



Photo by Brynn Campbell

Swazig Provoost patriotically sits perched on top of a pile of snow on National Flag of Canada Day on Wednesday, celebrating the 47th anniversary of the Maple Leaf. Provoost moved to Canada from France six years ago after meeting the love of her life in Vancouver, B.C. Provoost thinks Canada is, "definitely a cool place to live, and has a great social history. The Pearson era, I found, was absolutely stunning." For more Flag Day photos, see Page 4.

Canadians proudly wave the Maple Leaf

Special day to honour flag which began in 1996 marks the day it was raised

By Thomas Lee

Unlike holidays like Christmas and Valentine's Day, Feb. 15 goes on almost unnoticed by Canadians.

It is the day we celebrate our red and white maple leaf flag, a flag that universally represents peace, tolerance and unity.

National Flag of Canada Day started in 1996. It marks the day that Canada's new flag was raised over Parliament Hill in Ottawa at the stroke of noon in 1965. Until that day, Canada used a flag called the

Canadian Red Ensign. It was a flag that did its job whenever a flag was needed, but was never the official flag of Canada.

Ron Baldwin was with the Canadian military when the flag was being changed. Baldwin started out in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, a reserve unit based in Newfoundland. After spending time in the reserves as a medic, Baldwin joined the regular military. Baldwin was stationed in Germany with an armored unit when the flag was changed.

"A lot of people wanted to keep the old British flag, but it didn't matter to me. I got paid either way," said Baldwin in an interview.

After the flag was changed, Baldwin and a few of his army friends partied with the new Canadian flag at a German bar just outside of the camp. "It was nice to

'I think there is something very original about the Canadian flag.'

Johanne Seeger

have something to identify that was ours."

Johanne Seeger emigrated from Germany to Canada with her husband and daughter in 1954. Her husband had been a prisoner of war in Canada during the Second World War. Seeger's husband returned to Canada and was there for seven months before Seeger and her daughter came here by boat. In 1969 they became Canadian citizens.

"I think there is something very original about the Canadian flag," said Seeger in an interview.

"It was an important moment of our history," Rick Archbold, author of the book 'A Flag for Canada' said in an interview.

Archbold believes Flag Day should be a statutory holiday.

"It is silly it is not a national holiday. Instead we have family day when we already have a perfectly good reason to have a long weekend."

After writing his book, Archbold started a campaign to have Flag Day turned into a statutory holiday and to be recognized and celebrated around the country.

"I think if we honoured it, it would have a lot more participation."

Food drive to help victims of fire

By Meagan Pecjak

Loyalist College will be holding a food drive this Friday for two students who have been driven from their home because of a fire.

Loyalist is pulling together Food for Thought, a food drive for the students who are victims of a house fire. They have lost their home, belongings and memories.

Catherine O'Rourke, director of student success, is helping get the event together.

The drive has been incorporated into Random Acts of Kindness Week. "We recognized there was a need, and typically we try and do something for community agencies," said O'Rourke. "However, this year, our own students are in need, so it is appropriate that we support them."

Rebuilding your life after a fire is not easy. Melissa Fougere, disaster management co-ordinator for the Belleville Red Cross office, said that "it's up to the person who lost their belongings how much help they need."

Fougere said that the Red Cross would provide basic needs that need to be met again.

But mostly they are there just to ensure that the victims have the proper contact information in order to replace items they lost in the fire, and help from the community.

The Red Cross will be called to the scene of the fire and will start helping by providing "food, clothing and shelter for up to 72 hours."

For friends of those in this situation, Rebecca Lazar, a counselor at Loyalist, said that the best thing you can do is ask how they are, ask if they are okay, and ask if there is anything they need.

"If you are a friend of a victim, don't be scared to go that way," said Lazar. "If you are the victim, don't be afraid to ask for that support."

Another way to help someone in need is to give them a sense of security.

