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Brockville's Salt Caves

The Belarusians are Coming!

**Farmers
Altruistic in The Face of Adversity**

A Special Celebration for Mother's Day

**Uke-ing His Head
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Reflexologist



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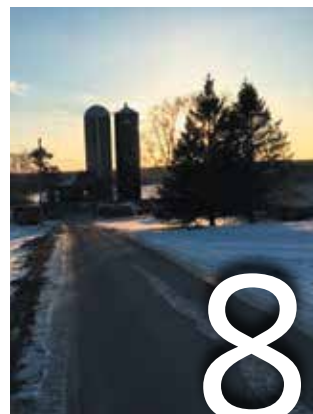


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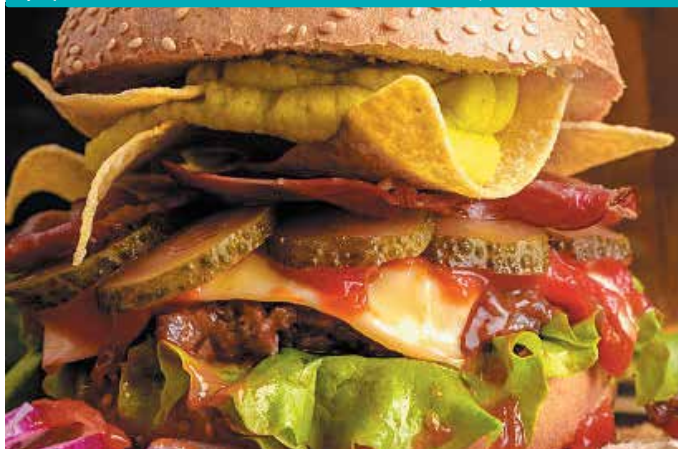
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BBQ Uncle Buck's Big Burger

Prep Time - 15 minutes ~ Cook Time - 15 minutes
Total Time - 30 minutes ~ Makes 6 burgers

What you'll need...

1 lbs. ground beef (medium or lean) • 6-10 strips of bacon (once cooked cut in ½) • 1 cup thinly sliced or chopped red peppers • 1 tsp. kosher salt • 1 tsp. black pepper • 1 tsp chili powder • 1 ½ cups BBQ sauce • 2 cups shredded smoked sharp cheddar or smoked apple cheddar cheese • ½ diced sweet onion • chopped mushrooms (optional) • 6 onion or cheese hamburger buns • 1 handful BBQ flavored potato chips (kettle is best) • 1 pcs. sliced dill or bread and butter pickles • 1 handful chopped iceberg lettuce (go for crunchy, not leafy!)

To Create:

- ➔ Heat grill to medium-high. Brush oil on grill to prevent sticking.
- ➔ **Patties:** combine ground beef, peppers, salt & pepper, and chili powder in large bowl, handling it as little as possible. Shape into 6 patties to fit bun size. Loosely cover with plastic wrap and set aside.
- ➔ **BBQ cheese:** Mix BBQ sauce, cheese, and onions (mushrooms) and set aside. Do not refrigerate (will use it shortly and don't want it too cold).
- ➔ Place patties on grill and cook, turning once, until cooked through, about 5 - 7 minutes on each side. In last 3 minutes of grilling, carefully place BBQ cheese on patties. In last 2 minutes of grilling, place buns cut side-down, on outer edges of grill to toast lightly.
- ➔ **Assemble burgers:** place BBQ kettle chips on each bottom bun. Add cheese-covered patty on top, bacon, layer of pickles, lettuce and lastly bun tops.



Uncle Buck's Banana Pudding - Southern Style

Prep - 20 minutes ~ Cook time - 20 minutes
Total time - 1 hour 40 minutes ~ Serves 8

What you'll need...

1 cup white sugar (can go with ¾ cup if you wish)
 ¼ cup cornstarch
 1 egg - beaten
 1 (355 ml) can evaporated milk
 1 ½ cups fresh milk*
 2 tsp vanilla extract
 1 340g package vanilla wafers
 4 bananas - sliced

**You can substitute the 1½ cups milk for 2 cups 2% organic milk and 1 cup heavy cream and do not use evaporated milk*

To Create....

- ➔ In a saucepan over medium heat, combine the sugar, cornstarch, egg, evaporated milk and regular milk. Mix together well and stir until thick. Remove from heat- add vanilla and mix well.
- Optional:** pinch of cinnamon or nutmeg
- ➔ In a large bowl or casserole dish, arrange a layer of cookies. Pour pudding mixture over cookies and top with a layer of sliced bananas. Refrigerate until chilled
- Added Idea:** put whipped cream on top and either strawberries or blueberries (in season)

Serve burgers with ice-cold beer or big ol' pitcher of sweet tea. (Look up recipe online for southern sweet tea, its worth it if you like Bourbon)

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Arlene's Salt Room at Mint Wellness is intimate and has a massage table for clients that want a reflexology session in the room, or you can have just the Halotherapy session. The room has a beautiful salt wall with lights, relaxing music, the climate-controlled Halo Generator, (medically certified from Lithuania) that disperses the dry salt air, a salt lamp for energy. The salt used is from Poland and is 100% pure pharmaceutical grade. Her room is located at 125 Stewart Blvd. in Brockville, On. She can be reached at 613-704-6468 www.mintwellness.ca or www.brockvillereflexology.com

Donna's Salt Room holds up to 8 chairs for groups or individuals/couples. a 6-sensor climate-controlled Halo-generator, salt lamps and relaxing music. Donna's salt is also from Poland and is 100% pure pharmaceutical grade. The Halo-Generator is from Poland and medically certified from there. You can find Donna at 4508 Susan Dr. Elizabethtown, On. (Tincap) She can be reached at 613-349-7258 www.halotherapysaltspa.ca

Top: Arlene Laberge RCRT in Mint Wellness Salt Room giving Reflexology treatment to patient.

