

Since 1977

FARM VIEW

A newspaper with something for everyone | December 2023 | Volume 46 #12



AGcalendar

Farm View's Ag Calendar is free to non-profit agricultural groups, up to a maximum of 40 words. All others are invoiced at \$25 per month. Please note the format of the listings below and submit your item by mail or email, in a similar fashion.

Nov 25th: SSFA Christmas Tree sales party

South Springwater Firefighters Association is holding their annual Christmas Tree Sales party. All funds raised support local community charities. Tree sales continue through December while quantities last!

Saturday November 25th, 12pm to 4pm.
Located at 1027 Bayfield St North, Barrie
More details in the ad on this page.

December 5th - 7th: Forage Focus Webinar

Ontario Forage Council is pleased to present the Free Forage Focus webinar series again in 2023! The theme for the 2023 Forage Focus webinar series is "The Value of Forage." This year's webinars will take place from noon until 1:00pm Eastern time on December 5th, 6th, and 7th.

More details at: <https://onforagenetwork.ca/ontario-forage-council/forage-focus/> and on page 31.

December 14th: News and Advertising Deadline

The advertising and news deadline for the **January** issue of Farm View is **Thursday, December 14th.**

Don't forget to book your Happy New Year greeting ad!

December 31st: Deadline for the 2024 Network Challenge

The Network Challenge is a one-year commitment to enhancing both your soil health and your professional network. With a six-part workshop series and multiple opportunities for peer collaboration - get ready for mentorship, training, skill development, along with a platform to share your ideas and best practices.

Visit <https://soil.typeform.com/OSN2024App?typeform-source=mailchi.mp> to get started. Don't forget, the application deadline is December 31, 2023

January 3rd - 5th: Ontario Agricultural Conference

Registration is open for the 2024 Ontario Agricultural Conference, From Good to Great! Virtual kick-off is January 3rd, 2024, SWAC in-person event January 4th & 5th, 2024, EOCC in-person event January 16th, 2024, MWAC in-person event January 19th, 2024. **Full details in the ad on page 18 and the article on page 31.**

January 3rd - 9th: 2024 Grey Bruce Farmers' Week Conference and Trade Show

Registration is open for the Grey Bruce Farmers' Week virtual Conference and Trade Show. The conference will be held January 3rd to the 9th. Many fascinating speakers and presentations! Topics covered are beef, dairy, goat, sheep, horse, eco day and crops day! **Full details in the ad on page 30 and in the article on page 16.**

January 24th: Essa & District Ag Society AGM

The Essa & District Agricultural Society annual general meeting will take place on January 24th, 2024. To be held at the Ivy Community Hall. **Full details in the ad on page 14.**

January 24th - 27th: Guelph Organic Conference

The theme for the 2024 Guelph Organic Conference is Bring Organic Home: Cultivating Community in a Changing Climate. Taking place January 24th-27th, 2024.

Jean-Martin Fortier and Catherine Sylvestre will discuss topics including planting, care, and harvesting details for dozens of winter crops so that you can earn money and provide the highest quality, most delicious produce to local markets. Visit <https://guelphorganicconf.ca/>

More information in the article on page 29.

Farm View gets technical

By Roslyn Watkins, publisher Farm View

For a very long time my husband, Shawn, has been encouraging me to get a QR code to link to the newspaper's website. I'm not a fan of technology overall, it's not here to stay, right? So I have been resisting. Until recently that is. Had I have known how quick and easy it would be to create one, I would have done it sooner. Introducing the new Farm View website QR code! You'll find this on the newspaper stands and sponsorship banners beginning in the new year.



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NEW YEAR!**

Soul Sisters Celebrations

Building a United Community Beyond Religious Boundaries

In the assortment of our spiritual landscape, the celebration of unity in diversity emerges as a cornerstone for building prosperous and harmonious communities. As neighbors sharing the same postal codes, sunsets and common aspirations, the rich landscape of religious and spiritual practices becomes a source of strength, fostering understanding, empathy, and a shared commitment to collective prosperity. The multitude of religious and spiritual denominations across Ontario is equivalent to a treasure trove, each facet contributing to the province's cultural wealth. In our neighborhoods, this diversity is not merely a reflection of varying beliefs but a testament to the collective resilience and adaptability of our communities. The coexistence of different faiths adds depth to our shared cultural narrative, creating a vibrant and inclusive tapestry that weaves together the stories of Canadians from all walks of life.

As December unfolds, the spirit of celebration becomes a unifying force that should rise above religious boundaries. The festive air is not confined to one specific tradition but permeates the entire community, encompassing the joyous echoes of Christmas, the reflective moments of Hanukkah, the serene practices of Buddhism,

and the communal prayers of Islam. The shared spirit of celebration becomes a bridge, connecting us through a shared experience of joy, reflection, and togetherness. In our pursuit of prosperity, both as individuals and as a united community, embracing religious diversity emerges as a strategic imperative. The rich blend of beliefs fosters a culture of learning, where we gain insights from our neighbors' traditions and perspectives. This cross-pollination of ideas becomes a catalyst for innovation, encouraging us to approach challenges with a multiplicity of viewpoints and solutions.

Celebration of unity in diversity extends beyond religious and spiritual practices to the core values that bind us as neighbors and fellow citizens. Shared aspirations for kindness, compassion, justice, and community welfare become the common ground on which we build a thriving society. In this unity of purpose, the richness of our diverse religious and spiritual expressions becomes a source of inspiration rather than division. To foster a thriving community, open dialogue and understanding are crucial. Initiatives that promote interfaith dialogue, cultural exchange, and shared community events become opportunities to deepen our connections. By ac-

tively seeking to understand our neighbors' beliefs and traditions, we pave the way for a more inclusive and harmonious coexistence. As we learn, we can all begin to understand and embrace that regardless of what we call the God of our understanding, we are aligned and guided by the some form of the "Golden rule." Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Worded differently, worth exploring in a future article, but the concept has the same meaning.

Revealing our similarities in religious and spiritual diversity is not just a seasonal observance but a endless journey towards building a prosperous and united community. As neighbors, let us cherish the richness of our collective cultural and spiritual heritage, recognizing that our diversity is an asset that propels us toward shared goals of success, understanding, and an enduring sense of unity. In embracing the beauty of our differences, we interweave a narrative of resilience and unity that transcends religious labels, forming the foundation for a vibrant and prosperous farming community.

Cheers and best wishes to your December celebrations.

In Gratitude,
Rev. Erin

In Gratitude, The Soul Sisters
Reverend Erin Wilson and Reverend Kelly Blakely
Soulsisterscelebrations@gmail.com



On the Cover



Merry Christmas from the 5 n's! Left to right are Trenton, Roslyn, Harrison, Lillian and Shawn.
— Photo by Stephanie Tavitian-Guthrie

DEADLINE for the January Farm View is December 14th.

FARM VIEW
can help you achieve increased sales and product/brand awareness with a regular advertising program that is delivered monthly to your target audience, farmers.

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FROM THE EDITOR



Roslyn Watkins
 Publisher/Editor
 Farm View Newspaper
 farmview@on.aibn.com

I am so pleased to present this issue of the Farm View newspaper. Not only is it full of many Christmas greetings from the advertisers, and beautiful Christmas stories but we also have

John Beischer, shares the first segment of his six month road trip. Cathy Hamill-Hill also tells us of her recent trip to the East Coast in her After the Chores column. On the subject of the travel page we welcome new advertiser Bird Kingdom in Niagara Falls. Perfect timing for planning a family outing over the school break. And I must say, if you are not travelling somewhere tropical this winter, visit the Bird Kingdom for a day and you will feel like you have!

I am also pleased to introduce new advertiser, Crewson Insurance Brokers. Jennifer Crewson was lovely to work with in arranging the advertisement. If you are in the market for insurance of any type, give them a call.

After this issue goes to press quite a few of us will be getting together at the fundraiser Feeding the Human Spirit - Celebrating the Legacy of Dr. Tim Henshaw. Farm View will have coverage of this incredible night in the January issue.

Until then, all the best to you and your families for a wonderful holiday season full of love and laughter. Merry Christmas!

— Roslyn Watkins

excellent coverage of the International Plowing Match held recently in Dufferin County and photos from The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. If you find yourself with a little downtime over the upcoming winter there are numerous webinars and trade show conferences coming up. Information on them can be found in the ag calendar on page 2 as well as throughout this issue.

The new travel feature page is taking off and this month former Farm View publisher,

The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair; delighting new and repeat visitors!

Story and photo by Shannon Russell



Charlie Russell (12), pictured at left, local resident to Horseshoe Valley had her first experience and shared in her Moms love of the Royal Winter Fair. Exploring all of the amazing things the fair offered from her favourite, the horse shows in the Coca-Cola Colosseum, to seeing the immaculately groomed show cows and sheep, and let's not leave out the food court with its many delicious offerings from a variety of vendors.

Charlie's eyes were filled with wonder the entire day. This was her Christmas gift and no doubt will be a new annual tradition for Charlie.

For more coverage of The Royal Agricultural Fair, please turn to page 8.

Ag Snapshot

LETTERS

New reader enjoys Farm View

Roslyn,

I was in a Sobeys grocery store in Innisfil yesterday and found a stack of your "Farm View" magazines. Picked one up (November 2023 issue) and had a read through this morning.

Good work!

I grew up on a 500 acre dairy farm (Ayrshires, a show herd) near Howick, Quebec and it was the best time of my life. Yes, a proud 4-H member too.

Both my older brothers stayed in agriculture, quite successfully, although neither one in Quebec! One here in Ontario near Omemee (now retired) and the other in BC, also retired.

I was given the gift of music and attended McGill U 1970-75 then was accepted at U of T for post grad studies. Following that, one year of teacher's college at OISE and poof, my first teaching job, in a little town in Grey County called Durham. Moved here to Simcoe County Bd. of Ed in 1982, at Elmvale Huronia Centennial and ultimately was hired at Innisdale Secondary in 1986. I taught 25 years there and retired in 2008.

Although I spent my life in Education my heart is on the farm.

Very much enjoyed reading your magazine - CONGRATULATIONS!

—Chris Ness in Barrie, ON

Please note the January issue will be delivered by mail as usual to farm households but delivery to local businesses will be delayed to the first week of January.

The Farm View is available at the following fine establishments

- ALLIANCE AGRI-TURF in Ivy, Bolton, Fenelon, Baxter and Lindsay
- BARRIE KOA (Seasonally)
- BEARD'S FARM SUPPLY
- BRADFORD GREENHOUSE Barrie
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- PEAVEY MART in Alliston and Collingwood
- PREMIER EQUIPMENT, Alliston
- RICHARDS EQUIPMENT INC.
- RITCHIE'S FEEDS AND NEEDS
- SOBEY'S in Angus, Bradford and Alcona
- STEER ENTERPRISES
- STEWART'S EQUIPMENT in Cookstown and Stayner
- THE UPS STORE in the Barrie Cedar Pointe plaza

The Farm View is delivered to these business between the 25th and 29th of each month and copies are available while supplies last. If you would like the Farm View mailed directly to your home, one year subscriptions can be purchased for \$49.00. Contact Roslyn at 705-722-0138, by mail 8 Luella Blvd Minesing, ON L9X 0W7 or email farmview@on.aibn.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Farm View invites letters to the editor. They should be fewer than 300 words and deal with a single topic affecting farmers. All letters must be signed, including your full name, address and daytime phone number. All letters are subject to editing for brevity. Please no phone calls.

