

Word Struck!

06 February, 2005

We have been under a smog alert the past few days and it is doing nothing for the atmosphere nor for the people living underneath it. And the color - the sky is pink in the morning as it is in the summer, and as the afternoon goes on, the sun looks like it will burst forth, but doesn't. So it just turns a dull grey in the late afternoon. All of this in February - one of the "coldest" months in the winter in Canada. But it's because there isn't the wind necessary to blow out the pollution from the smoke of wood stoves and fireplaces and industry emissions. It has been warm, up to 7 degrees Celsius, which makes for slogging in the snow.

Over the weekend, we were at Winterlude in Ottawa. Saturday morning, bright and early, we were at the free breakfast of hot chocolate and pancakes, and I don't know if it was because of the chill in the air or because we hadn't eaten anything for a couple of hours, but the pancakes sure tasted good and the hot chocolate - the best I have ever had.

The breakfast was held at Festival Square in front of Ottawa City Hall from 10:00 until noon, and it was well-attended. Picnic tables were set to one side, brushed off, and set proper so everyone could sit down and enjoy their meal. There were drums everywhere with fires in them, and the smell was wonderful. The city was contributing to the smog and it was nice!! The mayor was flipping pancakes, and everyone there was enjoying themselves.

After the breakfast, we went across the street to Confederation Park in the Crystal Garden to see the Ice Wall in Honour of the Canadian Armed Forces on the 60th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War, but it was covered in wrap to protect it from the strong sun, so we did not see it. (Hopefully this weekend we will see it). But there were people there carving ice blocks into statues and there was the one block of ice sculptures all around the

fountain in the park, and those were pretty. They had been judged the previous evening.

Next, we went to the top of Laurier Bridge to look at the skaters on the Rideau Canal, and it was packed. The city guessed there had been 60,000 skaters on about 5 miles of canal, and it was a beautiful sight to see them all going up and down the canal.

Winterlude is on in Ottawa for two more weekends, with next weekend all about Alberta and Saskatchewan who are celebrating their 100 years in Canada. Also, there will be snow sculptures to see in Jacques Cartier Park in Gatineau, a city across the river from Ottawa.

See you then!

Of course, Canadian genealogy, history, and heritage is still important to me, and my columns on that subject can be read at <http://www.genealogycanada.com>.

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