

Pioneer Days celebrants didn't mind a little rain



Dressed in pioneer clothes, Pearl Brown demonstrated some real old-fashioned, quality craftsmanship with her rug-hooking work. She sat in front of the Akers and Clark office on Main Street Friday, and contributed to Georgetown's Summerfest and Pioneer Days activities.

A weekend of rain didn't dampen the spirits of merchants involved with Pioneer Days, chairman George Markou told The Herald Monday.

In fact, he said, attendance was up this year during the three-day celebration in downtown Georgetown, which began Thursday afternoon with a sidewalk sale.

Although a large chunk of Saturday's slate of events was washed out in the steady rainfall which began Friday night, plans are already being made to hold a one-day "rain date" July 10, Mr. Markou said.

The event will largely centre around another sidewalk sale, but Georgetown Business Improvement Area chairman Lynn Barnard said groups which were to participate in last weekend's events are welcome

to return and there will be a street dance with "Yesterday". She also proposed that the Main Street Area which will be closed off with the town's approval, may be used by Summerfest artisans to set up displays.

Summerfest, organized by the Halton Hills Arts Council, was to have gone ahead Saturday with events for children and a gala arts and crafts show presented by the Credit Valley Artisans (CVA). Indoors, however, Summerfest's "Old Tyme Music Hall" was a sell-out success and those who failed to get tickets for the show at Sacre Coeur Church Saturday night were able to watch a special dress rehearsal Friday.

About 35 tables had been envisioned in the CVA show Saturday.

When it appeared to be doomed because of rain, one downtown merchant opened up the Goddard Supply store and some of the Artisans set up shop briefly.

Merchants, Mr. Markou said, were pleased with sales made early in Pioneer Days and said that attendance Thursday afternoon and Friday before the rain began at 6 p.m. was excellent.

"In spite of the weather," he said, "everyone is keen on the results they obtained."

Celebrants were able to enjoy an outdoor street dance Thursday night, but night time entertainment moved into the McGibbon Hotel Friday and Saturday nights.

And while some events were entirely washed out, among them the Carlsberg horses display Saturday and Friday night's baloon "Take off" sponsored by Canada Dry, others carried on oblivious to the inclement weather.

Perhaps driven by memories of previous Lions Club-sponsored pancake breakfasts, early risers Saturday morning didn't mind the drizzle as they crowded around the club's Main Street grill waiting to eat. And, throughout the day, the loony antics of Dr. Bandoli's Travelling Good Time Show continued to cheer up merchants and shoppers alike.



Members of Dr. Bandoli's Travelling Good Time Show had youngsters and adults in stitches throughout Pioneer Days last weekend. Their slick 'improvisational' humor and acrobatics blended well with the relaxed open-air mall activities on Georgetown's Main Street.

Herald photos by Dave Rowney and Chris Aagaard



President Janet Armstrong (left) of the Georgetown Horticultural Society congratulates Iva Knechtel for her first place finish in the "Best House Plant" category for growing a Hoya plant. In the basement of Knox Church on Main Street, a variety of plants were judged in a Pioneer Days competition by the Society, then displayed for the enjoyment of the general public.

This year's Olde Tyme Music Hall was another outstanding success, thanks to the efforts of 37 performers, including Al Gottlieb (left) and Dave Walker. Directed by Ron Hills the show was performed in the Sacre Coeur Church hall. It was produced by Dorothy Hunt.



Once upon a time, when gas was cheap, cars like this one chugged along Georgetown's Main Street, drawing glances from passing pedestrians. Its stylish lines continued to attract attention last weekend during Georgetown's Pioneer Days and, taking a look back into history is the Crane family, Joe and Madonna and their four-year old daughter, Julie.

Wee Duncan Tost is town's first 'Youngest Pioneer'

When Duncan Michael Tost came into this world Friday, Pioneer Days celebrants in Georgetown had already left the McGibbon Hotel downtown and were likely carrying on the party in a number of private homes in the area.

Unknown to him at the time (and he's still rendered speechless with surprise), young Duncan became Georgetown's first recipient of the Youngest Pioneer of the Year award, a new Pioneer Days "event" which this year is sponsored by the Penniesworth children's consignment shop.

Duncan arrived into the Georgetown District Memorial Hospital maternity ward at 1:37 a.m., weighing a cherubic seven pounds. He's the first child of Mike and Reni Tost of John Street in Georgetown and his father, while not entirely sure, doesn't rule out the possibility that there may be a family connection with Barbara Tost, last year's winner of The Herald's "Pioneer Citizen of the Year" award and sister of the 1982 winner, Frances Wilson.

"I wouldn't have seen him arrive as a Christmas or New Year's baby, so this award is just great," Mrs. Tost told The Herald Monday night.

Mr. Tost says he can trace his family's Georgetown roots back at least as far as his great-grandfather (on his mother's side), while Mrs. Tost's parents settled in Georgetown when she was three years old.

"This was the first place we settled," she said of her family which is originally from Germany, "so I guess we were pioneers, too."