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Phone (705) 722-0138

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Visit us on the web: www.farmviewonline.com

A forum for the Agricultural and Rural Community

The farm newspaper that covers Simcoe and Dufferin County, York, Peel and Muskoka Regions, keeping farmers and rural home owners informed about local and national news that affects their farm business, family and rural lifestyle.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$49.00 + 13% HST

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In memory of Jill Beischer

Farm View attempts to present a forum for varying points of view from the agricultural community. Editorial opinions are freely expressed by individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the executives or directors of the federations unless specifically noted.

"Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic, but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets."

W.J. Bryan

OFA Members Service Representative:

Leah Emms 1-866-660-5511 email: leah.emms@ofa.on.ca

Lisa Hern 1-877-343-5444 email: lisa.hern@ofa.on.ca

OFA Zone Director for Peel, Simcoe and York:

Paul Maurice: 705-427-3126 email: paul.maurice@ofa.on.ca

OFA Zone Director for Dufferin County:

Mark Reusser: email: mark.reusser@ofa.on.ca

2022-2023 Executive – Simcoe County

President: Dave Ritchie 705-534-4017
 Vice President: Colin Elliot 705-791-1006
 PAC Member: Dave Ritchie
 SCFA Phone: 705-726-9300 ext 1224
 simcty.fed.agriculture@outlook.com

2022-2023 Executive – York Region

President: Darryl Hamilton 416-788-1415
 Contact YRFA: york@ofa.on.ca

2022-2023 Executive – Dufferin County

President: Bill McCutcheon 519-766-7905
 1st Vice: Gail Little 519-925-2983
 2nd Vice/Treas: George Van Kampen 519-940-2202

2022-2023 Executive – Peel County

Vice President: Gary Mountain 647-225-3410
 PAC Member: Philip Armstrong 416-346-5066
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SCFA hosts banquet, meeting and elections

Story and photo by Roslyn Watkins

On October 26th Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture (SCFA) members gathered for a social hour and meal before the annual general meeting. The meeting was held at Living Faith Community Presbyterian Church in Baxter. The volunteers didn't disappoint with a full roast beef dinner and unlimited choices of pie and ice cream for dessert. Before we all tucked in to enjoy our dinner Andy Van Niekerk gave a blessing and afterwards Donna Jebb thanked the staff for their hard work in preparing the meal.

SCFA president, Dave Ritchie, opened the evening with thanks to the directors and to Nicole Cross, SCFA Office Administrator, for their hard work and dedication over the past year. Dave mentioned in particular how invaluable Nicole is for the Federation. From helping organize many events to saving funds on new office space. Ritchie said "Thank you Nicole, you've been a God-send." Ritchie also mentioned with great thanks the efforts of board members for organizing the Kids Keep Safe Workshop that was held at Huron Tractor in Stayner this past spring as well as the Annual Summer BBQ held this past July at John Beattie's Farm Storage in Alliston. Ritchie was very appreciative of the great efforts that go into planning these events. He also hinted at a possible Farm Comes to Town event in the new year. Ritchie took a few moments to discuss the new weather stations that the SCFA implemented this past year. Have a look at www.decisionfarm.ca for more

information on them. The SCFA has certainly had a busy year, from arranging public education events to speaking with town councillors throughout Simcoe County and all levels of government officials promoting what farmers do every step of the way. The pride Ritchie holds for Simcoe County farmers and everyone working in related agricultural fields is evident every time he speaks.

Next we heard from Guest Speaker, The Honourable Robert Black. Senator Black began by recognizing his long time friendships with Dave Ritchie, Keith Currie, president Canadian Federation of Agriculture and Paul Maurice OFA zone director for Peel, Simcoe and York. He then continued with a discussion on how the ag sector has suffered over the past years for many reasons. Covid, war, labour shortage to name a few. Black stated "I am and always will be an ag advocate." He encourages Ontarians to send an email or make a phone call to his office bringing concerns and issues to his attention. Black continued on sharing the work he is doing on many committees to bring more supports, tax breaks, and improvements to the agricultural field. Urban sprawl is big concern of Blacks, he stated "it is important to advocate for rural Canada."

Paul Maurice, Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) zone director Peel, Simcoe and York, spoke to the audience and said "on behalf of the OFA it is my pleasure to bring you greetings from the OFA." Maurice took a few minutes to give thanks and congratulate the

SCFA for the initiatives they have taken. Most importantly improving the working relationships with government officials.

Leah Emms, Member Services Representative at Ontario Federation of Agriculture, also had a few minutes at the mic to say how much she enjoys the rapport with Dave Ritchie and the staff at the SCFA. Emms recounted the Farm Comes to Town event held late spring in Innisfil where town councillors were given the opportunity to drive the larger farm machinery.

The evening progressed into the business portion and began with a presentation of the SCFA's annual account given by Alan Priest of Powell Jones LLP. Then moved on to elections and closing of the public portion of the meeting.



Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture President, Dave Ritchie, at left, introduces Senator Robert Black. In Ritchie's introduction he acknowledges and shows appreciation for Senator Black's commitment to Ontarians.



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Are you prepared for an emergency on your farm?



By Leah Emms
OFA Member Services Rep.
1-866-660-5511
Leah.Emms@ofa.on.ca

With December just around the corner and the official beginning of winter this usually signals a time to reflect on the year that's been. Weather is usually on the top of that list.

And this has me thinking about emergency preparedness planning. As we are experiencing more extreme weather events, I believe it's time to at the very least consider how you would react in the event of a natural disaster on your farm. Generally, we tend to think about flooding, drought, and wind

damages but also consider freezing temperatures, snow loads and loss of the electrical grid. If you have generator or inverter don't forget to get it serviced. A quick search on Google will return you with several farm emergency preparedness templates. Even if you don't complete the entire process having the discussion with your family and employees is a good starting point. The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association offers an excellent template resource. Please visit

their website at casa-acsa.ca. OFA created a fact sheet titled, emergency preparedness for farm animals. It is available on our website under the resources tab.

Thinking about tasks that should be completed during the year that sometimes get pushed to the back burner include getting your water tested. Health units across the province supply residents with a collection vessel which you fill and return to them for complete analysis by a laboratory contracted by the province. There is a great comfort level knowing that your water supply is safe for your family to consume. Another task to add to the never ending list is reviewing and evaluating your farm's insurance coverage. Don't wait until an emergency occurs to start questioning your coverages. Do you have "a gentlemen's agreement" on rental properties? It might be time to create a formal rental agreement for not only your protection, but all parties involved. Every year we have members asking how to proceed because the landowner decided to rent to another farmer for the calendar year and a winter crop was planted without any communication or written agreement about the next years rental terms. Farm & Food Care Ontario offer an excellent rental checklist and sample rental/lease agreement template. Farmfoodcareon.org/land-rental-resources/.

Do you or your family members hold a "G" licence? In 2021 the provincial government decided to end mailing paper renewal notices. Your licence and health cards renew on

your birthday every five years. Service Ontario offers an email or text renewal reminder service which you can subscribe to on their website. If eligible you can renew your licence and health card online instead of in-person at a Service Ontario location. Ontario.ca/page/renew-drivers-licence.

Lastly, in January Agricorp will begin mailing Farm Business Registration renewal notices. March 1st is the deadline for submitting your payment. To maintain your farm property in the Farm Property Class Tax Rate Program it is important to observe this deadline. Recently, Agricorp shared with OFA that 1800 farm properties in the province "fell" out of the Farm Property Class Tax Rate Program because property owners did not have a valid FBR attached to the property. This results in the property being taxed at the residential rate. Owners are advised to apply for a request for reconsideration through Agricorp. Deadline to apply is March 31st.

As I reflect on the activities of OFA and the County Federations I support, it has been another busy year of successfully advocating and educating our provincial & municipal partners, other not-for-profit organizations, and the public on the realities that farmers face in the ever changing world we live in. I am proud of the accomplishments we have made and look forward to achieving more in 2024.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a happy, healthy, prosperous 2024!

Agricultural Anecdotes from Farmer Tim

Not long ago, I had the pleasure of giving a few of my city friends a tour of our farm. It was their first time ever seeing a cow up close so it was a treat for all of us. It brought me so much joy to see the smiles and amazement on their faces as they petted their first cow. I entertained all of the usual questions, but there was one particular question that I wasn't sure how to answer. "Farmer Tim, which one is your favourite cow?". I guess I had never thought about one particular cow being my favourite.

After they left, I pondered that question again while I did the evening milking. There have been many great cows pass through our herd. As a kid, I remember Tulip. She was a huge cow with a pure white head and a very pendulous udder. I loved her because she came when you called her. Then there was Cranberry, our first red and white Holstein heifer. I spent many hours camped out in her pen while she was a calf; determined that I would make a pet out of her someday. Of course, I could never forget Star. She was born almost two months pre-mature in the pasture field one hot summer night. As I carried her tiny body across the field into the barn to put her under a heat lamp, I remembered spotting the most beautiful shooting star that I had ever seen. Thus, the name Star! More recent favourites are cows like Tempest. Tempest does not live up to her name. She must be the most docile creature that ever walked the face of the earth. In fact, my kids have ridden her like a horse and they have fallen asleep beside her when

they were younger. There are the award winners in the crowd too! Majestic Francine was the grand champion at a big dairy show in England many years ago. Her photo graces the sign at the entrance to our farm. In my youth, there were countless 4-H calves that always did their best to bring home ribbons at the fairs. There are envelopes arriving monthly in the mail letting me know that certain cows have been awarded certificates for lifetime milk production, for mothering exceptional daughters or for producing high milk, fat or protein yields. Surely, I must have a favourite amongst those talented girls! Sandi just got a gold seal for producing 100,000 litres of milk in her lifetime! She's definitely got to be in my top ten!

As you can see, picking my favourite is no easy task. Of course, there are certain times when I could tell you who isn't my favourite cow. Take Dame for instance. She loves to slap her (not always clean) tail across my face almost every time I milk her. Then there's Dorothy who never fails to kick the milker off at least once a day! However, all it takes is a gentle lick, a soft moo, or a sultry flutter of those long eyelashes and all is forgiven.

Cows are remarkable creatures. Each one comes with her own unique personality. It's that amazing diversity of personalities that makes my cows so wonderful to work with. It's also what brings a group of cows together to form a herd. Now if the question was, "Farmer Tim, what herd of cows is your favourite", I could easily answer.....this one!

Farmer Tim farms in Southern Ontario and has been sharing his stories through social media for many years.

Tim is quoted saying
"All farmers need to get their stories out there and have fun while they do it!"

