

# Holding hands in public

by BRIAN LOCKHART

There were many Canada Day parties held across the nation on July 1 to celebrate this country of ours.

While everyone was waving the red and white and wearing their Canada Day shirts and hats, I hope most of you took a few moments to reflect on the values that built this country.

One of the primary values is freedom. That is freedom to assemble and associate with whoever you want, freedom to move to another town or province, freedom to build a church and practice your religion, freedom to marry who you want, freedom to choose your job or vocation, freedom to express your opinion, freedom to criticize the government without fear of reprisal, and freedom of the press to report the real news ? not government controlled propaganda.

We should not take these freedoms for granted and assume they will always be there.

A few years ago, I attended a hockey game where the local team was missing half of its roster during the playoffs. All of the missing players were Russian nationals who came here for the chance to play higher-level hockey and get a good reputation in the sport.

So why would they all suddenly leave at the most important time of the hockey season?

It was because the visas that had allowed them to leave Russia to play hockey were about to expire.

If they returned after the due date, they would be detained immediately and sent to jail or the army, no questions asked.

I met a lot of those Russian players in several different towns and hockey clubs around the region. They were all nice and friendly, and they appreciated playing their sport here.

Given their age, I now wonder how many of them are now dead after being conscripted and used as cannon fodder in Putin's immoral war?

The Canada Day celebrations were attended by everyone of all ages. There were families arriving together, older people, younger people, and toddlers in strollers.

I positioned my cameras near the park entrance for the fireworks show, and hundreds of people entered and passed by my location.

I noticed a few things as I watched everyone enter ? I knew a lot of people who were arriving for the show. For starters, really short skirts are apparently making a comeback.

Nothing wrong with that.

I saw many teenagers arriving as couples or in groups. Some were holding hands or sitting closely together to watch the show.

There's nothing wrong with that either.

We all experienced puppy-love and the thrill of going somewhere with your crush for the first time.

The thing is, they have the freedom to attend an event and hold hands if they want to.

In some countries, that behaviour will land you in serious trouble.

Recently in Indonesia, a man and a woman were lashed with a rattan cane in public to pay for their crime.

The crime? They were seen kissing on a TikTok livestream.

For that, they were publicly humiliated and severely beaten.

A 22-year-old local resident who witnessed the lashing was quoted as saying, "It raises awareness that such actions are unacceptable, thereby educating the public."

I'm pretty sure this guy has never actually spoken to a real woman, and would probably be scared to death if a woman actually spoke to him.

He has certainly been brainwashed from a young age to have such a medieval and backwards thought process at his age.

In these cases, usually the people doling out the punishments are the real perverts. This really became evident when the U.S. military released a report on when they monitored website usage in some of these backward countries, and what the totalitarian leaders themselves were watching online.

In this part of Indonesia, people are routinely beaten and lashed for gay sex, gambling, drinking, men who miss Friday prayers, and women who wear tight clothing.

According to this list, just about everyone currently in Las Vegas would be getting a good beating under these archaic laws, myself included, under the gambling, drinking, and missing Friday prayers categories.

Freedom is not free. As citizens, we have to be vigilant against persons, groups, and organizations that would take that freedom away and oppress us under totalitarian laws and rule, and that includes new government hate speech legislation like Bill C-9. Modern hate speech is no more dangerous than it was 100 or 200 years ago.

We owe it to ourselves, our children, and future generations to keep our society free from outside influences that will try to force us to submit to a dangerous and oppressive regime.