Bottom: Donna Carty (owner) - halotherapy Salt Spa - Tincap standing in reception area

BROCKVILLE'S SALT CAVES

By Jonathan Vickers

Salt Caves, in Brockville? Now I am as curious as they come and I thought I knew that in this area the only cave was the "Railway Tunnel" Brockville, but curiosity got the better of me. It seems that two enterprising female entrepreneurs: Donna Carty and Arlene Laberge RCRT have each opened Brockville's Newest Salt Rooms "Caves" in the area, which are known as Halotherapy Salt Spa's.

Donna Carty opened the area's first Halotherapy Salt Spa in Tincap last April (2018) and Arlene Laberge just recently opened her Salt Room Spa in the newly re-located Mint Wellness location at the Brockville Shopping Centre on Stewart Blvd.

For those who are not familiar with Salt Caves (Spa's) and Halotherapy, the wellness and health benefit originated as far back as the 12th century in the salt waters (mineral water) of Poland. Eastern Europe has long been familiar with this form of alternative medicine and its benefits of the dry salt air that help improve symptoms for individuals that suffer from various ailments, such as: Inflammation, Bronchial or Asthma complications, Allergies, Pneumonia, Sinus Infections, Snoring, Wheezing and many other respiratory or skin conditions.

The Halotherapy Salt Spa experience consists of a completely climate-controlled salt room that uses micro-particles of pure pharmaceutical salt dispersed into the air in a controlled environment.

I met with each owner and gathered some insight on why Halotherapy has now come to the immediate forefront of Holistic and Alternative Natural Way of Healing, for individuals with the ailments aforementioned.

I asked Donna why she started her business and what was the impetus in her desire to become involved with Halotherapy. "My daughter has a skin condition that just would not heal with prescribed medications (steroids) and it was leaving scars at a young age" she said sadly. "I was travelling to Ottawa for consults and I did research on my own and learned about Halotherapy and salt treatments" she added. "Over time with salt treatments, my daughters' condition has cleared up, and the scarring and rash has disappeared."

Donna then went on to explain with this improvement in her daughter's health, it gave her the idea to maybe bring Halotherapy to Brockville. She invested and took a chance on herself and opened her Spa. To this day her daughter will always have the skin condition, but the results have been amazing and as Donna indicated to me, her daughter now only uses the Spa occasionally for maintaining her condition. "I now have several client success stories for both skin and respiratory issues."

Arlene Laberge (RCRT) reason for starting up her Salt Room were somewhat similar. Moving to Brockville from B.C., where she

was a Certified Reflexologist since 2007 and had been involved with reflexology and holistic medicine for over 28 years.

Arlene's husband had been ill for over 6 years (2013) with a diagnosis of a rare interferon auto-anti body immune disorder that creates infections, pneumonia, and inflammation, so he decided to have Halotherapy sessions. Shortly thereafter, he found that the benefits of the sessions helped keep the infections down, the inflammation down, and greatly improved his quality of life.

Arlene believes "In today's society we need to get back to a natural way of healing and we (society) should not over estimate how much good we can do by going back to nature to feel grounded." She also pointed out earnestly, "People today are tired of Pharmaceuticals, pills, and medications that are not making them feel better. Individuals are considering alternatives, and a natural way to want to feel better, energetic and happier."

Both women believe pollutants and environmental issues from former and current factories are a big concern for respiratory and skin issues, anxiety and stress levels that cause people to look for medication to alleviate their problems, instead of a natural way to help find relief.

In today's world, relief from different ailments or health issues are now not just from pills or medications, we all should be open minded to try new and different options with the appropriate consult with your physician. **LH**

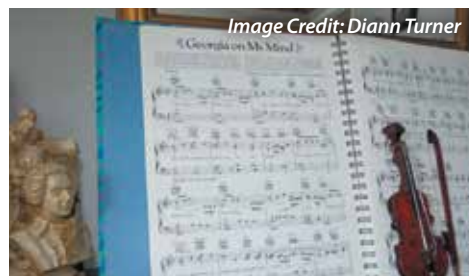


Left: Dave Jammin' it up.

Middle: Dave's Instrument Collection



Below: Music Inspires



DAVID RALPH

Bringing Music to the Hearth

By Diann Turner

It has been said that music washes the dust of daily life from the soul. Songs gain poignancy in our memories, stamp history, and highlight nature. Hans Christian Andersen wrote "Where words fail, music speaks." Music can be self expression, companionship in loneliness, a balm when in pain. Consider the sublime words of John Denver in "Annie's Song" – "You fill up my senses like the mountains in springtime!"

On a recent inhospitable wintry night, I warmed myself by a wood fire and enjoyed a pleasant evening with affable musician, David Ralph. He was raised amongst his family who listened to the radio. His brother, Joseph, acquired a High-Fidelity radio/turntable set and the music of Maurice Boyer, Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs started wafting through the house. The hankering to play music took hold and at sixteen, Dave bought his first harmonica and fought to learn "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain". "The harmonica is a difficult instrument to grasp", he said. "You blow your tonsils through the instrument."