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Highlights from the 101st Royal Agricultural Winter Fair



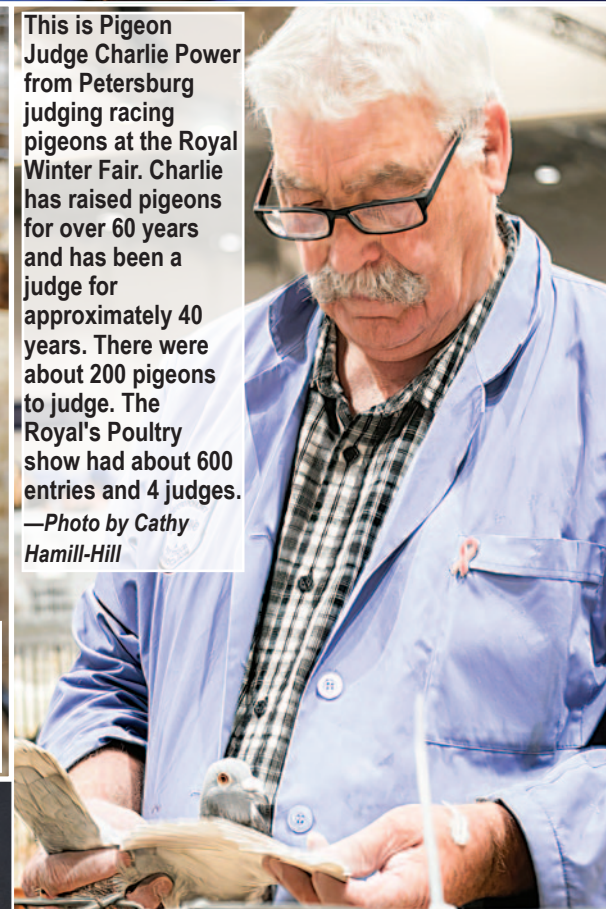
Bill Gardhouse from Schomberg is pictured here with his Best New Zealand white rabbit that was also chosen as overall reserve, which is second best in the entire Rabbit show held at the Royal Winter Fair. Bill has been a judge with the Dominion Rabbit and Cavy Breeders Association (DRCBA) for decades and has shown rabbits throughout Ontario and the USA. The DRCBA show this year had over 400 entries with 3 judges.
—Photo by Cathy Hamill-Hill



Isabella Cullen enjoyed being a ribbon presenter for Holstein Canada during the dairy show at The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.
—Photo by Carolyn J Morris



Pictured here is Alessandra from east of Ottawa. Alessandra travelled with her family for over 4 hours one way so she could come to the Royal Winter Fair to show her White Indian Runner ducks. Eight year old Alessandra is holding her favourite, Carrot.
—Photo by Cathy Hamill-Hill



This is Pigeon Judge Charlie Power from Petersburg judging racing pigeons at the Royal Winter Fair. Charlie has raised pigeons for over 60 years and has been a judge for approximately 40 years. There were about 200 pigeons to judge. The Royal's Poultry show had about 600 entries and 4 judges.
—Photo by Cathy Hamill-Hill



Brittany Rantala-Sykes, co-owner of the Ugly Barn Farm with Ivan Vincent, is showing baby mushrooms that are naturally growing on wood. The "mushroom kits" were sold out but interest was high in other mushroom products that were available in three categories; eating, medicinal and growing. Brittany says they began mushroom farming after purchasing a few mushroom kits and then realized they could do this at their property which led them to establish a mushroom growing facility. The farm sells online at www.theuglybarnfarm.com
—Photo by Cathy Hamill-Hill



Shawn Watkins of Anten Mills enjoyed his first trip to the Royal Winter Fair.
—Photo by Roslyn Watkins



Iain Morris and author Carolyn J Morris pose for a photo during the 101st Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. They have been bringing Carolyn's beautiful and educational books to The Royal for 7 years. No stranger to The Royal, Carolyn showed 4-H steers here as a youth. Visit www.railfencebooks.com to find out where Carolyn will be next and to order online.
—Photo by Shawn Watkins



Spruce Park Patchouli was the first place winner in the Alpaca show. This alpaca is owned by Catharine Musselman from Napanee. The showperson is Ruby Candler.
—Photo by Cathy Hamill-Hill

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Lifelong dream trip realized

Story and photo by John Beischer

Location: Galveston Texas.
Today, Remembrance Day November 11th, I attended a small gathering on the Gulf of Mexico at the Galveston seawall in southern Texas. This historic site is where the locals go to acknowledge Veterans Day. There was no cenotaph, simply a long row of canons on the seawall pointing out to sea. These cannons were used to defend against Spanish warships in the fight to wrestle [what is now] Texas away from Mexico. The symbolism was certainly sufficient to enable me to remember my Dad John, and my late wife's Dad Harold, both of whom served Canada in World War Two. While November 11th [Armistice day] recognizes the conclusion of the first 'war to end all wars' in 1918, it is the date chosen to honour all veterans of all wars past and present. Unfortunately, by this time next year we will have to include all the brave Israeli men and women who are dying at this very moment in the middle east in defence of democracy while fighting terrorists in their homeland. And the many thousands of Ukrainians who have died fighting against Russian communist expansion in eastern Europe.

Why am I in Texas you might ask. I left my home in Utopia on September 30th to embark on a six month road trip across Canada and the USA. Last February I purchased a used B class motorhome, a 2007 Pleasure Way van. It has proven to be a wonderfully reliable vehicle; I have travelled nearly 10,000 kilometers in the past 6 weeks with no mechanical issues to date.

This trip has been a lifelong dream of mine. I planned to travel to BC, proceed down the west coast of the USA and then head east across the 'cowboy' states, arriving in Florida mid November. I am on track to complete this first leg of my journey. I plan to fly home in December to celebrate Christmas with family and friends and then return to Florida to experience the Snowbird lifestyle I have heard so much about. But this is a travel article to celebrate my daughter's Travel Feature in her Farm View publication; so I better get on with it!

Day one: I drove to Sudbury and visited with my niece and her daughter Jamie Lynn. Around a fizzling campfire I got to know my great grand niece. A beautiful girl that I plan to visit again next summer. On the second night I arrived at Sault Saint Marie and stayed at a beautiful campsite [KOA] where the early fall colours were very evident. I stayed a second night to enjoy the autumn colours to their full extent. And to enjoy what was to be my last campfire for the next 40 days!

The next morning I drove to the USA border crossing and since I had no ham sandwiches aboard, they allowed me to begin my westward adventure.

I chose to travel west to BC [on the US side of the border] to save hundreds of dollars in fuel. When I left home a full tank of gas cost me approx. \$200 dollars. That same fuel cost me \$75 as I travelled across Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota and Montana.

I enjoyed these northern US states and the scenery and historical sites I visited along the way. But it was cold! I was happy to cross back into Canada at a town called Milk River on the Alberta border. I camped at a pleasant municipal campsite for the night and in the morning I drove to Calgary before heading west to Banff and Lake Louise. In 1971 I visited this area with my new bride [Jill] as we travelled west to Vancouver on our honeymoon. We were travelling in a truck camper and desperately wanted a hotel bed and shower for one night. The rooms at Lake Louise were \$150 per night. That was all the cash we had for our entire trip [no credit cards back then], so we had to decline and get back into the camper. That same room, facing the parking lot, now costs \$1100. per night. Only the rich and famous can afford to stay here now. How sad.

I left Lake Louise on October 12th and drove to the Salmon Arm area to visit Jill's brother Barry who recently relocated here in the town of Celeste. Together we travelled the area back roads to view the forest and structure damage from this past summers' fires. From here I drove to Kelona



BC to visit long time friends and once again I was treated to a chauffeured car ride to see the forest fire devastation in this area as well. At the conclusion of this wonderful 3 day visit with a former newspaper boss and his lovely wife, I left for Vancouver and a drive north on the 'sunshine coast' to Powel River. Here I took a ferry to Vancouver Island and drove down the coast to Victoria.

Rather than go back to Vancouver to begin my southern trek in the US, I was wisely advised to take the ferry from Victoria to Port Angeles in Washington State. From here I drove south on Highway 1 along the Pacific coast of Washington, Oregon and California; through the redwood forests with incredible vistas of the Pacific ocean. State Parks in Oregon are second to none! Then I arrived in San Francisco at rush hour on Friday night. I was reminded that I also had arrived in Vancouver at rush hour on a Friday night. A trend was starting and I didn't see it coming; Los Angeles, Phoenix, El Paso and Houston, jammed up for hours in heavy traffic due to poor planning on my part. While trying to escape from Los Angeles, confronted by a myriad of interstate and local highway interchanges, I sat on top of the I-10 overpass for more than an hour. While there, I noticed a number of abandoned cars were parked under the overpass. An oddity that I soon forgot as I exited the city. Then, this past Saturday I learned that a fire in a nearby pallet storage area ignited those vehicles and a huge fire storm ensued, destroying 3 major overpasses and closing all those downtown expressways for an indetermined period, possibly 6 months. LA will be a mess for years to come.

Once I got clear of LA, I stayed two days at Palm Springs in the desert where the pools and hot tubs were fed by actual hot springs from the nearby hills. This was by far the most attractive and enjoyable campground I had the pleasure to stay at on the entire trip; until I got to Galveston Island! That story will have to wait until next month's Farm View as I am way beyond my allowed word count for this month.

Before closing this travelogue, since this is an agricultural publication, I should mention the following: in New Mexico I had the privilege of visiting a Farm and Ranch museum in Las Cruces. They featured daily demonstrations of ranch activities, animal exhibitions and great kids activities. In Lubbock Texas the museum of Agriculture recently expanded to focus on both the history of farming and the science and Technology of modern agriculture. I highly recommend a visit here if you are ever in the area. In Mississippi a visit to the Agriculture and Forestry museum is well worth your time; transportation greatly influenced the lives of farmers and foresters in the 19th century. The water railroads and roads were instrumental in moving stock and supplies. This museum tells the story in detail.

If the editor permits, I would like to submit another update of my travels in her next issue. Tomorrow I will arrive in Orlando Florida where I will take a two week rest from driving before heading home [by plane] for Christmas with my kids and grandkids, returning to Florida in February to experience the 'snowbird' winter.

Warm regards,
John

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Unusual Christmas traditions from around the world

Pickle in the Tree | Germany

The Christmas tree tradition embraced around the world today is believed to have started in Germany

back in the 16th Century, so it comes as no surprise that our continental cousins still have some unique customs relating to the festive conifers. One of these is to hide a pickle somewhere within the branches of the tree, and give a gift to whichever child in the household finds it.

Some claim that the tradition may not be German after all. One legend says that the Christmas pickle originated in Spain, when two young boys were held as prisoners inside a pickle barrel. The heroic Saint Nicholas rescued the boys and brought them back to life. Either way, a pickle on the Christmas tree is a tradition we can totally get behind.

Roller Skate Mass | Caracas

In the Venezuelan capital of Caracas, swathes of city-dwellers make their way to mass on roller skates every year on Christmas morning. The tradition is now so well established that many of the city's streets are closed to traffic from 8am, so that the skating congregation can get to church safely.

It's even said that children will sleep with one lace from their skates tied around their toe, the other skate dangling from the window so that their friends can wake them up with a friendly tug on the lace.

Shoes by the Fire | The Netherlands

Every year in the days leading up to 25th December, Dutch children eagerly place their shoes by the fire in the hopes that Sinterklaas will fill them with small gifts and treats in the night. Traditionally, carrots are left in the shoes for Sinterklaas' faithful steed, a white horse named Amerigo.

In the olden days, naughty children would receive a potato in lieu of gifts, but potato punishment is no longer considered an appropriate scare tactic.

Belfana the Witch | Italy

Forget Santa and 25th December when in Italy, as all the action takes place on the eve of 5th January.

According to folklore, an old woman named Belfana visits all the children of Italy to fill their stockings with candy and leave them presents if they've been good. Just like Father Christmas, Belfana enters through the chimney and is left treats by the children who live there - typically wine and local delicacies.

The Yule Cat | Iceland

One of the more unique festive traditions we've heard of comes from Iceland, where a giant cat is said to roam the snowy countryside at Christmas time. Traditionally, farmers would use the Yule Cat as an incentive for their workers - those who worked hard would receive a new set of clothes, but those who didn't would be devoured by the gigantic cat-like beast.

Today it is customary for everyone in Iceland to get new clothing for Christmas to avoid an unsavoury demise.

Flying Witches | Norway

According to Norwegian folklore, Christmas Eve is the day when mischievous spirits and witches take to the skies for mischief and general tomfoolery. As witches often use brooms as their preferred mode of transportation, it's tradition for Norwegian families to hide away any sweeping sticks where the witches won't be able to find them.

