

July 23, 2014

Loyalist Days 2014 – Riding the Wave

It has become apparent to me that by starting on the east coast and working my way west it is possible to celebrate Loyalist Day in May, June, and July across the wide expanse of Canada. That is the beauty of belonging to an organization with dedicated volunteers in every region of this country committed to preserving the history of the United Empire Loyalists.

This year I attended Loyalist Day events in Saint John, New Brunswick; Simcoe, Ontario; and Victoria BC. Each successful occasion was brought to life through careful planning by branch executive and their members. By involving municipal representatives, provincial leaders, and the media, UELAC branches are drawing attention to the significance of Loyalist history within their own communities.



David Laskey UE, Bonnie Schepers UE, Rodney Weston, Dorothy Shepard, Mel Norton, Donald Flewelling UE in Saint John.

Beginning on May 18, 2014 in Saint John, New Brunswick I joined members of New Brunswick Branch and Nova Scotia Branch in the celebration of Loyalist Day at the site of the landing of the Loyalists in 1783. New Brunswick Branch President Dave Laskey; His Worship Mel Norton, Mayor of the City of Saint John; The Hon. Dorothy Shepard, Minister of Healthy and Inclusive Communities; Rodney Weston, MP Saint John; the Reverend Dr. John Tremblay and myself all contributed. Following a band concert by St. Mary's Band, Dave Laskey and I attended the 21- gun salute by the 3rd Field Artillery Regiment RCA (The Loyal Company) and inspection of the firing party at Longwharf. Every year the people of Saint John gather to commemorate the United Empire Loyalists and to celebrate the first incorporated city in Canada.

In recognition of Loyalist Day in Ontario (June 19), I participated in a flag raising ceremony hosted by Grand River Branch. President Beverly Balch conducted the program assisted by Cathy Thompson, Doris Lemon, and Bill Terry (Dominion President 2000 – 2002). Distinguished guests included His Worship Dennis Travale, Mayor of Norfolk County, and Simcoe councillors Jim Oliver and Peter Black. A performance of 19th century music by the Cottonwood Brass recalled summer afternoon concerts enjoyed by our grandparents.



Central West Region Councillor David Kanowakeron Hill Morrison UE, President Bonnie Schepers UE, Central West Region VP Sue Hines UE, His Worship Dennis Travale in Simcoe ON.

In 2014, UELAC branches in every province answered the call to stand with pride in our 100th anniversary year. UELAC members and friends in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta marked Loyalist Day in ways unique to each province and region. A wave of Loyalist spirit that began May 18th on the Atlantic coast washed across the country to meet the Pacific in Vancouver, Chilliwack and Victoria BC on July 22nd.

Manitoba and Saskatchewan experienced a more tangible flood this summer but it did not dampen their enthusiasm for promoting our history.

Victoria Branch – Vancouver Island, was the final shore with the unveiling of a new commemorative stone in Beacon Hill Park marking the 75th anniversary of the 1939 Royal Visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Congratulations to Branch President Aurelie Stirling and Branch VP David Clark on an excellent event. We were honoured by the presence of The Honourable Judith Guichon, Lieutenant Governor of BC; His Worship Dean Fortin, Mayor of the City of Victoria; Darwin Robinson, Mayor of Esquimalt (2003 – 2005); members of the Monarchist League - Victoria Branch; guests and friends.



Loyalist Day 2014 BC - President Bonnie Schepers UE at the podium, Victoria BC



The Honourable Judith Guichon OBC, Bonnie Schepers UE at Mayor's Grove, Beacon Hill Park.

The success of our Association is intrinsically tied to the success of our branches. As I participate in special branch events in every region, I am experiencing an organization that reflects the whole of Canada. And we're having fun doing it! Thank you for the opportunity to represent our Association on the ground where it matters.

In the coming weeks I will be in Adolphustown, ON and Mont-Saint-Gregoire, QC. In October I return to Vancouver for the Pacific Region Fall Fleet, then to Montreal for the Heritage Branch Charter Dinner. Woven into this schedule are numerous telephone calls, email communications, and executive meetings needed to keep UELAC on track and accountable to our members.

Truly, 2014 is an exciting year of celebration and progress as we plan for our future. Thank you for your part in upholding the vision of a united Association first imagined by our founding members one hundred years ago. Loyal Then, Loyal Now, Toujours Fidele.