

Pacific Regional Fall Fleet, October 5 - "Celebrating Our Centennial 1914-2014"
Bonnie Schepers UE

It began with an invitation in June of 2013 and ended with a flourish on Sunday, October 5, 2014. Our Fall Fleet weekend in Vancouver BC gave us a sneak preview of the warm welcome awaiting UELAC members next year in Victoria BC when 'Loyalists Come West' for the 2015 Conference and AGM.

Flying from Windsor on Friday October 3rd, we arrived at Vancouver International Airport in the early hours of Saturday morning. A heavy weather system moving across Ontario resulted in a number of flight cancellations but once airborne we were safely on our way in an impressive Air Canada Boeing 777, the world's largest twinjet aircraft with seating for 458 passengers.

Saturday morning Albert and I were invited to join friends from Vancouver and Chilliwack Branch for brunch at Seasons in the Park, Queen Elizabeth Park. A plaque at the entrance to the restaurant informed us that the President of the United States of America, Bill Clinton and His Excellency the President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin dined here on the occasion of the Vancouver Summit on April 3, 1993. Wherever Loyalists meet, history is evident. At times we even manage to make our own! The restaurant is located 152 metres above sea level, the highest point in Vancouver, and offers beautiful views of the park, the city, and the mountains beyond.



At lunch we enjoyed good food and lively UEL related conversation. The best discussions often take place over a meal and good company and that was certainly our experience. We shared the table with Chilliwack Branch President Shirley Dargatz, 2015 Conference Co-Chair Carl Stymiest, UELAC Trustee Warren Bell, Albert Schepers, Pacific Region VP Diane Faris, Vancouver Br Treasurer Judith Ueland,

Bonnie Schepers, Past Pacific Region rep Mary Anne Bethune and Vancouver Br Membership Chair Linda Watson.

After lunch, at Carl's invitation, we toured the Bloedel Conservatory where more than 200 free-flying exotic birds and 500 exotic plants and flowers thrive in three different climate zones. Lots of photo opportunities there!

With final preparations in the works for Sunday's Pacific Regional Fall Fleet we went our separate ways. For us this meant an afternoon spent at Stanley Park, a national historic site of Canada. With Carl as our tour guide we took in the nine totem poles at Brockton Point, the Hollow Tree, Prospect Point, a spectacular view of Lions Gate Bridge and many, many wedding parties. I especially appreciated stopping at the resting place of Canadian writer, Emily Pauline Johnson (also known in Mohawk as Tekahionwake) 1861 – 1913.

Sunday, October 5 was the big Fall Fleet event and the energy and enthusiasm in the room carried the day! Sixty guests were in attendance to celebrate 100 years of UELAC and the launch of Moving Ever Westward – Loyalist Descendants Come to British Columbia. Thanks to the efforts of editor and compiler, Dr. Peter Moogk UE, Vancouver Branch has created a fascinating record of western Canadian Loyalist family stories. A copy of this book, fresh from the press, is on its way to the UELAC Office for our library holdings.

There were anthems! There were toasts! There was cake! Every Pacific Region Branch was represented. Together we celebrated Loyalist history and heroes. As Dominion President, I had the pleasure of assisting in the presentation of a number of UE certificates as well as the Phillip E. M. Leith Memorial Award.

The warm hospitality extended this past weekend in Vancouver is only a glimpse of what will take place as we 'come west' next May 28 – 31 for the UELAC 2015 Conference and AGM in Victoria BC. With sincere thanks we say goodbye for now. See you next year!

Loyalists Come West 2015