Dave was reared by his grandparents back of Lansdowne. His grandpa worked in Kingston and Dave worked on the railroad in summertime. His grandpa died when he was fourteen and he became man of the house. The burning desire to learn music

was not buoyed; no one taxied you around to lessons back then. That first harmonica drew Dave in and he discovered that once a song runs through your mind, you find the note and fish for others. "It's like running a backhoe," said Dave. "You lean over and grab some more dirt!" "Will the Circle be Unbroken" is a classic example. Today, Dave owns a mandolin, two guitars, a banjo and three Lee Oskar harmonicas. Dave does not read music. He took a few lessons from Tom Case a local musician who befriended Dave, gave him the options to learn to read/play music; Dave chose to play! His beautiful mellow voice soothes the listener. He closes his eyes and sings with abandon. Dave loves the sweet sound of Bluegrass Gospel. He strums and sings the likes of "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry", "Life's Railway to Heaven", "Sing Me Back Home Before I Die" and "Little Mountain Church House."

In their 47 years of marriage, Dave and Ruth, together with their sons, Andy and Dan, have exemplified the spirit of giving in their community and Dave's music has been a big part of that. They used to make cheese every Sunday at his father-in-law's and Dave would play his banjo to time the cheese making process. He often played at old folks' homes and added his lovely melodies to soften the sadness at funeral

homes and gravesides. Art Berry was a local farmer and bus driver who played harmonica until his lungs got bad. When Art passed away, Dave honoured him with "Farmer's Song" and "Amazing Grace" at the funeral. Dave met local vocalist, Clarice Gervais, at The Lansdowne Fair at a talent show. She and Dave get together Thursday evenings to practise. Her repertoire includes Bluegrass and Patsy Cline. "Wagon Wheel" is one of her favourites. Roger Astley, Rene Perrin, and Dave jam together and do some singing. Roger plays banjo, fiddle and guitar. Dave also played at square dances in Mallorytown. He plans to retire this year and welcomes the opportunity to share his music at multiple venues. Dave clearly loves to play. He says it relaxes him. For me, those beautiful, timeless ballads are like water rippling down rushing spring creeks.

I asked Dave how he imparts his gift to the next generation. He suggested his family tires of listening to him, but I could sense his hopeful intent. His granddaughter, Caleigh, (3) finds a guitar, sits crossed-legged, and strums away! Grandson, Corbin, (6) jots words in a note book and then sings them heartily!

Louis Armstrong said, "Musicians don't retire; they stop when there's no more music in them." That will be Dave! **LH**

THE BELARUSIANS ARE COMING!

By Andi-Christine Bednarzig

“We love her like a daughter. She is our daughter,” Tracy Yuille said, as she embraced Iryna Burkenia. Iryna, or Ira for short, nodded and hugged her Canadian mother back.

Ira has stayed with the Yuille family at the Thousand Island community of Rockport for 16 summers. She was 10 years old when she first arrived as part of the Children's Relief from Radiation Program, one of the many initiatives of the Brockville based non-profit charity, Canadian Aid for Chernobyl (CAC).

According to Eric McKenzie, President and Director of Communications for CAC, families have hosted over 750 children since the program's inception in 1991.

When asked how she felt about coming to Canada for the first time, Ira asserted: “I wasn't scared. I was very excited!” She explained that other kids had already stayed with families in Europe and returned with wonderful stories.

The radioactive fallout from the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster in the Ukraine continues to devastate the agricultural communities in the Chaussy region of eastern Belarus. Bringing children to Canada for a few weeks, and providing them with fresh air, and uncontaminated water and food has resulted in improved health and a strengthened immune system.

Tracy and her husband, Pat Yuille, initially heard about CAC through an ad in the local paper.

“We asked for a young girl since we already had two teenaged daughters. We got Ira and it was love at first sight,” Pat smiles. What were Ira's first impressions of Canada? “Everything was different. Everyone drives everywhere. In Belarus people walk, Ira said.” Pat and Ira laughed as they recalled her bafflement of Canadians' fondness for driving. After another trip into Gananoque, the little girl cried, “No more machina!”

Ira spoke no English when she arrived. Pat taped handwritten signs on common objects with the aid of an English/Russian dictionary. He wasn't familiar with the Cyrillic script, but it all worked out. Nevertheless, interpreters were available 24 hours a day - just a phone call away.

Pat will fly to Belarus this Spring as part of a Delegation to help distribute non-perishable food, medical supplies, clothing, footwear, bedding, hygiene products, household items, and bicycles brought over in shipping containers.

The Yuielles recall a previous trip to distribute food boxes. They wanted to go to Belarus in case they ever lost touch with Ira, so they'd know where to find her. The first house on the list for deliveries was Ira's family. When Pat and Tracy knocked on the door, Ira answered. “The look on her face!” Pat said, “Her brain just couldn't process that we were there.” The Yuielles spent two weeks discovering their Belarusian's daughter's homeland. They were comforted to see where she lived and where a part of her will always be.

This year is different for Ira. She arrived last September to study English as a second language at St. Lawrence College. Ira is considering early childhood education or social work for future study.

In the neighbouring community of Ivy Lea, Francois Lacroix and his wife recalled how they attended a talk given by CAC's Director of Humanitarian Aid and Orphan Initiatives, Dave Shaw. They hosted two girls, Anna and Yana, in 2009 and 2010.

Lacroix recounted the highlight of the summer; a fun day for all visiting children and their host families. Interpreter, Marina Ladyjenko, had little to do that day, as their grand-niece, Jessie, kept the group entertained with the help of Google Translate and her enthusiasm. The retired couple are no longer hosting children, but are active members of CAC.

“It became our choice charity, because it is managed and operated solely by volunteers. All money and other donations go directly to the children and needy people in Belarus.” Lacroix said.