Donald Duck | Sweden

Every Christmas, families around Sweden gather around the television at 3pm sharp to watch Donald deliver his raspy message.

Everything on Christmas is planned around the television special, and more than 40% of Sweden's population still tune in like clockwork. The tradition dates back to the 1960s when televisions were a new commodity in Sweden and only two channels aired - one of which played Disney cartoons at Christmas. It may be a quirky tradition, but a whole nation coming together to watch Christmas cartoons together is about as festive as it gets.

The Alternative Christmas Tree | New Zealand

Thought all Christmas trees were created equal? Think again. The Kiwis are all about the pōhutukawa, a beautiful tree that is native to New Zealand with gnarled roots and bright crimson flowers.

The first mention of the pōhutukawa tree came from Austrian geologist Ferdinand von Hochstetter in 1867. He described locals decorating their churches and homes with the brightly coloured branches at Christmas.

Today, the pōhutukawa tree is a recognised symbol of Christmas around New Zealand and is featured on Christmas cards, decorations, and even in the Christmas carols that children sing at school.

A Cobweb Christmas | Ukraine

One of Ukraine's favourite festive traditions is not one for those with a fear of creepy crawlies! Where we would have baubles, tinsel and stars, Ukrainians use decorations that mimic the natural formation of spiders' webs shimmering with dew.

The tradition goes back to a folktale about a poor widow who could not afford to decorate a tree for her children. Legend has it that spiders in the house took pity on the family, and spun beautiful webs all over the tree, which the children awoke to find on Christmas morning. Spiders' webs are also considered to be lucky in Ukrainian culture.

From the website Holiday Extras



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Dufferin County Farmer receives Mapleseed Sheep Pasture Award

Story and photo by the Ontario Forage Council

Mike Swidersky and family of Riverview Ranch Meat Co. in Melancthon, Dufferin County are the recipients of the 2023 Ontario Sheep Pasture Award. The award, sponsored by MAPLESEED, the Ontario Forage Council, and the Ontario Sheep Farmers, was presented at the end of October. Mike will be awarded \$250 and a bag of forage seed for his exceptional pasture management.

Mike and his wife, Amber, own the farm and operate it with their two children, Warren and Grace. Mike and Amber established the farm in 2003 after completing Agricultural programs at the University of Guelph. Mike has spent the past 17 years honing the farm's production practices and stewarding the land, raising and growing their flock of sheep supported by Amber who has experience in the animal nutrition industry.

Warren and Grace are interested in taking over the farm and making it a second-generation operation. This means adapting the farm in years to come to make it sustainable for multiple families. Warren and Grace both invested in a ewe with their own money over 10 years ago; since that time they have been developing their own flocks within the Riverview Ranch flock.

The Swidersky's are passionate about holistic and pasture management. Mike notes that "The core focus of the farm is sustainability, soil health and integrity. All decisions made on the farm are made with the health of the pasture, soil, and the animals in mind."

Sharing ideas and successful best man-

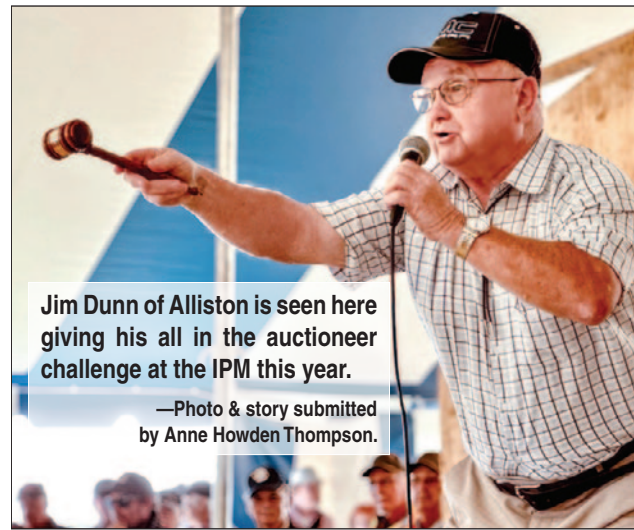
agement tips are ways producers pass on experience to, not only new and novice producers, but to the entire industry. Thank you to the Swidersky family for representing these practices and sharing their story!

The deadline for applications for the 2024 MAPLESEED Sheep Pasture Award is September 30, 2024. For details, call the Ontario Forage Council at 1-877-892-8663 or visit either the Ontario Forage Council website at <https://on-foragenetwork.ca/category/forage-council/mapleseed-pasture-competition/> or Ontario Sheep website at www.ontariosheep.org



Mike Swidersky, pictured above, and family of Riverview Ranch Meat Co. in Melancthon, Dufferin County are the recipients of the 2023 Ontario Sheep Pasture Award.

IPM Auctioneer challenge



Jim Dunn of Alliston is seen here giving his all in the auctioneer challenge at the IPM this year.

—Photo & story submitted by Anne Howden Thompson.

One of the non-plowing events at this year's International Plowing Match and Rural Expo held in Dufferin County was the auctioneer competition.

It's the familiar call of the auctioneer signalling the end of bidding at a live auction and when the bidding closed at this year's Ritchie Brother's Auctioneer Challenge it was first-time competition entry John Dunn of Alliston who emerged victorious.

Held on the Friday of this year's International Plowing Match and Rural Expo (IPM) in the Holmes Agro Agricultural Showcase Tent, Dunn's energetic auctioneer chant caught the judges' attention.

Competition judges looked for clearness of speech, rhythm, how well the participants caught the bidders' eyes, dress code and how correctly information about the winning bid was relayed to the clerk.

As winner Dunn earned the right to join in on the live auction fun at the Celebration of Excellence event that evening. Veteran auctioneer Bob Severn of Severn Auctioneering Inc, Shelburne quarterbacked the night's live auction with Dunn saying he was thrilled when Severn invited him to the stage to get in on the auction action—"that is the biggest crowd I have ever auctioned for," he said.

Ready for adoption!

Bessie is a big, beautiful, female Caucasian Shepherd who is approx. 1+ years old. She has been in a local shelter for almost 11 months now while she waits for her new family. Bessie is good with dogs, but we are not sure about cats or livestock. She really loves her handlers at the shelter and is the sweetest girl. If you have lots of love, a nice big yard and can give Bessie a home, please contact the Caledon Animal Shelter at animal.services@caledon.ca a 905-584-2272 ext. 4698



Freya is still looking for a home where she can work her sheep. Freya is good with birds and likely would do good with goats or any other livestock... Freya is not for a novice owner or a farm that will have a lot of foot traffic as she is a pretty serious worker but once she gets to know her people she will be loyal to a fault. If you are interested in Freya please do not hesitate to contact the Peartree Animal Wellness Center Rescue by text or phone at 519-709-6678.



Congratulations
to the OPA and the Local Committee on delivering an immensely successful 2023 International Plowing Match to our community and to our farmers, who work hard year-round to bring us the best food in the world!

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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Highlights of the International Plowing match in Dufferin County

The timing of Farm View's November deadline did not allow us to include this report last month. We are glad to provide this look back now, and present some of the highlights. Images and information have been supplied by organizers and volunteers of the International Plowing Match; so a thank you to all involved from Farm View and our readers.

After four days of focused-concentration and attention to detail in the fiercely-competitive plowing competition at this year's International Plowing Match and Rural Expo the judges' scores were tallied. Winners announced at the Friday evening Celebration of Excellence, held at the Orangeville Fairgrounds. A number of plowmen from our Farm View distribution area emerging successful.

There is always a lot at stake during the match competition, particularly in the Ontario class which is where the Ontario Plowing Champions are named, earning the right to compete next year in the Canadian Plowing Championships in Wolfe Island, Kingston, Ontario next August.

Representing Ontario next year will be:

- Junior Champions: Austin Brodhaecker of Ayr and Alex Cameron of Owen Sound
- Ontario Championship Tractor Plowing with a Conventional Plow: Brian Davenport of Owen Sound and Patrick Sanders of Alvinston.
- Ontario Championship Tractor Plowing with a Reversible Plow: Daryl Hostrawser of East Garafraxa and Bob Campsall of Cannington.



Daryl Hostrawser with his two-furrow roll-over plow.

Veteran plowman Daryl Hostrawser of East Garafraxa has already competed at the Canadian Plowing Championships an impressive 14 times and with this latest win at the International Plowing Match and Rural Expo he will make his 15th appearance next August 2024. He has four wins at the Canadians to his credit and competed at the World Ploughing Championships four times, most recently for the 2022 edition in the Republic of Ireland. He has travelled to the Worlds as part of the Team Canada contingent seven times, including a visit to Kuldiga, Latvia as part of the Canadian coaching team in October 2023. Hostrawser was awarded the Brian Fried Memorial Award in its inaugural presentation at the 2023 IPM. He competes with a 1991 Ford PowerStar 7740 SL tractor and a 1986 Kverneland two-furrow rollover plow.

Bob Campsall of Cannington emerged as the Ontario Reserve Champion Plowman in the reversible class at this year's International Plowing Match and Rural Expo (IPM) held in Amaranth Township, Dufferin County. With this win he gets to defend his current Canadian Champion Plowman (Reversible) honour—just won in August—at next year's 2024 Canadian Plowing Championships in Wolfe Island, Kingston. He will also travel to Estonia next year to participate in the 2024 World Plowing Championships. A veteran plowman, Campsall is an eight-time Ontario



The inaugural Brian Fried Memorial Trophy was awarded to Daryl Hostrawser.



Here we see Bob Campsall in action. Adjustments are made frequently in the field to get the right results for the plowmen.

—Photo by Anne Howden Thompson

Champion, six-time Ontario Reserve Champion, four-time Canadian Champion and two-time Canadian Reserve Champion with five trips to the World champions already under his belt, including an additional visit to the Worlds as a Team Canada coach/judge.

Brian Davenport of Owen Sound, 2023 Ontario Champion, Conventional, qualifies to compete in the 2024 Canadians and as 2023 Canadian Champion, Conventional is qualified to compete in the 2024 Worlds.

Davenport travelled to the 2019 World Plowing Championships in the United States as a coach/judge and competed last year at the 2022 World Plowing Championship in the Republic of Ireland. This past October he travelled with the Canadian contingent to Kuldiga, Latvia for the 2023 global competition where he placed seventh. His Canadian championship win in August 2023 means he will again travel with the Canadian team for next year's World Plowing Championships in Estonia.



Brian Davenport is also seen making adjustments in the field.

—Photo by Anne Howden Thompson

Alex Cameron of Owen Sound won 2023 Ontario Junior Reserve Champion (qualifies to compete in the 2024 Canadians) and he was also awarded the 2023 Barb McAllister Memorial Scholarship.



Jr. plowmen going to the Canadians. These two young men will be representing Ontario in the Junior competition next August. Left to right: Austin Brodhaecker of Ayr; Maranda Klaver, Ontario Queen of the Furrow 2022-2023; and Alex Cameron of Owen Sound. Cameron was also the recipient of the 2023 Barb McAllister Memorial Scholarship.

—Photo by Leila Brown Photography

Scott Thomas of Elmwood earned the 2023 IPM Champion Horse Plow Person and the 2023 Lloyd Van Dusen Award.

These wins bring Scott Thomas championship wins to six (three as Champion and three as Reserve Champion). This is the second time he has earned the Lloyd Van Dusen Award at the IPM.

Former Ontario Queen of the Furrow Elisabeth Barker MacMillan returned for a visit to this year's IPM and it was a particularly special reunion. Barker MacMillan was crowned 60 years ago at



Elisabeth Barker points to a historical photo on display in the Ontario Plowmen's Association Welcome Tent. She was crowned by Barbara Cunningham of Peel.