Duncan Michael Tost, who was born at 1:37 a.m. June 18, is Georgetown's first recipient of the "Youngest Pioneer of the Year" award, presented by Lynn Barnard of Penniesworth (left) to Duncan and his mother, Reni, at the Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital Monday night. Duncan, Reni and father, Mike, live on John Street in Georgetown.

(Herald photo)

Frances Wilson Pioneer Citizen of Year

Lasting and lively, this great-granddaughter of George Kennedy represents Georgetown's durability and charm

By PAUL DORSEY
Herald editor
Embodying her community's durability as well as its lasting charm - and providing a living contact with its pioneer past - Frances Gertrude (Kennedy) Wilson has been selected as Georgetown's Pioneer Citizen of the Year.

Recommended for the honor by local historian and town councillor John McDonald because of her remarkable liveliness at age 83 and her direct ties with Georgetown's founder, George Kennedy, Mrs. Wilson was presented with a plaque sponsored by The Herald this week.

The presentation was to have been made Saturday in the midst of downtown Georgetown's Pioneer Days celebrations, but was postponed because of the rain. Now in its third year, the Herald's Pioneer Citizen of the Year award has previously been presented to Colonel John Barber, living descendant of the Barber family which gave Georgetown its industrial heritage, and to Barbara Kennedy Tost, a great-granddaughter of George Kennedy - and Mrs. Wilson's older sister.

The Pioneer Citizen of the Year award recognizes an individual's contribution to, or representation of, some aspect of Georgetown's pioneer past.

The Herald's visit to Mrs. Wilson's Main Street home Monday found her in good spirits and good health following a bout with a lingering cough. But for a lingering cough, in fact, she is inspiringly lively and industrious, continuing to manage a boarding house and cooking for its four residents.

The house once catered to 18 tenants, Mrs. Wilson told The Herald. She and her late husband, John Buchanan Wilson, a proud Scotsman who died in 1978, moved into the long-standing house next door to Yong's Restaurant about 20 years ago. Today it's sparsely furnished but clearly a warm home to Mrs. Wilson, a German shepherd puppy and the four tenants from Belle Isle who help her with chores.

Frances Gertrude Kennedy was born in her parents' home, located where the Georgetown post office now stands at Guelph and Maple, April 19, 1899. Her father, William Cyrus Kennedy (known as Cy) ran a grocery store in downtown Georgetown, assisted by his wife Frances Rullege. Cy and Frances had four children, two of whom died young. Mrs. Wilson's older sister and last year's Pioneer Citizen, Barbara Elizabeth Tost, still lives in her Queen Street home (she'll be 98 Aug. 21).

When 14-year old John Wilson arrived in Canada from Scotland, starting out by helping his own grandfather's gardening business in Cooktown, there was a built-in link with the Kennedys of Georgetown. His grandfather had married one of the future Mrs. Wilson's aunts and eventually a romance developed between John Wilson and Frances Kennedy.

When the couple married in 1928, they built a new home on four acres of land extending north from Maple Avenue opposite the present North Halton golf club. Their son Jim still lives there, tending the good-sized garden his father - a trained landscape gardener - had built up.

While George Kennedy's many other great-grandchildren have dispersed far and wide over the years, Mrs. Wilson's own children are all close by. Sons Jim and John (who's known as Cy) have both presented her with grandchildren, and one of Cy's daughters, Debbie Bonham, further delighted Mrs. Wilson with a great-granddaughter of her own. Little Sharon Bonham celebrated her first birthday April 15, just four days before Mrs. Wilson's 83rd.

Proclaiming herself "a home girl" and "not much of a traveller", Mrs. Wilson says her ties

with Georgetown have always been irrevocable. She readily acknowledges that downtown Georgetown, the town itself and the rest of Canada are having their economic troubles, but is adamant that things could never again be as bad as they were when she and Mr. Wilson were starting out in marriage - during the Great Depression.

"Oh no, it can never be as bad as that," she says. "Things have changed for the better. It's nice to have seen the town grow to what it is today. I think it will continue growing."

If Georgetown's spirit is as hardy and durable as Mrs. Wilson's, it should indeed stand up to today's trials and tribulations. Last June, she suffered a stroke that paralyzed the muscles in one ankle, and the doctor offered only the gloomiest predictions as far as her future mobility. Needless to say, Mrs. Wilson set her mind to overcoming the problem and continues to walk solidly without the aid of a cane or a helper. Not only that, she says, proudly posing for a photo in her front garden, she still has all her own teeth.

Take heart, Georgetown: with a pioneer heritage like that afforded by Col. Barber and the Kennedy sisters, you have many, many lively years ahead.



Frances Wilson is as spry and chipper an 83-year old as you'd ever want to meet. She runs a boarding house on Main Street and last year shocked her doctor by bouncing back from a stroke, overcoming slight paralysis to the point where she now gets out for the occasional outing. But it's Mrs. Wilson's staunch love for and loyalty to Georgetown - and in particular her direct ancestral link with community founder George Kennedy, her great-grandfather - that has earned her 1982 honors as Pioneer Citizen of the Year, an award bestowed annually by The Herald upon a living resident who has contributed to or represents some aspect of our pioneer past.

(Herald photo by Chris Aagaard)