

## Taking pride in your country and community

Mark Pavilons



"We are tremendously proud of our cultures, heritage and achievements and we will continue to break new ground. I am proud to be a Canadian and I hope you are too."

Philip K. Lee

What does it mean to be a Canadian?

The answer should come so easily, it would be a no-brainer.

But for some reason, that's simply not the case.

Time Magazine once wrote that "Canada is one of the planet's most comfortable, and caring, societies. The United Nations Human Development Index cited the country as the most desirable place in the world to live."

This tossed salad of a country is so delightful, everyone should live here.

King native Adele Reeves and her husband Leandro spent more than four months travelling coast to coast, to get a handle on this age-old question. The result is their documentary, "More than Maple Syrup."

For anyone who's travelled outside of Ontario, you know this country is as different and diverse as the geography itself. Even towns and cities across Ontario vary widely.

While each province has its unique characteristics and charm, we are all bound together by a sense of national pride.

But just what is it?

Reeves says from her experience it relates to our very geography. Canadians are tied to the great outdoors. We have this huge beautiful back yard that just beckons to be explored and enjoyed. People in remote areas of this country have "cabins" that are even farther afield. Just how far into the heart of nature can one get?

Who hasn't been camping? Who hasn't sat around a campfire and roasted marshmallows? And who hasn't jumped into chilly lake waters just because?

Our cultural diversity is another of our defining characteristics.

We all know about our aboriginal peoples, but we're still working on embracing this as our history. The first human beings, crossing over from the ice bridge that connected Asia to North America, came to Canada more than 15,000 years ago, and left their mark forever on our west coast.

From the very beginning, Canada has been about different cultures.

Reeves and her husband will be holding a public show this Friday (2-10 p.m.) and Saturday (noon-8 p.m.) at the Lions building on the King City arena grounds. Get a glimpse of your Canada and help them reach their fundraising goal to complete the documentary. I've seen some of their photos of this country and its people and you know what they ... a photo is worth a thousand words.

I just love listening to those old, weathered craftsmen from across Canada, who can explain life and their passion in simple terms ? missing teeth and all!

?We have it all. We have great diversity of people, we have a wonderful land, and we have great possibilities. So all those things combined there's nowhere else I'd rather be.?

? Bob Rae

There are only three major races and 193 countries in the world. Yet, there are thousands of cultures and billions of opinions. And I?believe it's how one's culture and roots marry with Canada that defines us as Canadians.

Canada itself is a relatively young country and we're still evolving. Someone once wrote that Canada will be a great country when it's done!

In a few words, here's my take. A Canadian is someone who can carry two large coffees in one hand and still hold a door open for someone else. We understand why neighbour wears shorts in January, cooking on the BBQ in his garage. A?Canadian is someone who feels compassion for the plight of others and weeps for total strangers.?We'll help look for a lost dog in the snow, and help someone change a tire in the rain. For many?Canadian males, beer, hockey and foam fingers are staples.

To expand on all of that, what does it mean to be a resident of King Township?

We don't stop being Canadian due to our residency. But can it take on a new flavour, influenced by our community?

Certainly. And it's proven time and again.

While I'm not a King resident, I?do consider myself connected to the municipality's social fabric. I?get it.

Like Canada itself, King is constantly evolving and changing.

Previous NIMBY?attitudes delayed the inevitable, and development has arrived, in full force. Fortunately, large-scale growth is limited to the urban centres of Nobleton and King City, with some infilling left in Schomberg.

King is known for its million-dollar homes and affluent residents. But our Food Bank is busier than ever, and hard-working small business owners put their hearts into their work.

King is brimming with passionate artists, environmentalists and volunteers.

There is always something going on, in every corner of this place!

Being a large rural municipality with a relatively small population, King is a bit of an enigma ? it definitely has the best of all worlds. It's becoming the go-to place for that perfect country retreat, farm or equine facility. It still retains that small-town Ontario atmosphere.

People here care. People get together to support their own. Citizens take up a cause if it's worth the fight.

For outsiders, visiting King is like exploring the attic at grandma's house ??you don't pay much attention to it, but when you're there, you encounter all this great stuff!

In general, we Canadians may be a bit reserved and conservative by nature. But there's nothing wrong with being our own biggest cheerleader. After all, who better to sing our praises than us?

There are certain King residents ? the mayor in particular ??who go out of their way to promote King every chance they get. Join them if you can!

Maybe King is the epitome of what being a Canadian is all about!

?Canadian pride may not rest on our sleeves, but it resides deeply in our hearts.?

- Steve Miller