Photo by Anne Howden Thompson

the 1963 plowing trifecta—an IPM, a Canadian Plowing Match and a World Plowing Match—held on the Highway 10 Caledon farm of Conn Smythe, just 25 minutes south of this year's match. Travelling all the way from Nova Scotia with her son for this year's match she said she didn't want to miss this anniversary moment. "It chased us out of the Maritimes," said MacMillan, referring to post-tropical storm Lee which left a trail of destruction on Canada's east coast.

A new Ontario Queen of the Furrow was crowned at this year's International Plowing Match and Rural Expo (IPM), with the Peel Dufferin representative Melissa (Mel) Karpenko winning the unique honour on home turf. A graduate of the University of Guelph with a Human Kinetics degree, she has worked with Corteva Agriscience and BASF Canada and is currently in her final year at Western University in the nursing program. She plans to work locally as a Registered Nurse upon graduation.

Karpenko was raised in Caledon and currently lives on a dairy goat farm in Dufferin County. She was also named Miss Friendship by her fellow competitors and placed second in the plowing competition.

Mel was coached in the plowing part of the Queen of the Furrow competition by

Bill Hostrawser of East Garafraxa.

Shayna Morphy of Wellington placed fourth in the plowing competition.

Congratulations to all the competitors and winners in this year's IPM!



2023-2024 Queen of the Furrow
Melissa Karpenko

Leila Brown Photography



Shayna Morphy of Wellington.

Leila Brown Photography

Sawmiller John Cerswell Breathed Life into Tecumseth

Village stories

by Andrew Hind

region's development than his sawmill.

Born in 1795, John Cerswell was the son of farmers Andrew Cerswell (1763-1833) and Susan McMillan (1771-1836), natives of Donegal, Ireland. In 1819, when John was 24 years old, the family immigrated to Canada to flee the poverty and recession that was then strangling rural Ireland. They settled in Markham.

On Feb. 10, 1822, John married 19-year-old Susan Coffey. A year later, they had a daughter, Jennet, and purchased a fine 200-acre spread (Lot 22, Concession 7) in Tecumseth Township. The young family was content.

Then tragedy struck. In February 1827, Susan suddenly died of some unrecorded illness, tearing apart John's idyllic world.

John mourned for a time, then stoically forged ahead. Around 1828, he purchased Asher Miller Foster's sawmill, located just west of Bond Head. Of frame construction, the mill measured 38-feet by 48-feet, making it one of the largest buildings for many miles, and its

In early Tecumseth Township history, one would be hard pressed to find a man more influential than John Cerswell, and an industry more vital to the

wooden waterwheel was 16-feet in diameter. A 200 foot long, 14-foot-high dam created an artificial pond along Beaver Creek to provide a year-round supply of water to power the saws.

Today, Beaver Creek is anything but impressive. In fact, most of the year it's almost dry, with little more than a trickle of water flowing along its course. But two centuries ago, it was a much more substantial waterway and provided ample water for the mill. It wouldn't have been unusual to see the creek and millpond brimming with floating logs, all awaiting a date with the saw.

In 1830, John remarried, to a 36-year-old widow named Mary Watt. Despite Mary's somewhat advanced age, the couple would have four children together: Samuel, Andrew, John Jr., and John's twin, James, who died ten days



after birth.

John was once again a happy man, and a widely respected one. When Tecumseth Township formed its first council, he was elected a member and went on to serve a several years in this capacity. Cerswell was also an elder in the Presbyterian congregation and bought a house in Bond Head with the sole purpose of turning around and selling it to church trustees for \$1 so that the priest might have a manse in which to reside.

As the decades of the 19th century wore on the machinery operating the sawmill began age, as did John himself. Both began to slow down. John's sons took little interest in upgrading the mill with newer machinery because by the 1860s there were fewer and fewer stands of trees in the area worthy of culling. In addition, because of widespread deforestation, Beaver Creek no longer flowed fast and deep enough to sustain milling operations for more than a few weeks out of every year. The mill closed in the late 1870s.

John Cerswell outlived the mill by only a few years, dying in 1881.

But while the sawmill and its owner are long since passed, the contributions of man and machine to Tecumseth history should not be overlooked. In their day, they breathed life into the region.



From the ornaments that glitter to the lights that flicker, may every moment of your Christmas season be merry, bright and beautiful.

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Light snacks & refreshments will be provided.



South Simcoe County 4-H represented at the Royal!

Story and photos provided by South Simcoe 4-H



15 members of the South Simcoe 4-H Sheep Club competed at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in the Junior Sheep Competition. Our club members had fun and all did a great job representing Simcoe County at the Royal in showmanship and confirmation classes. Congratulations to our club member Lauren Cowan who won the Wool Ambassador Competition this year.



The South Simcoe 4-H Rabbit and Cavy Club had a few members compete at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair on Sunday November 12th. Both members had a wonderful event and placed well in youth confirmation and showmanship classes.



Lauren Cowan, winner of the 2023 Royal Winter Fair Wool Ambassador Program, poses for a photo (left) with Kay the sheep, the official ambassador of the Royal.

4-H Ontario offered a new conference this year which was named The Impact Conference. Five 4-H members, pictured to the right, from Simcoe County attended this event in October. They had a wonderful time meeting other 4-H members and learning about leadership and careers.



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Merry, Bright & Beautiful Wishes

During the holiday season, our thoughts turn gratefully to be part of this wonderful community. It is in this spirit that we say thank you and send best wishes from our family to yours.

Dave, Angela, Jack, and Alex Bertram

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Experts gather together for the 58th Grey Bruce Farmers' Week!

Grey Bruce Farmers' Week returns for its 58th consecutive year in 2024! This annual conference and tradeshow will be held in-person at the Elmwood Community Centre, or can be livestreamed from your home between January 3rd and 9th 2024.

Organizers look forward to seeing producers, agribusiness professionals, and industry experts gather together once again. There is no better way to beat the 'winter blahs' and build excitement for the new year, than by enjoying good company, a good meal, and learning the latest on your industry at a conference like GBFW!

The GBFW committee would like to thank the local agribusiness community for their strong sponsorship and exhibitor support. There are currently 124 businesses or organizations registered to support various days in terms of sponsorship or tradeshow exhibition. If producers are looking to make connections in their industry, GBFW'24 will be an excellent opportunity for doing so! It should be noted that the conference could not run without the support of these groups, and organizers hope that producers might consider that support while making some of their purchasing decisions throughout the year!

As mentioned, GBFW'24 will once again be available for participation in-person or through a livestream. In addition to the daily presentation agendas, all participants can access pre-recorded On-Demand presentations plus recordings of the proceedings in Elmwood, from home for thirty days after the event wraps up. The thirty On-Demand recordings span topics related to all days of GBFW plus general interest presentations.

As always, a stellar crew of service group members local to Elmwood will be preparing their famous roast beef dinner each day. Local goat and lamb will be served on their respective days, and pies will be abundant on the buffet style spread at noon?!

The program is looking strong as ever in 2024. Highlights include:

• Beef Day: Mark Gerber, Technical Sales Specialist with

Zinpro Performance Minerals will be presenting Year Round Cow Supplementation Increases Calf Weaning Weights

• Dairy Day: Mark Gerber, Technical Sales Specialist with Zinpro Performance Minerals will be presenting Dairy Lameness

• Goat Day: Dr. Rosie Busch, Sheep and Goat Extension Veterinarian at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine will be presenting Pragmatic Approaches to Disease Control on Your Farm, and Healthy Udders & Milk Quality

• Sheep Day: Dr. Mark Young, Innovations Specialist with the Centre for Innovation Excellence in Livestock (UK) will be presenting Innovations and Technologies to Support Future Breeding Objectives and Where Do Sheep Fit into Sustainable Food Systems

• Horse Day: Lindsey Partridge, Founder of Harmony Horsemanship will be presenting Liberty with Horses

• Ecological Day: Amy Stein will be presenting Land Access and Linking

• Crops Day: Justin Shepherd, Senior Economist with Farm Credit Canada will be presenting Macroeconomic Uncertainty –

What is the Impact on Ontario Agriculture?

Many, many more excellent speakers fill out the schedules for each day, as well as panel discussions covering (by order of the day they appear) Keeping Cows on the Ontario Landscape, Hoof Health, Ask a Vet, Accelerated vs. Annual Lambing, Equine Metabolic Syndrome, Land Linking and Access & Living Labs Research, and Improving Phosphorus Use with Non-Traditional Fertilizer Sources.

Livestreaming tickets must be pre-purchased online. It is recommended that attendees purchase in-person tickets online as well but for those unable to do so, cash, cheque and debit will be accepted at the door. Ticket sales will open in early December!

If you would like more information about Grey Bruce Farmers' Week's program or tickets you can go to their website: www.gbfg.ca, or contact the organizers directly by emailing info@greyagservices.ca or calling 519-986-3756. Don't forget to follow the event on social media too! Twitter and Facebook: @GBFarmersWeek, Instagram: @GB_FarmersWeek, #GBFW24.



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An Old Hobby for a New Generation

By Suzanne Armstrong, Ph.D., Director of Policy & Research for the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario

Anyone trying to order seeds in the spring of 2020 would have noticed something striking was going on. Demand for garden seeds, and other garden materials went up dramatically. Seasoned gardeners suddenly had trouble getting seeds from their favourite suppliers. Apparently, demand was so high that Burpee Seeds in the US had to stop taking orders for the first time in its 144-year history.

So now, as we head into the 2024 seed purchasing season, how have things changed? Was the trend for gardening and growing your own food just a fad? In good news, many people, especially those with young children, are enjoying the hobby of gardening. Younger generations now talk about “plant parenting.” For those with no access to outdoor space or who may be renters, houseplants and gardening in pots can be great solutions.

As those who love to garden know, this has many positive outcomes, including more time spent outdoors, reducing stress, exercise, increasing in the amount and variety of fruit and vegetables consumed (for children and adults), and even living longer. Engaging with nature, caring for plants, and planning for the next season contribute to a positive outlook.

I have often heard farmers lament that food skills, from growing to storing to cooking, are falling by the wayside. We can thank the pandemic for bringing these important skills back into popularity for many people, young and old. Hopefully this resurgence will give us

new budding gardeners among those children growing up with gardening opportunities.

The phrase “bread and roses” can perhaps apply to gardens too, to reminds us we need not only our daily bread, but also the beauty of nature in our lives. Gardens should be both productive and places of sanctuary.

In the agricultural sector we often emphasize the essentials we provide such as food, fibre, and fuel. However, we should not overlook the importance of

flowers, houseplants, and providing the means for people to grow their own food, flowers, trees, and shrubs at home. These provide for better physical and mental health for so many people.

As the leaves fall from the trees and the frost-tender plants have now all finished for the season, don't forget the importance of plants in your life, and of enjoying nature and outdoors. Personally, winter is my favourite gardening season, as I can plan and look forward to next year and there is no weeding!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

Best wishes to our watershed friends & neighbours.
Have a happy & healthy holiday season!

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Ontario Energy Board Sets New Electricity Rate Plan Prices

Residential, small business and farm customers can choose their price plan, either Time-Of-Use (TOU), Tiered or Ultra-Low-Overnight (ULO) prices. The OEB has an online bill calculator to help customers who are considering a switch in price plans. For more information, see oeb.ca/choice.

The Government of Ontario announced on Friday, October 19, 2023, that it is raising the income eligibility thresholds that enable Ontarians to qualify for the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) by up to 35 percent. OESP is part of Ontario's energy affordability framework meant to reduce the cost of electricity for low-income households by applying a monthly credit directly on to electricity

bills. The higher income eligibility thresholds will begin on March 1, 2024.