Gala fundraisers and silent auctions are two events that help fund the many CAC initiatives. Tremendous support also comes from Brockville area dentists, physicians, and opticians for the visiting children. Another initiative, Shoe Boxes for Seniors, provides 700 boxes packed with toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, hand cream, socks, candies, tissues, and small towels.

Before the Delegation arrives in the Spring, Dave Shaw will personally meet the containers to oversee unloading and customs bonding. The distribution of aid is overseen by Shaw. **LH**

Follow the Spring Delegation on CAC's blog on the CAC website or on Facebook at:

canadianaidforchernobyl.com
facebook.com/CdnAid

Canadian Aid for Chernobyl
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Brockville, ON. K6V 5V5

Pat Yuille, Iryna (Ira) Burkenia & Tracy Yuille



Image Credit: Diann Turner



Image Credit: Diann Turner



Left: Sunset on the Hunter Farm

Image Credit: Neil Hunter



Left: Ross Turner Splits Firewood

Above: The Hunter Family

FARMERS

Altruistic in the Face of Adversity

By Diann Turner

This is the story of three Front of Yonge farms: Junedale Farm, Hometown Jerseys and Leann Holsteins.

I often wonder what sort of thoughts go through people's minds while driving through bucolic Ontario farming communities. No doubt the rustic, rolling, agricultural land, with its picturesque idyllic outdoor scenes, like the dust rolling behind a tractor and disk in springtime, might suggest prosperous, unhurried life-styles. Murray McLauchlan wrote "Farmer's Song" in 1972 and its lyrics – "Straw hats and old dirty hankies, moppin' a face like a shoe," invoked images of blood, sweat, tears and poverty. In chatting with people, I find that a true understanding of farming today is so rare, people's perceptions become rumpled in my mind. Over the decades, the media has created mental depictions of everything from farmers in threadbare clothing, tumbledown farm houses, and sagging verandahs to debonair gents in denim, sporting brand new pickup trucks or \$300,000.00 combines.

It was my privilege to interview Three very successful Front of Yonge Township farmers. As a farm wife of 38 years, I'm pleased to report that farming is smarter than ever, and increasingly much more complex. Ross Turner, 67, of Junedale Farm in Mallorytown, said the Turner farm was purchased by his Grandad in 1913 and has been a working farm ever since. Neil Hunter, 43, and his

wife Melanie, 39, purchased the old Arden Warren farm on Junetown Road in 2016. Neil and Melanie Hunter grew up on farms and discovered an interest in cattle early through 4-H. Melanie's father had a hobby farm but worked full time off the farm. Neil's Dad had beef cattle, but his mechanic's job made the money. Their paths crossed through 4-H and the Jersey Youth Seminar. Melanie earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Queen's and an Honours Degree in Ag/Science from Guelph. Neil earned an Ag/Business Degree from Guelph. They married in 2005 and set up a new farm; the bank manager told them to get a house and job in town. They started out in Napanee with an older herd of cows, added technology, and grew. In 2003, Mad Cow Disease led to setbacks, but by 2016 they had maxed out their facility in Napanee and sought to purchase a suitable farm with an adequate quota. In June 2016, they began operations in Junetown, where they own 430 acres of land, and milk 140 Jersey/Holstein cows. Hometown Jerseys also sells semen and trades/buys/sells cows. Melanie does the milking in the main barn, and Serena (a hired hand) takes care of the second barn. Melanie intimated that she enjoys most days; likes the independence of self-employment, appreciates her two children don't have to go to day care, and loves animal husbandry.

John Asbreuk bought his farm in the mid-1950's and together with his sons, built it into an impressive dairy. Casey Roth, 48, on Cronkwoods Road, together with

his brothers, Leonard and Billy, operate a thriving dairy farm Leann Holsteins that their Dad purchased in the 1950's and developed as a dairy in the 1960's. At that time in Ontario, every country road was dotted with small dairy farms, where families eked out a living milking a few cows and scratching the dirt. As Casey said: "Our tummies were full, we had clean clothes, and Dad quit his Dupont job to farm full time." There were 21 dairy farms along, or near, the river at that time in Front of Yonge.

All Three operators admitted that finding dependable people to work on the farm is by far the biggest challenge. "Where on earth can you find people, who want to work?" Other adversities include break downs with equipment, veterinarian costs, weather and the need to stay motivated, and driven. All these farmers are healthy and in excellent physical condition.

The average age of Canadian farmers is 55 and there are more farmers over 70, than under 35.

Statistics Canada also found that 92% of farms have no written plan for who will take over when the operator retires. The last Statistics Canada Census on farming took place in 2011 and operations are in decline since. The government dissuades small farms.

Ross farms 600 acres he partially inherited from his Uncle in 1970. He rents 150 acres of additional tillable land and plants a total of

300 acres in hay, corn, barley and soya beans. He operated as a small dairy farm until 1990, then sold his cattle and quota for two reasons: Government assistance dwindled, and help was scarce. Ross has no succession plan. He sells firewood, maple syrup, owns a sawmill and cuts logs and lumber for people, and custom combines. His only hired help occurs during spring planting. "I farm because I love it" says Ross. "I love the outdoors."

All three farms are discouraged by commodity prices and the lack of government support. Melanie stated that even Canada's Food Guide (revised in 2018) focuses on plant-based diets. Casey stated, "I could make a lot more money working out, but I do this because I love it."

