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Column: JANE DUCKWALL - NEWCOMER NETWORK

CANADA DAY GATHERING IS A BLAST - AT WAXHAW HOME TRANSPLANTS' GALA IS ONE OF MANY ACROSS U.S. TO BE FOUND ON WEB SITE *JANE DUCKWALL, Special Correspondent*

If you're a Canadian transplant who felt isolated last Sunday on Canada Day, you need to meet Toronto native Janet Riehle.

While you were sighing about the barbecues, parades, pancake breakfasts and fireworks you were missing north of the border, you could have been enjoying the company of compatriots, complete with homemade beer and burgers, at the Riehles' home in Waxhaw. Not only would you have met some interesting and friendly Canadians now living in the Charlotte area, you would have met at least one Canadian dignitary: Kevin Sinnott, senior trade commissioner for the consulate of Canada in Raleigh. Sinnott traveled from Raleigh with consulate co-worker Mark Edwards, and the two brought "all kinds of goodies" to share with those attending the Canada Day festivities, Janet said.

It was **CanSouth** of Charlotte's first Canada Day celebration, an event held for those Canadians who were lucky enough to find out about it from other expats or through the list of U.S. Canada Day parties at www.connect2canada.com. Janet said about 53 people attended, representing several of Canada's provinces, including Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, Quebec and "everywhere, all across Canada."

The festivities featured hamburgers and hot dogs, husband Nick Riehle's home-brewed beer, a badminton tournament in the backyard, street hockey in front of the house for the kids, side dishes brought by attendees and lots of laughter and conversation.

Janet first heard about **CanSouth** - a group for North Carolina's transplanted Canadians - while living in Raleigh, where the organization is based.

After she and her family moved to Waxhaw nearly two years ago, she thought it would be a good idea to have a Charlotte-area chapter, so she helped create the "offshoot," as she calls it. It has grown from a handful of members to several dozen, and she hopes it will grow even more. For newcomers who want to learn more about the area's Canadian expat community, Janet's contact information can be found at www.CanSouth-Charlotte.org.

(I confess I had to do an Internet search to find out what Canada Day is all about. The short version is it's Canada's version of the Fourth of July, and it's celebrated July 1.)

Dana Hicks, Canada's honorary consul in Charlotte, was unable to attend Sunday's barbecue because he was away on vacation in Canada, Janet said.

"However, he did call to wish us a "Happy Canada Day!" she said.

I had just one more question: Who won the badminton tournament?

"Unfortunately, it was my husband," Janet said with a sigh.

She didn't explain her use of the word "unfortunately," but I could tell she was secretly proud.