The amount of OESP bill credit is determined by the number of people living in a home and the household's combined income. The current income thresholds cap income eligibility at \$28,000 for one-person households and \$52,000 for five-person households.

The new income eligibility thresholds, which will be in effect beginning March 1, 2024, will allow many more families to access the program.

Find out about low-income bill payment support programs at oeb.ca/bill-help.

Learn more about the Ontario government's electricity support programs at ontario.ca/yourelectricitybill.

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Ontario Celebrating Excellence in the Agriculture and Food Industry

The Excellence in Agriculture program celebrated 25 exceptional farmers, food processors, organizations, businesses and Indigenous communities who are driving Ontario's agriculture and food industry forward.

The Conestoga Food Research and Innovation Lab (CFRIL) at Conestoga College was named recipient of the Minister's Award for its applied research centre

To Learn more, visit the Excellence in Agriculture webpage.

Ontario Strengthening Agri-Food Sector in the North

The province is providing more than \$4.1 million through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) to nine agri-food projects in the North. This investment will boost local food production, create jobs and stimulate expansion and diversification in the northern agri-food sector.

From my family to yours, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a successful growing season in 2024!



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Good for a laugh!

- What is the best thing to put into a pie? Your teeth!
- What goes up but never comes down? Your age!
- Where do snowmen put their web pages? On the winternet!
- Which hand would you use to pick up a dangerous snake? Someone else's!
- What kind of ship never sinks? Friendship!
- Three letter word that starts with gas? Car!



CHRISTMAS SEASON WORD SEARCH

This month's word search puzzle includes names of religious celebrations happening this time of the year, but maintains a leaning to Christian and traditional North American wintry words and activities. Words can be found frontwards, backwards and diagonal with some letters possibly being used in twice. Good luck!

T	I	D	I	N	G	S	C	A	R	O	L	E	R	S	O
S	L	L	E	B	O	D	H	I	D	A	Y	U	L	E	S
K	H	P	L	O	D	U	R	A	V	C	H	A	B	T	I
E	O	T	E	L	T	S	I	M	N	R	M	H	O	N	D
W	Y	A	D	W	O	N	S	R	R	U	G	C	A	Y	T
N	A	G	G	O	B	O	T	Y	D	I	K	M	I	L	H
T	S	A	E	F	O	B	M	R	E	I	W	K	N	L	S
L	T	V	L	E	G	N	A	L	N	O	A	P	A	O	T
B	E	L	C	S	I	C	S	G	N	T	N	R	T	H	S
C	H	E	S	T	N	U	T	S	A	S	Z	E	I	O	O
Y	A	D	A	I	C	U	L	A	T	N	A	S	V	L	H
E	G	N	A	V	G	S	D	R	A	C	A	E	I	I	T
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F	R	A	N	K	I	N	C	E	N	S	E	T	Y	A	R
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L	E	S	N	I	T	C	H	I	M	N	E	Y	C	K	Z

- | | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------|
| ANGEL | CHRISTMAS | HOLLY | SANTA CLAUS | TINSEL |
| BELLS | FEAST | KWANZAA | SLEIGH | TOBOGGAN |
| BODHI DAY | FESTIVE | MISTLETOE | SNOW DAY | YULE |
| CARDS | FRANKINCENSE | MYRRH | SNOWMAN | ZARATHOSTSHT DISO |
| CAROLERS | GINGERBREAD | NATIVITY | STOCKING | SANTA LUCIA DAY |
| CHESTNUTS | HANUKKA | PRESENTS | TIDINGS | |
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Christmas Playlist: Holiday Concerts were a Big Deal in Rural Ontario

Holiday entertainment was limited in rural communities during the years of the one-room schoolhouse. In that era of black-and-white photography and horse-drawn sleighs, the main holiday



attraction was the annual Christmas concert put on by the teacher and her students. In fact, the concert – referred to by most simply as ‘The Entertainment’ – was one of the most anticipated social events of the entire year.

No pressure for the teacher, who in many cases was a young lady not much older than some of the students she taught.

The schoolteacher certainly felt the weight of expectations. A bad performance would lead to tongues wagging and subtle displays of disapproval, so teachers made sure to thoroughly train their pupils in their songs and skits. Sometimes young people above school age would be recruited to add more sophisticated numbers.

Planning usually began as soon as the new school year began in the autumn and continued throughout the term. Many of these concerts were quite elaborate, with songs and skits, home made costumes, plenty of decorations, and even refreshments on occasion.

“The annual Christmas concert, in my mind, was the ‘icing on the cake’, the highlight of the year,” wrote Rebe Kelpy, casting her mind back to early 20th century Christmas’ in the flyspeck hamlet of Spence.”

“At the end of the evening, everyone carried the festivities outdoors,” Rebe continued. “Santa came and always found the children a gift and a bag of nuts and candies, on or under the two towering spruce trees. As long as I live, I will never forget the magic of those evenings, fortified by the fragrance of the evergreens.”

Sometimes these holiday concerts were more memorable for reasons less magical, as Isabel Laycock (nee McQuay) would surely tell you were she alive today.

Isabel was a young single teacher in Germania, southeast Muskoka, in 1938. “My mother took her responsibilities quite seriously,” recalls Earle Laycock. “Being a schoolteacher, she was

expected to conduct herself in an exemplary manner. Trips to the billiard hall were forbidden, for example, and bowling alleys were acceptable only if accompanied by a responsible male companion. And she never drank alcohol.”

Everyone in Germania respected her dedication to the job and held her in high esteem. As thanks for her hard work, a family invited her to dinner on the night of the Christmas concert. She would dine and then race over to the school.

“During the lavish meal, the family opened a bottle of home-made dandelion wine and offered some to mother,” Earle says. “Not used to alcohol but not wanting to offend the family who were quite proud of their wine, mother accepted a glass. Perhaps more than one glass although the record is not clear about that.”

Isabel didn’t remember much of the evening past that point. What she did remember was embarrassing. She recalled entering the schoolhouse and noticing many people had already arrived. She recalled waving her arms exuberantly. And she recalls, most uncharacteristically for the reserved and refined young teacher, yelling at the top of her voice, “Hi Everyone! Merry Christmas!”

It would have been clear to all in attendance that she was drunk.

“She must have been well liked as a teacher because there were no repercussions about her behaviour, although mother was a bit embarrassed whenever she recounted this story,” Earle laughs.

One way or another, rural schoolteachers were sure to give their communities a memorable Christmas show.

Tortilla bacon roll-ups

Story and photo by Roslyn Watkins, recipe adapted from Canadian Living

Christmastime is also known as ‘appetizer season’ in my world. Appetizers are not just for parties, they are perfect snacks for school or afterwards with a hot chocolate. Most appetizers make a large batch and can be ready to go from freezer to lunch box in no time! This recipe in particular is so versatile, add your favourite cooked protein: chicken, pulled pork, ham, a combo of your favourite cheese and a mix of peppers and you’re all set. You can even take a short cut and buy a flavoured cream cheese instead of using a bag of spinach.



Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 bag of spinach
- 1-2 red peppers, finely chopped
- 1 brick of cream cheese
- 1 Tablespoon minced jalapeno
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 10 small flour tortillas
- 1 cup Monterey Jack cheese, grated
- 8 slices bacon cooked and crumbled

Method

In a small bowl, combine the cream cheese, jalapeno, salt and pepper. In a saute pan, warm the olive oil, add the spinach and cook until wilted. Drain out the water. Set that aside. Spread the cream cheese on the tortillas. Sprinkle the grated cheese on the tortillas.

Add the spinach, red peppers and bacon. Roll the tortillas up. Put them in the fridge for an hour to firm up before you cut them. Slice them into 6 slices and arrange on a foil or parchment lined baking sheet, set the tortillas under the broiler for about 3 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and golden brown.

To freeze them, layer them in waxed paper prior to cooking and then put them in a freezer bag. Add a few minutes to the time under the broiler if cooking from frozen.

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The Phone Call

Story by Joyce Ernyes

It was only mid September but the maple trees were already announcing the arrival of fall in the small town of Cobalt, Ontario where Eugene Armontief lived. He had never liked this time of the year. He was not quite sure why, but a feeling of melancholy enveloped him like an icy blanket at the first sign of an autumn chill in the air. It was possibly due to the fact that his two least favourite days of the year were approaching—Thanksgiving and Christmas. These were family days and he had no real family of his own.

Gene, as he preferred to be called, had been in and out of foster homes since the age of five. He was not a problem child but for one reason or another, things didn't work out and every few years he would be relocated. After finishing high school, just before his seventeenth birthday, he left his most recent foster home eager to live his own life and earn his own money.

Jobs were not plentiful in the small town, especially for a young man with little, if any, work experience but he did eventually find summer employment as a labourer with a small construction company. He worked long hours securing as much overtime as possible thus enabling him to afford a small apartment.

Gene was somewhat contented with his new-found independence but the underlying feeling of loneliness was ever present to some degree. The summer seemed to have gone by much too quickly and there were rumours circulating at work that layoffs were imminent by mid-October.

The long weekend in September had arrived and Gene was again scanning the help wanted adds in the local newspapers in the hope of finding suitable winter employment. The Northern Shore newspaper, the largest of the three publications in the area, boasted a full page of classifieds on weekends but as yet there were no jobs available. As Gene was about to put the paper aside something caught his attention under the heading: PERSONAL.

It read as follows: Armontief Eugene . . . searching for Eugene Armontief, approximately eighteen years of age, born in Thunder Bay Ontario. Birth mother Teresa Louise Jacobs. Anyone with information please contact Jackson Armontief at the following number. . .

He re-read the notice two more times. His was not a common name so he felt that he was likely the person someone was searching for but he could not think of a reason for anyone wanting to find him. He didn't know his birth mother's name nor had he heard of anyone else with the same surname as his. This was indeed a strange turn of events thought Gene but he was not about to call the number and possibly make a fool of himself.

With the personal column, torn from the paper, and tucked into his shirt pocket, he left for work the following Tuesday. Eventually, he broached the subject with one of his co-workers and showed him the notice. His co-worker encouraged him to call the number but Gene was still reluctant to do so. By lunch time, the whole crew was aware of the story and it was decided that one of the men would call on Gene's behalf to "feel out the situation."

The stage was set for that evening after work and several men gathered around as the call was placed from Gene's small apartment. Without the advantage of speakerphone, the one-sided dialogue served only to create more mystery and anxiety for Gene.

When the conversation ended with a few affirmative replies and acknowledgements, the co-worker turned to Gene and handing him the phone he smiled and said, "Jackson Armontief is your brother and he has been trying to find you for a very long time." Gene could barely speak as he took the phone and everyone quietly left.

Gene and Jackson talked long into the night and as the events of past years came to light it was agreed that nothing mattered except the future. They were brothers. Gene also learned that he and Jackson had an extended family that included three half-sisters, two half-brothers, nieces, nephews, and their maternal grandmother.

Jackson, who was now living in Sault Ste. Marie, assured Gene that he would be coming down to see him for Thanksgiving and he hoped that Gene would accompany him to the family gathering in Thunder Bay at Christmas.

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Christmas gift to me

Story by Cathy Hamill-Hill

Old John gave me a special Christmas gift. I first met shy Old John when my brother and I worked at a Farmer's Market. I called him over to hold open a repurposed livestock feed bag while I got sweet corn out of it. My long hair apparently brushed his hand- and he interpreted that as me wanting to be his friend making him work up his courage to find out how to reach me.