The economics of farming and the lack of lucrative incentives are enough to deter any young Canadian from choosing to farm. Low interest rates have helped; if that changes, disaster looms. Farmers are granted a few tax breaks, HST is returned to them and they claim expenses other folks can't, but farm assistance programs (NISA, CAIS, MRI) mean tedious applications. Picture no extended health coverage, mortgages and loans for continuous debt load, and obsolete subsidies. Costs have accelerated with inflation. Ross purchased a new Ford tractor with a cab in 1975 for \$12,000; today, equivalent cost is \$75,000. The price of seed, fertilizer and fuel costs have risen exponentially; in the 1970's a bag of seed corn was \$18.00, today it's \$250; the technology costs \$50. To stay afloat, farmers must get bigger, plant more acres, borrow more money, work harder, and press on despite the odds. Risk factors increase as more is invested and borrowed to net proportionate income. Ross says he got the same price per ton for corn in 1980, as he does now, with gigantic increased input.

So why do they keep going? "Because it is a calling," says Ross. Farmers are an example of the indomitable resilient human spirit, more than any other cultural career. Melanie says, "you get up in the morning, decide you're going to do it, and then do it!"

The next time you slurp down ice cream on a sultry day, or scarf down that juicy burger, remember farmers and the effort they expend so that you and I can continue to eat the way we do. Seven percent of the world eats this way. For farmers, life often grinds forward on its winding track through seasons of mundane labors and around corners of forgotten obscurity. Altruistically, they work so that we can eat; we eat to sustain life. What could be more incredibly important? **LH**



Image Credit: Neil Hunter

The Hunter Family



Image Credit: Diann Turner

Leeann Farm, Cronkwoods Road



Image Credit: Frank Robinson

Purebred Jersey Cow



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Heidi Vanderkloet of Farmer's Daughter is in "her happy place" with a display of quilts and fabric.



The Farmer's Daughter Country Retreat is a quiet space to "get away from it all" and become engaged in special crafting activities.



This is one of the cozy country bedrooms at Farmer's Daughter.



A quilting display at a local fair reveals the amazing talent and interest for quilting in our area.



FARMER'S DAUGHTER

A Country Retreat

By Sally Smid

In our fast paced and intense world, what could be more refreshing than a quiet rural house, on a peaceful country road, surrounded by farm fields? Farmer's Daughter Country Retreat is just that. Located at 294 Scott Rd., north of Athens.

Heidi Vanderkloet describes her enterprise as "a place to relax with friends and work on favourite projects" in a peaceful country setting. The chance to have a weekend escape to create and socialize with friends is a very special opportunity! "Farmer's Daughter Retreat" has 2 workrooms, an equipped kitchen and attractive dining area with "comfy seating". There are also 5 cozy bedrooms and 2 full bathrooms and has accessibility. The house is equipped with many items to accommodate crafting. This is not Heidi's first business venture, as she formerly operated Farmer's Daughter Boutique in Sunderland before coming to help operate the family farm with her husband Dale and two sons.

The retreat house has been the site of a variety of workshops and retreat weekends, including scrap booking, crocheting, and sewing, but most importantly quilting, which is Heidi's passion. Quilting has a long history in Canada and is a very quickly growing pass time. The many local quilting groups and shows that take place are evidence of that.

While the warmth and comfort that quilts supply, especially through this past winter, are much appreciated, at Farmer's Daughter it is clear that today's quilts are both functional and decorative. The house is filled with such creations, which adds to its cozy atmosphere. Quilting categories include those that are traditional, contemporary, wall and miniature. Colour arrangements and quilting designs can widely vary. Modern sewing machines and equipment have certainly changed the art from that of only hand stitching and old-fashioned quilting bees, to piecework, patchwork, appliqué, collage, embellishment and fusing are some of the new techniques employed today.

"I love to work with quilters who love fabric as much as I do!" Heidi remarks. Her excitement about materials and design, as well as her expertise, make crafting events a positive and rewarding experience. Completed projects make very special family keepsakes and very special gifts. It is interesting to see how different designs look with varied colour choices. Meredith

Mantel, of Smiths Falls has visited the house on several occasions and comments, "It is a peaceful place to learn about quilting and Heidi is very supportive!" Kathy Doile expressed her pleasure in being able to quickly create a quilt top. The Retreat House has also been the site for kids' workshops in past months. Youngsters have been thrilled to be able to take home their creations, a more enriching experience it would seem, than the usual "screen time".

Farmer's Daughter has wonderful potential, as many from more urban areas are seeking a rural setting such as this, and would have great satisfaction in being involved in the vintage art of quilting. Guests bring their own groceries and rates are reasonable with a minimum of a 2-night stay.

There are also possibilities of exploring more of what is available in the rural surroundings. It is, with no doubt, that visitors to the Farmer's Daughter Retreat House will leave with a renewed perspective and sense of fulfillment' **LH**

To learn more, go to retreatatfarmersdaughter.vistaprintdigital.com or visit our Facebook page.

Farmer's Daughter Country Retreat is Located at 294 Scott Rd., north of Athens.

DONKEY LOVE

By Andi Christine Bednarzig

“I fell in love,” Annick Rousseau said, as she recalled the day, she acquired her first donkey.

Rousseau sat in her kitchen overlooking 25 acres of pastureland just outside Lyndhurst, a small agricultural community north of Gananoque. This former iron works town is most famous for its Annual Turkey Fair, celebrated on the third Saturday of September.

Rousseau’s passion for donkeys had its origins in the Eastern Township region of Quebec, where she had a farm of 200 sheep. She bought a donkey to protect her flock, and soon added a second one. Rousseau traveled to France to spend an intensive 10 days training to learn as much as she could about these amazing creatures.

