

July 4, 2006

Big crowds come out for Canada Day celebrations

The Chronicle

Côte St. Luc's Pierre Elliott Trudeau Park was bustling with activity all evening last Saturday, as hundreds of residents came out and joined officials to celebrate Canada Day.

An impressive lineup of performers, including the Côte St. Luc Entertainers and the One More Time Band, played a variety of music. The Police Marching Band from Denmark, currently on a North American tour, made a special Canada Day stop in Côte St. Luc.

Joseph Milo's Musicians of the World Symphony Orchestra performed the Overture to the Marriage of Figaro by Mozart, followed later that night by Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture, during the detonation of the fireworks.

For the many children, there was face painting, a roaming magician, Canada Day balloons, carnival midway games, the ever-popular inflatables, and a pair of horses ridden by officers of the Montreal Police Department's equestrian division.

O Canada was sung twice – first by Councillor Mike Cohen's daughter, Alexandra, at the opening of the ceremonies, then again by Geraldine Doucet, accompanied by the WSO, leading up to Mayor Anthony Housefather's official Canada Day address around 10 p.m.

Handing out Canadian flags and greeting everyone at the entrance to the park was Saul Nadler, a Canadian Forces veteran. Asked what significance Canada Day had for him personally, Nadler's reply was straightforward.

"Canada is a country we fought for and we're very proud of the country and we try to show everybody," he told The Chronicle. "When Canada Day comes, we should all celebrate. We have a free country and we have to keep it that way."

Councillor Glenn Nashen described himself as an intensely proud Canadian. "Canadian identity and culture really runs through my blood," he said. "I literally wear the maple leaf on my heart on a daily basis. To me this is really the annual culmination of being able to give expression to one's sense of pride and identity of being Canadian ... This is a day that really unites everybody."

Elaine Cohen, a local journalist and teacher, explained why she considers Canada Day important. "We have a terrific history," she said. "Everybody can do their own diverse thing here. There's no melting pot, and yet we can all get together and have something in common for Canada Day."

Councillor Mitchell Brownstein, an immigration attorney, noted that the United Nations has voted Canada the number one place in the world to live seven times in the last decade.

"This shows that we should appreciate that this is one of the greatest nations to live in," he said. "We have the best quality of life. It's a peaceful country. We have beautiful facilities and infrastructure. We're very fortunate."

Councillor Steven Erdelyi said, "Canada Day is a day to celebrate our great nation that's made up of different people that all come together to this great land and enjoy living together with mutual respect for each other. It's a nice time to have fun with the family."