

## 25TH WARKWORTH PERFECT PIE CONTEST

# Pecans are perfect for grand prize pie

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Heather Clarke found out last Saturday: she has the secret to the perfect pie.

The unassuming Norham resident couldn't believe her good fortune when her name was announced as the winner of the 25th Annual Warkworth Perfect Pie Contest.

The honour seemed, at times, to be almost too much to take in.

Standing before a crowd of 200 jamming every nook and cranny of the Warkworth Town Hall Centre for the Arts, Mrs. Clarke was speechless. Recovering for a moment, she stopped to thank everyone and praised "the wonderful community we live in."

The prize package this year was the best ever for the contest that began as the result of a column written in the *Warkworth Journal* over 25 years ago by Grahame Woods.

Mrs. Clarke took home cash prizes, including the grand prize of \$150 donated by Northumberland Publishers. She also loaded a deluxe mixer, a unique sculpture by Paul Portelli, a silver platter from the Royal Bank, \$100 from the Warkworth Co-Op, and other goodies into her vehicle to take home.

This isn't Mrs. Clarke's first foray into the contest, but it's her first Perfect Pie.

She first entered in 1997 and gained notoriety when her two-year-old son was photographed asleep on her knee during the festivities.

In 1998, she and friend Wendy VanRoom entered in an attempt to determine whether Tenderflake lard or Crisco shortening made the better crust. They didn't find out. Both women won honourable mention.

From there on in, she admits she has been winning different categories, but never top honours.

Last year, her son Travis won the newly-created Youth category and an honourable mention in the Men's division with his apple pie. He entered again this year at the bidding of his Grandpa Woof.

Heather never dreamed she'd find her pie on the prize table this year. In an interview after the ceremony, she admitted walking along one side of the room in

search of her pie. She didn't find it, but assumed it was on the other side, not among the winners on stage.

She was up all night Friday in her quest to find perfection. Ironically, the pecan pie was one of her first efforts in a long night. Four others that followed were disasters. Her youngest son, Troy, looked after some of the failed blueberry and maple syrup efforts. Both ended up too runny, so he scooped up pieces for breakfast.

Heather says the award was wonderful and gratifying after all she had gone through the night before.

Husband Grant noted before she left the house Saturday for the competition, after all the catastrophes, the pecan pie looked pretty good.

As for the secret to success, Heather laughs and recommends you don't drop it on the way to the oven - it's quite runny.

Unused to the attention, Heather said

she had hoped to see Norma McCleary win, she loves the contest so much - or maybe one of Heather's girlfriends.

### A parting note

On perhaps a sadder note, this was Grahame Woods' final year with the contest. The man who nudged the event into existence with a newspaper article more than a quarter century ago is stepping aside. His long association with Warkworth has left a legacy in the artistic fibre of the village. Possibly his genius lies in realizing what is apparent, and then making it happen.

Thanks, Grahame.



**Dozens and dozens** of pies awaited the judges at last Saturday's competition.



**Easy now!** Perfect Pie winner, Heather Clarke, and award presenter, Grahame Woods, are being very careful as the prize changes hands. Worthy Matron, Audrey Thackeray, stands behind.



**Bill Saunders** sits patiently with his pie as he awaits the competition. Bill took top honours in the Men's Division.



**Judge Shari Darling** does some preliminary work at the long row of pies.

**Photos by Bob Owen**

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