When Rousseau developed skin irritations, and with her daughter allergic to cleaning products, a friend in Italy recommended donkey milk products; hence the creation of her handcrafted soaps.

Rousseau explained that donkey milk is closest to human milk in composition. It is often given to babies allergic to human milk. Consumption of raw donkey milk is often recommended for cancer patients in European countries, such as Belgium and Germany. It is believed that the milk will increase the level of leukocytes in the blood and help boost the immune system.

Two and a half years ago, Rousseau and her partner, Jean-Sebastien Gagné, decided to move their operation to Leeds and the Thousand Islands. They now co-exist with two jacks (males) and six jennies (females).

Rousseau runs a small shop out of her home and is also a regular at summer farmers’ markets. Her skin soothing, unscented soaps can be purchased locally in Lyndhurst at Wendy’s Country Market and The Green Gecko. In Gananoque, they can be found at Farmhouse Flowers.

Aside from making soap products, two years ago, Gagné and Rousseau planted 220 elderberry bushes, an indigenous Canadian plant with medicinal properties.

The couple is interested in the health benefits of the flowers, fruit, stems, and leaves. It will take about five years for the plantings to come to full fruition. With her knowledge and experience, Rousseau offers workshops for owners whose donkeys may be having temperament issues.

Rousseau is also interested in the therapeutic and mental health benefits of working with donkeys. She has helped handicapped adults and children, as well as autistic children in Quebec and hopes to continue this work.

“Seated in a wheelchair brings you to eye level with a donkey, a perfect height for grooming and brushing.” Rousseau recalls how some of her donkeys figured out to gently manoeuvre wheelchairs, to the delight of participants in her program.

Donkeys have delighted attendees at the Annual Lyndhurst Santa Claus Parade. On Valentines Day, warm, wet smooches are given at a “kissing booth.”

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Rousseau described the loyalty of donkeys; She was bringing a wheelbarrow of manure out of the barn, when she slipped and fell and hurt her head. “I woke up to breathing on my head and felt something pushing my shoulder to wake me up.” One of her donkeys had broken through a fence and injured itself to get to her. “Donkeys are close to the family, much like dogs and are very protective and loyal,” Rousseau said, as she stroked her donkey’s long soft ears. “Owning a donkey is a very humbling experience.” **LH**



Image Credit: Andi Christine Bednarzig



Image Credit: Andi Christine Bednarzig



Image Credit:
Andi Christine Bednarzig



Image Credit:
Andi Christine Bednarzig



Image Credit:
Melissa Mazurkiewicz



Image Credit:
Andi Christine Bednarzig



Image Credit:
Annick



Above: This is a photo of the Athens Orchestra in 1914. (Front L-R) Miss L. Ney, Mrs. George E. Judson, and Miss E. Bottomley. (Back L-R) Fred Hollingsworth, Wesley Morris, Roscoe DeWolfe, who enlisted in WWI to play in the military band and is named on the Vimy monument, and Crawford Slack.



***All photos courtesy of Township of Athens and Area Heritage Society.**

Left: An Athens mural, painted by John Hood in 1987, depicted the uniformed band in the park bandstand on a summer evening.



Above: This bugle was owned by the Taylors, who were part of the Athens band. Could this have been the instrument that summoned residents to listen to outside performances?

Right: This vintage drum is on display at the Joshua Bates Centre to honour the history of Athens' musical past.

ATHENS BANDS A Special Part of Local Culture & History

By Sally Smid

Many citizens of "Farmersville", now Athens, were once very well known for their musical talents. It was about 160 years ago, in 1879 that the first village band was organized. The group had eighteen members and was led by Prof. J. W. Davey with R. R. Alguire as drum major. The members practiced faithfully in the old town hall, now Athens Library on Central St., and later in a room provided by Fred Pierce in his Hotel. It was said that "their first concert was on Main St. and consisted of just one tune". In 1885, it was recorded, that a bugle-call beckoned villagers to come and listen to an outside performance.

"We are pleased to say that the band has lost none of its old-time vigor and rendered selections in first class style," noted the Athens Reporter, "showing that during the cold winter evenings the boys had not been idle". The group was referred to as the Citizens' Band when it performed for a Dominion Day concert in 1895. It was later referred to as the Farmersville Brass Band.

Funded by donations from village residents, the band matured and eventually gave annual concerts and minstrel shows which often included vocalists. There were also instrumental soloists, recitations and humour. Some original musical compositions were also included. Artist Crawford Slack was one of those composers who often read his poetry as well.

In the fall the band would travel to country fairs in the area, including the large one in Unionville, now Forthton. They often welcomed special visitors at the train station. Their navy-blue uniforms trimmed in red and silver were quite elaborate. Members included prominent citizens, such as J. P. Lamb, Fred Pierce, (MP) A. E. Donovan and more. Crawford Slack, provided instrumental instruction and was a later band leader along with A. W. Kincaid and G. L. Taylor.

The band was reorganized at various times. One account mentions that their band hats had light fixtures attached for nighttime performances. The group also performed as a marching band which involved a lot of practice, coordination and precision. The band often played in the bandstand in Athens Park and there are stories of couples spontaneously dancing to their lilting music.

Because of their remarkable music ability, the band was invited to perform in Lanark and Brockville. The Reporter announced in

1914 that a "fine orchestra was open for engagements or will perform at charitable or sacred functions". The Athens Women's Institute helped to reorganize the band in 1924 and had a bandstand built in the park where the new band would give concerts. Some older folks still recall those special occasions and how folks would spontaneously start to dance to the band's music.

