone enjoyed sausages, scrambled eggs, pancakes topped with maple syrup, strawberries and whipped cream, plus gluten free options were available as well. The breakfast was very well attended.

With this year's Canada Day falling on a Sunday, the Melita & Area Ministerial organized a Multi-Denominational Service where different congregations participated in the reading of the scriptures, choir, and the offertory. The service was led by Rev. Barb Alston of the Melita Presbyterian Church. Evelyn Andrews played the piano and Heather Sandilands was on guitar. Reading of the scriptures was done by representatives from Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church, Victoria United Church, Elim Chapel, and Christ Church Anglican. It truly showcased unity and solemnity in faith as a community.

The Multicultural Celebration immediately followed the service. Members of the community were treated to lunch comprised of: roast beef on a bun; Greek salad; butter chicken with rice; chicken souvlaki with tatziki & pita bread; *lumpiang shanghai* or Filipino springrolls; and *pancit* or Filipino noodle dish. Appetizers, cookies, and cupcakes were also shared with everyone.

Over lunch, the Romanetz Ukranian Dance Ensemble from Winnipeg performed four dances for the crowd. *Pryvit* was the opening number. It is a welcoming dance which included the presentation of the traditional symbols of Ukranian hospitality: salt and braided bread. This was followed by the *Poltova Duet* which portrayed the flirtatious nature of young love. The third was called *Gihunets (Gee-who-nets)* which means Cassanova in Ukranian. They ended with the Hopak which is the most famous Ukranian dance. It is the finale of every Ukranian performance. It was a fast and energetic dance which showcased the talents of the dancers. This was choreographed by Tom Mokry. The Romantez Ukranian Dance Ensemble was named after a flower that carpets the steppes or foothills of Ukraine. This beautiful yet hardy daisy is the perfect description for a dance group that calls this uncompromising Canadian prairie, *Home*. Three common themes unite the members of the Romanetz: they are proud of their Ukranian heritage, they love Ukranian dance, and they have a strong desire to share the culture with the world.

In between the dance performance, Steward, Russell, Cady and Kendall Pulinney together with Marcus and Alonzo Laureola, pre-recorded a popular Filipino folk song, *Anak* which means child. Written by Freddie Aguilar, it is about a parent's love for a wayward child. This song was originally released in 1978 and has received international acclaim with 55 conversions in 26 different languages. Live guitar accompaniment was performed by Marcus Laureola.

After lunch, everyone had various options for the afternoon. There was a free public swim at the Melita Aquatic Centre and a movie, A Wrinkle in Time at the Melita Strand Theatre. Even though a thunderstorm passed through Melita mid-afternoon, the community parade still took place at 6pm. The parade was led by the RCMP and the Melita & Area Fire Department. Residents, visitors, and some 3&83 Cruiser members joined the parade. There were nine kids that joined the Decorate-Your-Bike activity. The winners for the said activity were Robert Wheelans, Ethan Hay, Penny Stewart and Liam Holden.

All the evening activities were held at River Park as everyone waited for the fireworks. Throughout the evening, visitors at the park enjoyed hotdogs, smores, Canada Day cake, and refreshments. Kids had a lot of activities to choose from: t-shirt crafting, bouncy castles and inflatable games, mini-golf, and other outdoor games. There was also a cultural performance at the start of the evening from Noella Eagle, sharing a traditional pow wow and a friendship dance. Live entertainment from Along for the Ride band featured classic rock, country, and a little bit of old time music. Band members were: Christa Gould on vocals; Tyler Porter on bass & vocals; Carey Gould on drums and vocals; and Kennan Eckstein on guitar. Mayor Bill Holden hosted the lunch and evening programme.

At about 10:30pm, the Melita & Area Fire Department showcased spectacular fireworks to culminate Canada Day! The fireworks show lasted more than 10 minutes ending with an awesome finale. The Town of Melita was pleased to have organized and funded in part, the Canada Day festivities. It was also funded in part by the Government of Canada. The entire day was made possible by all the volunteers, sponsors, performers, community members, and everyone who participated or helped out in any way from planning, preparations and post event activities.