Two years later, he first called me at the end of my work shift, two years after my hair touched his hand, and introduced himself, "I'm John, I met you at the Woodville Sale-barn." My vision was this tall, sweet, friendly young farmer that I thought liked me- and I was quite disappointed when this John said "years ago when my Dad worked in Guelph as a blacksmith."

Old John would be called "gifted" today as he had such an incredible memory. He had full recall of facts and details from about 5 years old to when I met him in his mid 80's. We had 80 years of his life to talk about.

John's Father imprinted on John that money was not to be spent: money was to be saved. There was no excuse not to save money and John faithfully put half his senior pension cheque in the bank each month and any extra dollar he possibly could. Hydro as a "luxury" and he agreed with his Dad nobody really needed it. The source for water they found natural on the property and hauled it into the house by bucket. The nurse that came to John's house to help him one day argued the water was "bad" which made John recite his Grade 13 chemistry lesson to her about algae formation and the vitamins it contains- she never returned.

He did pay for a phone, a party line with no party since everyone had their own line years ago. With John's good memory, he could hear a phone number once, and remember it for life which was good since he could not see well enough to write. He had significant glaucoma which took away much of his vision forcing him to surrender his driver's license. He relied on a nice family to drive him, preferably every day, for free to the local village to get a hot meal at noon. John enjoyed hot food immensely and he got the special of the day leaving not a single bite left on his plate, every single time. Much of his phone time was figuring out free rides to get his hot meals. Thursday night from 6:00-7:00 was "John time" in my life.

I heard about the missing six muffins that John said he left on the table one night and found only an empty package the next morning. He said he must have a squirrel living somewhere in his house. I got this muffin news after I promised that I was coming at noon to take John "uptown" to the local restaurant for lunch for Christmas in December. He especially perked up at the "I will pay" comment.

John's house was hidden. He never bothered to "waste" money on trimming trees so I was not aware of what he really lived in until I drove in there that December day.

After I left my car after seeing the outside yard of this place, I made sure my boots had my pants tucked in and tied tight on this dark, cloudy day. I zipped up my jacket and my pockets. I found the house cats sleeping outside of the house in what might have been, at one time, a sun porch. My fear was the cats moved out being afraid of the muffin eating "squirrel."

I tapped on the old, paint chipped door and John immediately answered with a big "Hi! Come on in!" John looked fabulous, albeit grimy, for a man close to 90 years old. The room he invited me to come in to was so dark I could barely see with the billows of smoke hanging in the air. The windows were dark with grime. There was a calendar hanging by one corner on a blackened wall that said 1955 which was likely the last time this place was cleaned, 40 some years ago. John had told me about his coal stove that "worked so much better with coal" that he now used as a woodstove and his old oil stove that he had to put oil in via a sieve every few days. The floors were wooden and so covered in dirt, wood bits and dried oil they were near black and crunchy.

He showed me some rocks that he had collected over the years listing their very complicated names and origins from the earth. Then he asked me, "Do you like music?" I said I did and he asked me to get him "the case over there."

I thought this should have been medal worthy to find that case. I rummaged through yellowed papers, old, crumbling cardboard boxes filled with dusty unidentifiable objects and heavy chunked firewood for the coal now wood stove- to finally find something over to the side that resembled a case on the dark, crunchy floor. Trying not to choke from this stirred up dust and the smoke, I was praying for no sudden "squirrel" to pop out of that case.

I opened the case and inside, was clean bright red velvet and within that velvet, rested a bright gleaming white and red accordion.

John was now sitting in his chair, near a grimy window. I handed him the accordion and he took his grimy hands and he adjusted the accordion around him. He shuffled a few times like a hen sitting on nest. He touched the accordion and he made some strange sounds with it and apologized. Then, without warning, he placed his fingers on the accordion again and with a smile, he launched into a spirited edition of "Jingle Bells."

The sun came out and the smoke of that room was lit up in a golden haze that left John in almost a glow. The smoke shifted, it seemed, to be like fog and enhanced John to a musician on stage. He was swaying to the song, his white curls bouncing in time with his music and that room sang out with "Jingle Bells." He looked straight ahead or to the side, he could not even see the keys by sight on his accordion. He played all from memory; he had not been able to read a page in over a decade. I am sure he practiced for this gift to me for weeks, over and over in that dark gloomy house, working so hard to remember to get it all correct.

The sun shone brighter as more clouds parted. I felt like I was witnessing the First Christmas when the Christmas Star came out to show the Miracle born in the Stable. John was now playing the second part of my gift, a heartfelt version of "Amazing Grace." It was clearly hard work as he had to concentrate to find the keys but his great memory never let him down.

John had no will and no family leaving his estate to the government by default however, he left me with an inheritance with more value than any gold. Each December, I can see John with that red and white accordion in my mind. I can hear his gift to me: I feel Christmas again.

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Harvest Moon Tractor Parade a delight to all spectators



Laura Smith, one of the organizers of the Harvest Moon Tractor Parade held in Little Britain, was so pleased with the attendance this year from the local farmers. The Parade was held the Saturday after Thanksgiving, on October 14th. Pictured above is just a segment of the Tractor Parade that wound its way through the "downtown" to the delight of the huge crowds that came out to watch.

Pictured to the right is Phil Archer from Little Britain waving to the crowds along the route of the Harvest Moon Tractor Parade. Phil is driving a 1941 201 Massey Harris he and his wife Betty own. The tractor was purchased from Ken and Dorothy Leatherdale who were Massey Harris collectors in Listowel, Ontario.



Story and photos by
Cathy Hamill-Hill
Continued on page 27...


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Little Britains Harvest Moon Tractor Parade

Story and photos by Cathy Hamill-Hill
Continued from page 26.



The Little Britain Tractor Parade came together from a vision to celebrate the harvest honouring the farmers that work, all year, to make that harvest happen. This year the Tractor Parade was bigger than ever before. Pictured above is participant Dave Hollinger from Hollinger Farms driving a 1952 John Deere 830.



Carrie Jenkins is shown above driving the 1960 Massey Ferguson 35 tractor that she purchased in the spring of 2020. This tractor was restored in the spring of 2020. This tractor was restored by Carrie's Father-in-law, Phil Archer and his brother, Cliff. The Harvest Moon Tractor Parade had people lined up for miles to watch.



Pictured to the left is Stirling Little driving his 1951 Allis Chalmers WF. Stirling takes the time to be part of this parade because, as he says, "My family has been in Little Britain since 1959. My family and I try and support the community events as much as we can."

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Safety tips for a happy holiday season

By Dennis Gannon

December brings the shortest day of the year and some special times when we like to light up our homes and businesses as we celebrate them. At this time of the year we celebrate these special times with our families and friends and often these activities include food, alcohol and bright lights. As we start planning and preparing our events, take the time to review and follow these simple safety tips and make this holiday season a safe and happy one.



Ensure you use outdoor lights outdoors, and indoor lights indoors. Inspect your lights before putting them up; replace cracked bulbs and strings of lights that have frayed, broken or exposed wires. Replace cracked bulbs and strings of lights that have frayed, broken or exposed wires. Do not connect more than the recommended number of lights together. Always turn off all indoor and outdoor lights before going to bed or leaving your home. Use LED candles instead of open flame candles. Keep candles away from curtains, paper, furniture or anything that can easily catch fire. Adults should always supervise children when candles are lit. Children should never be left alone to light a candle or use matches. Keep candles in sturdy, stable holders and sit them on stable surfaces away from drafts, children or pets. If you enjoy a live tree, get one that is fresh and green. The needles should bend instead of break and the tree stump should be sticky with resin. Christmas trees can be extremely flammable if very dry. Once ignited, the speed and intensity of burning is extreme. A dry tree will be totally consumed in a matter of seconds. The stump of the tree should always be in water. Do not set up the tree within 3 feet of a heat source such as a radiator, television, fireplace or heating duct. Never use lit candles on your tree. Cooking fires are one of the leading causes of house fires. It's tempting to leave the kitchen to visit with company but you should always stay in the kitchen while food is cooking. Alcohol and cooking don't mix. Enjoy your beverages after the meal is finished and all heat sources are turned off. Share your home escape plan with overnight guests so they know how to escape if there is a fire. All homes require working carbon monoxide and smoke alarms. Checking your alarms monthly to ensure that they are functioning properly is essential for your and your family safety.

Your local fire department is always available to assist you and answer any questions. Never hesitate to contact them.

Enjoy your holiday season and best wishes to all!



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Community appeal for Support for Older Farmers

Article by Community Reach North Simcoe

Community Reach North Simcoe launched their annual community appeal for support on November 28, 2023. They provide a vital service to rural communities and are asking that you consider making a tax-deductible donation to ensure they can continue to meet increasing demand for drives.

Community Reach provides door to door rides to people in Tiny, Tay, Penetanguishene and Midland, who do not have access to other transportation options. Their friendly drivers safely deliver people to medical appointments, social events and for shopping. While many of their trips are within North Simcoe, they also help people get to medical appointments in the GTA and other locations in Central Ontario. For older residents of North Simcoe, including farmers who have spent much of their lives in the area, this service is critical to their independence and to remaining in their own homes.

The percentage of seniors who continue to hold a driver's license decreases with age. Seniors give up driving due to vision loss and other health issues and because they may no longer feel safe driving. In rural communities which lack public transportation options, seniors who give up their licence may need to rely on families for transportation or may leave their community to be closer to amenities. Seniors who have been self-sufficient their entire lives, may not want to tell their children or neighbours where they are going or why. They may not want to interrupt their caregivers for a ride. Community Reach offers seniors independence and dignity and the opportunity to age in place, even in rural areas.

Cindy and Kirk Hastings are Community Reach supporters because they have seen, firsthand, the urgent need for transportation services in rural communities, as people age. When their father was confined to a wheelchair following an illness and lengthy hospital stay, Cindy and Kirk were thankful to have Community Reach in their community. "At first, we weren't sure what to do because he couldn't drive, nor could he travel in our vehicles anymore. But he still needed to attend medical appointments." This is why Cindy and Kirk are supporting the Community Reach year end campaign and invite you to join them.

You can support Community Reach through Canada Helps, by e-transfer (admin@communityreach.ca), by credit card through the Community Reach website (www.communityreach.ca) or by mailing a cheque to Community Reach 850 Hartman Dr. #104, Midland, ON L4R 0B6



Bring Organic Home: Cultivating Community in a Changing Climate

Article by Organic Council of Ontario

We are so excited to announce the theme for this year's Guelph Organic Conference is Bring Organic Home: Cultivating Community in a Changing Climate. Taking place January 24th-27th, 2024. Our climate is changing, but so is the business climate in which we operate. What does it mean to Bring Organic Home? Back to our roots, back to our principles, back to local growing, or back to as many kitchens in Canada as possible?

In case you couldn't already feel it in the air, winter is coming, and we are thrilled to announce two amazing speakers we have lined up who will help you navigate the cold. Come hear from Jean-Martin Fortier and Catherine Sylvestre as they share their tips and tricks used for extending the growing season. We'll celebrate their newest book launch, The Winter Market Gardener, and learn all about this guide to year-round vegetable production.

Our speakers will discuss topics including planting, care, and harvesting details for dozens of winter crops so that you can earn money and provide the highest quality, most delicious produce to local markets.

A big thanks to our Platinum Sponsor, New Society Publishing! Grab a copy of The Winter Market Gardener, meet the authors, ask questions, and get your book signed by these two market gardening experts in person at the Guelph Organic Conference.

Jean-Martin Fortier is a farmer, educator, and advocate for regenerative agriculture. He is author of the international bestseller The Market Gardener, founder of Growers & Co., and co-founder of the Market Gardener Institute. In 2015 he established the research farm la Ferme des Quatre-Temps. He lives and farms in Quebec, Canada.