In 1933, it was reported that Fred Hollingsworth and his orchestra could be heard on CFLC Radio in Prescott and "17 telephone calls were received during the two-hour performance".

In a display case in the Athens' Joshua Bates Centre, a drum which was acquired by Lois Schroeder Stanford pays tribute to the history of the village's bands. Crawford Slack wrote a poem which he dedicated to colleague A.W. Kincaid which effectively captures the spirit of those early bands as he relates his excitement about playing his cornet in the village band:

"...marching gaily down the street in regimentals grand,
As proud as any brigadier, a playing in the band...
When we lads met with spirits gay and horns all new and bright,
And started in to practice at the town hall every night.
Of course, the neighbours grumbled, for we blew both night and day,
And my joy it reached its zenith when a tune we learned to play."



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A SPECIAL CELEBRATION FOR MOTHER'S DAY

By Lorraine Payette

To Mom's everywhere you are truly thanked for everything you do and have done. We hope our reader's will give their Mothers or Grandmothers a special day this year!



Special decorations for a Mother's Day cake

Finding the perfect Mother's Day gift can be a hard thing to do when you are an 8-year-old boy living on a farm in the middle of nowhere. The task can be even harder when you only have one parent. You can't go to the other one for a ride, or a cash loan, or even great ideas. And you certainly can't ask your mum for help – that would spoil everything.

However, creative thinking will win the day. So, a plan was developed, the right pieces came

into place, and my son decided to give me the most special Mother's Day celebration ever.

"Mum, I want to take you for a ride and give you a big bouquet of flowers," he said. "Then we can have a special dinner."

I could see he was deadly serious, so I thanked him and followed him outside.

There waiting for me was his little red wagon. It had been freshly washed and had a big pink bow tied on it.

"You need to get in," he said. "And be careful not to fall out."

I climbed into the wagon and waited for him to discover I was too heavy and he couldn't possibly pull me around. But he was a lot stronger than he looked, and off we went on that special ride.

He pulled me out to the laneway, and then made a sharp right past the lilac bushes and into the easternmost field. It was a gorgeous spring day, and all of the wildflowers were in their most perfect early bloom. The variety of colours and scents was incredible, and seeing them from the height of the wagon bed put them into a whole new perspective.

"Which ones do you like?" he said. "We want to pick the best ones."

He carefully pulled the wagon through the entire field, stopping every few feet to check for a perfect clover, whether red, white, yellow or sweet an ideal buttercup; some beautiful vetch in purple or gold; dandelions and cinquefoil and all kinds of delightful blooms I might never have paid much attention to while just walking by. When he had exhausted the fields, he went to the garden to see what other delights might be in store. Radishes gone to flower, turnips, even the occasional self-seeded pea added to the beauty of the collection.

We finished the ride at the kitchen door, where he handed me out of the wagon before helping to select the perfect onion soup bowl in which to place this precious bouquet.

While I admired my gift, he brought out another surprise for me. I had baked a cake the day before so we could have a little something for dessert. Unknown to me, he had got up very early and decorated it specially, using all the candies he could find to liven up the icing. Every colour of the rainbow was there, carefully placed in a design crafted by loving hands. To be on the safe side he had added a few candles – and the final cake was all the more tasty for it.

I believe this will always be my favourite Mother's Day memory, stored away to bring out again and again. May every mother out there receive an equally special gift to cherish and keep in her heart forever. **LH**



Photo supplied by The Grenville County Historical Society

Above: The refurbished building that was the old Prescott Train Station has become the permanent home of the Grenville County Historical Society.

GETTING ACQUAINTED

with the Past

By Lisa Crandall

Family genealogy is a 'trending' hobby these days and when you live in a part of the country that has roots reaching back to the earliest settlers, even predating Confederation, The Grenville County Historical Society can be a fulfilling and fun place to volunteer. Yes, I said "fun." The GCHS is a group of volunteers that operates out of the old train station in Prescott. They have turned their individual passions into a lively and laughter filled concern.

The original organization called the Grenville Pioneer and Historical Society was founded in 1891. Back in those days the primary qualification for membership was being the descendent of someone living in Canada in 1792 and, of course, being male (women were only allowed to become members after 1914). There was a brief hiatus to the society between 1924 and 1959, but it was re-organized and held its first official meeting in January 1960. Over the years the archives were housed in various places including the Grenville County Registry Office, The Prescott Municipal Building, assorted members' homes, the Homewood Museum and finally, Crane House in Prescott. Always expanding and in need of more space, in 2007 they had the opportunity to set up shop in the abandoned building that was the former Grand Trunk Railway Station in Prescott. After a surprisingly short period of refurbishment, they created a working area that includes; office and

research space, a lovingly tended storeroom for artifacts including; clothing and a wide range, but limited, selection of items from homes and local businesses.

Most of the action happens in the two office/research areas where large tables and shelves filled with documents take pride of place. The researchers respond to calls from all over Canada and often the United States, looking for information. Over so many years the collection of documents has become uniquely extensive. It includes material on individuals, families,

private houses, buildings, local businesses and organizations, as well as military and historical events. Documents include Grenville County birth, marriage and death records. Copies of the Brockville and Prescott newspapers on microfilm and church, cemetery and census records, as well as official documents, such as deeds and maps. In addition, there is a wealth of donated material including, personal photographs, scrapbooks, copies of local newspapers, video tapes and slides, etc. Much of it carefully indexed by the volunteers.



