



photo: Sean McLean

On Canada Day, Jonathan Lodge marches as a proud member of the Ceremonial Guard.

and food from over 100 nationalities are showcased, and there are performances from such varied companies as the First Nations Red Spirit Dancers and the Shiamak Davar International Indian dance troupe. "The sense of global community there is really quite moving," says Michael MacLean, who lived in Toronto for 18 years and is now a writer-editor with the department.

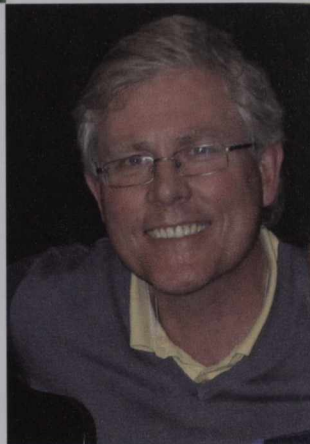
Manitoba's Canada Day celebrations may not be as busy as those of Toronto's, but it's hard to find a place closer to the heart of Canada than the "Keystone Province." In Winnipeg, trade assistant Mychal Nemetchek celebrates with her family at the Assiniboine Park Zoo, which offers free admission all day on Canada Day. "Later on, the big spot for fireworks is The Forks, where the Assiniboine and Red rivers meet," says Nemetchek. "It's a rendezvous for the people of Winnipeg and a place for many events, including Aboriginal dancing and singing as the sun sets."

In neighbouring Saskatchewan, Mona Taylor, senior trade commissioner and zealous fan of the Saskatchewan Roughriders football team, celebrates Canada Day in Regina's beautiful Wascana Park, which hosts a number of annual events. These include the Plywood Cup, a fundraising race to build a makeshift boat with limited materials and then sail it across Wascana Lake with a crew of one.

For fellow trade commissioner Danielle Sabourin, celebrations in the shopping district of Vancouver's Granville Island are the way to go. "It's a great atmosphere—the sunshine off the water, kayakers gliding by, the sounds and smells of real marketplaces," she says. "I'm a big fan of the little ferries in False Creek, the street performances, the *pain au chocolat* from La Baguette & l'Echalote. We barbecue wild salmon on our patio while watching the festivities and fireworks at the community centre right up the street from our house."

What makes all of these celebrations unique and cause for great pride is their strong sense of regional community. Along with the thousands of other celebrations across the land, they weave together and form a rich, panoramic image of a nation on its birthday.

Back on Parliament Hill, parading in our tunics, we listen to individual voices from the crowd, cheerful, often exuberant. Far outnumbering the dignitaries and VIPs, thousands upon thousands of ordinary, festive Canadians swirl around us, immersed in their own uniquely personal celebrations. Surrounded by them, beneath the tall Peace Tower of Parliament's Centre Block, we ourselves stand tall. We, too, are helping Canada celebrate its birthday. And when the clock strikes noon and the people raise their voices along with the band to sing "O Canada," our hearts beat proudly beneath the scorching sun.



On July 1, Anthony McLevey honours fallen Newfoundland soldiers.



For Mona Taylor, Canada Day is a walk in the park.