Jean-Martin Fortier

Catherine Sylvestre is a professional agronomist and director of vegetable production and leader of the market garden team at la Ferme des Quatre-Temps. She develops, implements, and teaches best practices for cold season growing, specializing in crop protection and greenhouse production for northern climates. She lives in Quebec, Canada.



Catherine Sylvestre

More speakers, events, and details coming soon! Stay tuned to <https://guelphorganicconf.ca/> for up to date information.

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After The Chores: Vacationing Farmers

By Cathy Hamill-Hill



My Gramma had always wanted to go to Florida but never got there and it was one of her few regrets in her 90 year life. This memory prompts me, every few years, to plan some travel away from this little farm.

Our last vacation that involved a travel agent was in 2019 to the USA. Travelling this time within Canada would be way easier so decided to do this all on my own. The time, in October was set aside in February and we planned our life around those days. I found cheap tickets online, two one way flights which I considered made me quite the expert to start with.

The key to travel, in my mind, is to make sure you have all the stuff from home that you need. My key stuff was my new-to-me Camera and its two lenses, its charger and my VISA debit card and driver's license. I put the charger in our big suitcase that we had stuffed full of rain gear. I felt so prepared.

Vacation day started at 3:30 am for me when Daisy the cat decided she wanted attention. There was no getting back to sleep with all the "what if?" anxiety that comes to me leaving home for the next 5 days. For the next hour, I mentally repacked the suitcase over and over and decided we are so ready.

I pulled the suitcase out into the hallway and dropped it there. I wake up stupid in the morning so I had my Camera bag all packed the night before as I have left the battery home before and had to come back to get it. I grabbed my Camera bag and was out the door.

I was just barely awake 40 minutes into our trip to the airport, when Sweetie said some awful words, "Did you put the suitcase in?" I showed him the Camera bag as an answer. Sweetie knows all the shortcuts so we were still on track for the second time to get to the airport- until we met Toronto morning rush hour traffic. It was 8:00 am when we finally got to the sign that said Pearson Airport. The flight left at 8:45 am. By the time we got the Escape parked and found where Air Canada is for domestic flights, it was half an hour and kilometers of walking, later. I was quite pleased to find there were no line-ups and I was getting excited to be in Newfoundland by lunch time.

"Your flight is boarded" the Air Canada staff person said. I was thinking, we can walk fast so just point us where the

plane is. I kept my mouth shut, thankfully because the next words were, "You missed your flight."

The next minutes were spent looking at each other and wondering whether to rebook or just go home. This was bad thing #2 and we were only two hours from home.

The next flight was four hours later. We found out from all the line-ups at customs why those two hours ahead are necessary.

On board the flight, we decided to buy a lunch tray. The flight worker said he could not take my VISA Debit card as only credit cards were accepted. Sweetie offered his credit card to have it rejected, it was expired. The look on the flight worker's face with his long, sad silent look rather scared me but I could not think of why the flight worker was so worried for us.

I had reserved online a rental car so I went in line to pick up the car at the Newfoundland airport. This is when I found out bad thing #3 and why the flight worker gave us that look. When I explained I had no credit card but had a VISA debit card, the rental car worker said a version of "no credit card means no renting a car in Newfoundland" and waved us away for the next person in line. I didn't believe him so tried another rental car place and he was right.

I went to the information desk- and was told that no credit card means not renting a car though there "might" be an on-line option. It turned out the online option would not work and never did work. The information desk worker suggested we hire a taxi and added, "you won't get a hotel room without a credit card either" as her final advice. She then handed us a tour guide booklet.

My first taxi ride ever was no great experience. The taxi driver only showed signs of life when he said that his set rate was \$35 for downtown. Sweetie said after that the taxi's brakes were so bad that he thought that car might never stop again. I paid the \$7.00 per minute rate with the debit card and we emerged into downtown St. John's at 7:30 pm.

The Inn I thought we would stay at was close so I went to the door and used the intercom to ask if there were any rooms. When I got to the part about "you need a credit card" and explained my situation, the intercom went silent as the worker left.

I checked my phone to find it needed recharged now- and Sweetie's phone was already out. It was nearly dark. We knew nobody in St. John's, Newfoundland. We had no car, no accommodations. I realized that this was what a homeless person must feel like in their first few hours. I was terrified. I asked Sweetie what to do- and he said he wanted to go see the St. John's Harbour. We then decided going back to the airport to try and book an early flight home was the only option left. I was thinking, with great longing, that this was chore time at home.

Here in Ontario, there would have been handrails and a

sign explaining the steep walk down, but in St. John's it was just navigate the best way you can as this is normal here. Sweetie was hauling the big suitcase, its wheel clacking along the pavement as he went down the steep steps. I was clutching my Camera bag and now deep in a silent prayer of asking for Help through all this.

My pictures I took that night of the Harbour showed a big ship with its lights on- and another too blurry from my shaking hands, to make out what it even was. My eyes, thankfully super good now, were whirling in every direction, looking for an answer to prayer. I knew only God Himself could have given me the next sight, "Murray Premises," a hotel with live people working at the front desk, located right across from the Harbour.

Staff Audrey and Brianna offered us a payment option with the debit card. I told them they were like Angels on earth to us that dark October night in Newfoundland.

We sure appreciated the tour booklet because Mary, the tour guide gave us fabulous days out with Newfoundland stories and sights.

Coming home back to Ontario to the barn was so appreciated...home sweet home on the farm.

Thanks to each of you that takes the time to read this column each month. I am so grateful to sweet, kind hearted, encouraging Farm View Publisher, Roslyn for giving me this space. I am also grateful this year, to be given my sight back, so I was able to be out my camera more than ever. I want to extend my appreciation to all of you that patiently answered my many messages, texts, phone calls, requests for pictures and in person interviews to allow me to do this job that makes me happy. It has been a wonderful year and I leave 2023, grateful with beautiful memories. I wish all of you a joyous Christmas and a blessed 2024.

Sincerely,
Cathy



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Article provided by the Ontario Agricultural Conference committee



Registration is open for #OAgC24!

In order to live up to our “From Good to Great” theme, the conference will offer more opportunities than ever before. As always, every participant will have access to all recorded sessions until March 31st, 2024, beginning on January 3rd with our VIRTUAL KICK OFF. But that’s not all, this year there is SO MUCH MORE!

Participants will be able to attend any or all of our 3 IN-PERSON sessions: Ridgetown Jan 4 & 5, Kemptville Jan 16, and Waterloo Jan 19, 2024. Each IN-PERSON location will offer sessions unique to that location, which will be recorded on the IN-PERSON days and then made available after recording, for all conference participants to view as ON DEMAND options. By the time all sessions are posted virtually, there will be 66 sessions for participants to view. You can find them all in the conference brochure. Check it Out.

Of course, the virtual tradeshow will remain available for the duration of the conference, where growers can see the latest in industry innovations. TEC Talk Tuesdays return, offering another virtual opportunity to connect with speakers and attendees alike, with the great discussion and excellent questions that these sessions are known for.

If it all seems a little overwhelming, it should! There are so many amazing options. Check out the website www.ontarioagconference.ca, and this great explanatory video from conference co-chair Albert Tenuta to help sort the details. Follow us on Twitter @OAgC24 for ongoing updates or check back on the website from time to time.

This promises to be our best conference ever, but IN-PERSON capacity is limited, so get registered! This is one conference you cannot afford to miss. Hope to see you there!

For more information, contact

Conference Co-Chair:

Albert Tenuta, OMAFRA, Email: albert.tenuta@ontario.ca, Ph: 519-360-8307

Conference Program Chair:

Andrew Barrie, OMAFRA, Email: andrew.barrie@ontario.ca, Ph: 519-373-9008

Conference Registration Lead:

Mary Margaret McDonald, Email: mmcdonal@uoguelph.ca, Ph: 1-866-222-9682

VIRTUAL KICK OFF January 3rd, 2024, SWAC IN-PERSON January 4th & 5th, 2024

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COMING EVENTS

Ontario Forage Council is pleased to offer the Forage Focus webinar series again in 2023!

We will be hosting one webinar per day for three consecutive days:
 December 5, 6, 7, 2023 from 12:00 - 1:00 pm EST.
 Tuesday, December 5, 2023 - Matt Groen - Value of Feed Quality
 Wednesday, December 6, 2023 - Christine Brown - Soil Health Value
 Thursday, December 7, 2023 - Pat Lynch - Forage Value as a Cash Crop
 Registration: <https://events.eventzilla.net/e/forage-focus-2023-2138618222?p>
 Additional program and speaker details as they become available:
<https://onforagenetwork.ca/ontario-forage-council/forage-focus/>

Free Classifieds

Free classified word ads (maximum of 40 words) are for non-profit individuals and farm groups. Ads can be mailed or emailed. They must reach us by the 15th of the month before the next month's issue. Telephone orders are invoiced at \$15 for the first 25 words. Word ads run in one issue only and must be re-submitted each month to repeat. For mail-in ads, use the space below to neatly print out your FREE classified word advertisement.

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Cookstown Location:

4321 Line 13, Cookstown,
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Kubota B2301

hours ua: 335.3, diesel, 4wd, 3 spd hydrostatic transmission, foldable rops, 540 pto, no remotes, 23x8.50x15 fronts, 33x12.50-15 rears, kubota RCK54-32 mid mount mower, Erin. **\$17,300**



New Holland L216

hours ua: 2061, cab/heat, 10x16.5 tires, iso / h pattern controls, 2 speed, standard flow, air ride suspension seat, hydraulic q/a, low pro bucket w/ bolt on cutting edge, Erin. **\$37,300**



Kubota M9540DT

hours ua: 1850.8, 4wd, cab/heat/air, 12.4r24 fronts, 18.4r30 rears, 540 rpm, 2 remotes, front grill guard, m36 loader, self leveling, manual q/a 82" bucket, Unit is located in Erin. **\$72,000**



Kubota DMC8536R

pivot tongue mower conditioner, 1000 rpm, 2 pth, excellent condition, Unit is Located at Stewart's equipment in Erin. Stock Number : U27673 **\$34,300**



Kubota M7060

hours ua: 531.1, 4wd, diesel, cab/heat/air, 540 rpm, 2 sets of remotes, 360/70r20 front tires, front fenders, 440/80r30 rear tires, radio, metal pless agh830-13 blade, unit is located in Erin **\$63,900**



Case IH5120

hours ua: 5783, 2wd, cab heat air 11.00x16 front tires, 18.4x38 rear tires, 540 rpm, two sets of remotes, 16x16 semo power shift, bar axle, Unit is located in Erin **\$33,900**



Kubota M7060

hours showing: 547, 4wd, 12 speed transmission, rops, left hand hydraulic shuttle, 360/70r20 fronts, 420/85r30 rears, cast centers, la1154 ldr, 7' bucket, 3 pth, front grill guard. (Erin) **\$57,900**



New Holland BC5070

540 rpm, hydroformatic tension, hydraulic pick up lift, hydraulic swing tongue bundle, wagon hitch, Unit is located at Stewart's equipment in Erin **\$27,900**



New Holland 460

4x6 bales, netwrap, wide pick-up, hydraulic pick-up, 18l-16.5l rubber, crop cutter, rear kicker, bale count 14100, Unit is located at Stewart's equipment in Erin **\$33,900**



New Holland C232

hours ua: 725, rubber track machine, cab with heat and air, aux hydraulics, 2 spd, iso/h pattern, hydraulic q/a, 72" low profile bucket w/ bolt on cutting edge, unit located in Erin. **\$71,900**



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