Photo Credit: Robert Erickson



Photo Credit: Robert Erickson

Above: One of the research tables is from early days of the Augusta Township Council, dating back to the 1850's. The Plexiglas covering preserves a plethora of gouges and doodles created over the years. Volunteer Gini Leonard takes full advantage of the table top while doing her research.



Photo Credit: Robert Erickson

These archives can be searched in person for a small fee of \$2 per hour or volunteer researchers will do the searching at a rate of \$15 per hour. One of the benefits of membership in the GCHS is a reduction in these rates.

Although connected by their love of history, the interests of the volunteers are wide ranging and finds its expression in many forms. There is a member who loves to work with the objects that are donated. She specializes in creating the displays used for outreach projects, such as Doors Open and local business exhibits. Other volunteers who have a passion for photography are currently involved with a project to use social media as a tool to identify people and places in photos that have been gifted to the society. Members also turn their curiosity about specific events or locations in lengthy spiral bound reference documents that sometimes turn into books. These published books range the many historical stone houses in the area

(3 volumes to date), the historical plaques found throughout the county and collections of local stories captured in a 20-volume set of booklets entitled Pioneer People and Places. For a complete survey of the archived material and the books available, check out the website at <http://www.grenvillecountyarchives.ca/> These items can be purchased at the office during regular business hours or by email.

Recently one volunteer, Bonnie Gaylord, found herself in front of the camera, when an individual working on a documentary about "abandoned railways" arrived unexpectedly, to gather some footage after having exchanged several emails about the project. She was also involved in the background research for an award-winning film, 12 Years a Slave. One of the main characters, Samuel Bass (played by Brad Pitt), was from Augusta Township. She is presently just getting started on a project involving the history of local business, the Portolano Glove Factory.



Photo Credit: Helen Mott

Left: A display case at the front desk houses an assortment of items donated from the personal collections of local townsfolk.

Above: Sandra Shouldice animating Abigail Gould Perrin, her great great great grandmother, during a walking tour of the Maynard Cemetery.

Bottom opposite page: Oscar the telegraph operator, seated in the window overlooking the still used train tracks, is a popular favorite with visitors. Sitting with his back to the room he is the first 'person' you see as you enter and he is often mistaken for a real volunteer.

For Sandra Shouldice, long-time volunteer and current president, one of her favorite recent events was a walking tour of the Maynard Cemetery entitled "Let the Stones Speak". During this event several volunteers dressed up in period costumes and were stationed at selected gravestones, where they spoke on behalf of the historical personages buried there. Shouldice spoke as her great great great grandmother Abigail Gould Perrin.

During the off-season (September through May) the office is open on Tuesdays between 10AM and 4PM. During the summer (June, July, August) the office is open five days a week, courtesy of a grant that allows the hiring of a student researcher. If you are interested in joining the crew of volunteers that makes the GCHS such a going concern, drop by the office any Tuesday. Young or old there is bound to be a place for you and whatever niche of local history you are interested in exploring. **LH**



Dave Rowan and Frankie



Dave Rowan

UKE-ING HIS HEAD Dave Rowan Brings Great Music to Seniors

By Lorraine Payette

Dave Rowan is a familiar face to many living in the seniors' residences in our area. He and his partner Frankie (his dog) are making a career playing covers of songs from jazz, pop, country/western, the 20s to the 60s and 70s for grateful residents.

"I do a little bit of pop, a little bit of rock – anything that the old folks would like to hear," said Rowan. "Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, the list goes on and on."

He started his musical career playing guitar around campfires while working as a CIT (Counselor in Training) at kids' camps when he was about 15-years-old. After about five years of doing this he was invited to join a group called the Vegas Boys in Toronto.

"The Vegas Boys played together right up until last year," said Rowan. "One guy got

diagnosed with throat cancer and was no longer able to sing. It was 15 years of unbelievable – and I do mean unbelievable – memories and stories."

He did jam sessions in the city but had to stop when he developed sleep apnea and could no longer stay up late at night.

"I went to visit my sister's father-in-law in a retirement residence," he said. "I brought my guitar along and soon I had 'lots of people' in this dining area. The lady who runs the activity programme said, 'You know, we have money to pay people like you.'"

"I got a list of all the seniors' residences in and around Toronto and started making phone calls. A couple of months later I approached a bunch of the guys that we had been doing jam sessions with, and I got four guys that stepped up and said, 'Let's go make some noise for the old folks.'"

"We started playing and that was the start of 'Friends of Jake'. That's when I started playing seniors' residences with that band and I'm doing solos all along as well."

Jake was a dog who belonged to one of the band members. Being the one most likely to

show up for all rehearsals, they decided to name themselves after him.

About five years ago the Rowans had a grandson and decided to move to Gananoque.

"I've been doing all sorts of stuff since I moved here," he said. "I've been trying to get some musicians together to put a band together. I've been working for eight years trying to develop a reputation as a good entertainer. Then Frankie came along in the last two years and has completely stolen my show. She likes to dance."

A cross between Labrador and Husky, Frankie charms the audiences and puts them at ease everywhere Rowan goes. Whether playing at a seniors' residence or teaching people to play the ukulele, she's always there helping out.

"There was a group from the high-school interested in starting ukulele," said Rowan. "About 8 or 10 kids came into the library and I gave them ukulele lessons. It was a panic. Now I'm giving ukulele lessons at the seniors' residences. I have a course at Rosedale Retirement Residence in Brockville and the residents love it." **LH**

To hire Rowan to come and play for you or to teach ukulele, please contact him at 613-449-7169 or daver_4@hotmail.com. He and Frankie will be delighted to come and make beautiful music with you.



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The cast of Glory. Photo by Barbara Zimonick.



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