

First of all, let's start with the obvious: Happy Birthday, United States of America!

July 4th ... a day of celebration of the nation's birthday. A day for ... time off from work, beer drinking, grilling out, fireworks ... what more can you ask for, right?

The Canadian in me would like to remind everyone out there that your neighbor to the North - your number one trading partner and world's longest undefended border-mate - just had a birthday as well.

It was on July 1. Yes, we know you missed it, but a belated birthday card would have sufficed.

[!\[\]\(666e09182d4cd268646ea700ea60dcdf_img.jpg\)Neighbour To The North](images/map?canada?political-geo.png "Neighbour To The North") Yes, we're the ones that supply the NHL with players ... we supply the world with great comedians and musicians ... and we provide enough quirky stuff (i.e. health care system) to help keep you entertained. Don't forget how we helped out on D-Day or are currently losing our soldiers in Afghanistan. And, yes, someone has to report the news in this country - albeit most of them are Canucks!

Let's face it - us Canadians have to stick together. Sometimes we have to even remind ourselves that we just got a year older. For what it's worth, we get email from fellow Canadians reminding us of the event! For example, on July 1 I received an email from Michael Wilson, Canadian ambassador to the US, who passed on a note from the Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper:

July 1, 2007
Ottawa, Ontario

Greetings fellow Canadians

On July 1, 1867, three small colonies joined together as the Dominion of Canada.

Today 140 years later, we are a federation of 10 provinces and three territories, stretching to the coasts of three oceans.

But our vision reaches beyond our shores.

We are building successful business in world markets.

We are working to deliver aid and enhance security throughout our globe.

And, in concert with other countries, we are wrestling to address the environmental challenges that confront our planet.

From championships in hockey to humanitarian and military leadership roles in Afghanistan and Haiti, we can say again this year, Canada is a citizen of the world and we make our contribution a positive one.

And why shouldn't we? From the natural wealth of the land that God created, to the talents, energy and imagination of people drawn from all the nations of the earth, we are a country that has been truly blessed.

I believe that whether our ancestors came from the East, the West, or the South, as Canadians we always look to the North for the true definition of our country.

This past year, I visited our Canadian Forces and public service personnel at Alert on Ellesmere Island, the most northerly human habitation on the planet.

As I looked at the vast gleaming expanse of the Arctic I could not help but think it is as limitless as the potential of Canada itself.

On behalf of Laureen, Ben, and Rachel as well as all of our government, I wish you, your friends and your loved ones, a happy Canada Day.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, July 1, 2007

A video version of this message is available <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1725&lk=4911094-4911094-0-27670-0On8xZUIfGmLa mi2owVL3qFC-slchjVf> here.

So did y'all have a mass email to remind you of the 4th? Probably not. Or maybe you didn't get the public service announcement. Or perhaps you were just lounging around by the pool waiting for the hot dogs and hamburgers to finish cooking.

But as someone that has had the privilege of "being on the outside [of the

Who's Birthday Is It Anyways? | Allan Besselink

Written by Allan Besselink

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United States] looking in", I would strongly suggest that we all take a moment to appreciate the nation's birthday - for real. The founding fathers gave us the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights - two landmark documents from both a historical and philosophical perspective. This is good stuff - revolutionary stuff (no pun intended - and not to bring out the boo-birds from the Commonwealth!) if I might say so. With them stands a phenomenal statement to the power of the human spirit, to rights and responsibilities, and to equality under the law. Although the perception of the US in the world today may be a little under the weather (and I am sure we can all propose a few reasons why), as a Canadian growing up in eye-shot of the US I can attest to the true values and fiber that are underlying the nation in which I now reside.

So ... with those thoughts, I say to you - "Happy Birthday to us all ... belated or otherwise" - and let us all take a moment to remember what these birthdays truly represent in the scope of the world as we know it. Then - we can set off the fireworks and pop open a Molson or two!