"Sometimes it means getting them back into a routine as soon as possible," said Lazar.

Often someone just is not sure where to turn in a situation such as this.

O'Rourke said one way students could help would be "to come out, and to support the food drive. If they could make a small donation as well to helping these students get restarted, that would be really appreciated."

Having their name entered into a draw will recognize those who do donate either food or change.

The food drive is being held this Friday. Students who wish to donate can go to the Student Access Hub where there will be a spot set up to donate non-perishable food items.

Animal-assisted therapy program marks 20 years

Volunteer takes her dogs on weekly visits to nursing home and hospital

By Michelle Cochrane

The St. John Ambulance therapy dog program is getting "pawsitive" reviews as it celebrates 20 years of service.

Dog handler Joyce Fowler has been volunteering within the Quinte division of St. John Ambulance for six years with her two Shetland sheepdogs. Fowler takes her dogs on weekly visits to Trent Valley Lodge seniors home and Trenton Memorial Hospital.

"Some patients or residents will respond to an animal when they won't respond to people," said Fowler.

Canines have been key members of the average family home for quite some time. St. John Ambulance is taking that familiar, comforting feeling of family pets into communities across Canada through their volunteer therapy dog program.

Volunteer visits provide happiness and companionship to people who are sick or in need. Dogs are unaware of human frailties and respond to physical and mental illness, confusion, tears, and have the ability to distract those in discomfort.

Many people are able to benefit physically and emotionally from regular contact with the unconditional love of a dog.

Volunteer dogs are not specially trained for the program but are required to pass an evaluation that tests temperament of the dog and the handler's control in various situations.

Heather Rodrigues, manager of life enrichment at Trent Valley Lodge in Trenton, believes it is important for the health



Photo by Michelle Cochrane

Trent Valley Lodge resident Marie Latimer is comforted in bed by St. John Ambulance therapy dog, Bandit. Bandit visits long-term care facilities and hospitals, offering companionship to those in need of comfort or emotional support.

of residents to have visits from therapy dogs.

"I think it takes residents back to when they had a pet at home and it's really good therapy for them. They come alive," said Rodrigues. "If they've been upset, you see a big change in them and they forget all their troubles when the dog comes in."

Trent Valley resident Bonnie Lynn Jones says the visits calm her down and brighten her day.

"It makes me feel a part of the normal world where they can have dogs," said Jones. "My blood pressure goes down when I pet an animal."

Many residents look forward to the

weekly visits of their four-legged companions and welcome their arrival with open arms and cookies in hand.

Leslie Jack, provincial therapy dog program co-ordinator for St. John Ambulance, understands the virtual walls and barriers people may put up in their lives, but finds it amazing what people can say

to a dog and not to people.

"We've seen a firefighter put his arms around a dog and just sob to the dog, where he couldn't talk to people," said Jack. "Dogs can help release that emotion and people aren't ashamed."

The therapy dog program dates back to 1992 in Peterborough. Jenny, a Bouvier des Flandres, and her handler were visiting local retirement homes and approached St. John Ambulance with the idea of a larger program.

The dog therapy program grew from there and now it includes 42 divisions across Ontario, which is nearly half of the national total.

Over the years, the volunteer service has grown from visiting seniors' homes and hospitals, to helping young children improve their reading skills, provide stress relief to university and college students during exam periods and aid in critical incident stress debriefings.

"We've been getting more schools and libraries on board. The reading program is really taking off," said Jack. "We can hardly keep up, but that's great."

Growing to meet the demands of local communities, program officials say they will provide visits in any way needed.

"It's all from feedback. If people call us, we try to meet their needs," said Jack.

In the near future, Jack hopes the program will be more involved in children's programs and would like to see the service branch out into play therapy.

"The nicest feedback is the amazement we get from staff, seeing people respond to the dogs," said Jack. "It's the little miracles; they aren't huge, they aren't going to make the news, but that's what keeps us going."