

Rick Watts (Cont')

Partner/Family: I'm married to Liz, who is Canadian – it's her fault I started programming in SAS. She was learning SAS when I was learning C. I remember several conversations where we were using the same words but neither of us had a clue what the other was talking about! I have an 11-year-old daughter, transplanted from England when she was 7. She often seemed more Canadian than English and made the move well. My 24-year-old stepdaughter elected to stay on the other side of the pond.

Pets: I have dogs, cats, chickens and turkeys. The turkeys are all named after festive seasons and won't be with us much longer!

Sports/Hobbies: I used to play rugby, which is very much an up and coming sport in North America, but I'm too fragile for that now! I'm chairman of the Friends of Elk Island Society. We support and fund conservation, education and research in Elk Island National Park. We're best known for a 20-year project to reintroduce trumpeter swans into central Alberta. To my knowledge, this is the first time a reintroduction of this type has been attempted. After 20 years of mixed results, we began to see real success this year.

What your ideal weekend would be: I like lonely places, so I'd love to spend a few days miles from anywhere. Ideally, this would be somewhere extreme and picturesque, perhaps New Zealand. I have yet to travel far north of Edmonton, but I'm looking forward to visiting the Northwest Territories and the Yukon some time soon (but not in the winter!).

Favourite Foods: Chinese. No wait, curry...or Thai? You get the idea!

If I could be anything at all (besides a SAS programmer), I would be....

Perhaps a park warden. There are parks in Canada where the pace of life is slower and the wardens spend a significant percentage of their careers on horseback. That appeals to me.

When I'm not programming in SAS, I like to Find some time and space to myself with my camera. Of course, that doesn't happen very often. I have so much else to do.

One thing every SAS programmer should know (a techie tip – this could be at any level – e.g. a simple programming tip, something new you've learned lately, macros, whatever you think may be helpful for other SAS users)

I used to be afraid of SQL. Don't be. There are some things that are easier and faster to do with PROC SQL than in a DATA step. This can be particularly true if your data is hosted on a database server and you can use passthru SQL to execute native SQL on your host.

For more of Rick's techie tips [click here](#)

http://www.sas.com/offices/NA/canada/newsletter/insights/Jan06/user_profile_techie_tip.pdf