

Eyes sparkle at Appaloosa farm

BY CANDYCE ROWLANDSON
Cowboy Jim and his wife Judy placed a small advertisement in the newspaper which read, "Have your child's party on a beautiful 80-acre farm — complete with pony rides, nutritious lunch, cake, stories by Cowboy Jim and take-home favors. All you do is bring the kids. Reasonable rates. Unforgettable experience. Appaloosa Springs — the spot to be. RR.1 Acton, 1-519-853-2705."

This ad is definitely bringing smiles and bright eyes to the children who visit Appaloosa Springs on weekends. Today, Cowboy Jim and his wife have hosted 15 parties in their old-fashioned, country-style home.

When Judy Anscorb (Mrs. Cowboy Jim) couldn't find sufficient employment, she and husband Jim placed a birthday party advertisement in the Toronto Sun; their parties have become popular.

When the children first arrive, they are introduced to Mrs. Cow-

boy Jim, Assistant Rachel and dogs Peanut and Tanis. The birthday child must then ring an old bell on the side of the house and call for Cowboy Jim.

Jim gallups around the barn in full gear to greet the children. "Come on boys and girls and let Mr. Mugs give you a big, wet kiss." Mr. Mugs is a patient, 19-year-old Appaloosa that provides rides for all the children. Afterwards it's time for games, horse-back riding, a tour of the farm and finally a nutritious lunch and the cake.

Assistant Rachel says that the children are happiest when they are on the tour and have contact with the horses. "When the children are outside with the animals they can have as much fun as they want and they can be as free and noisy as they like. Sometimes, I sing songs with them if they don't know what to do but that rarely happens."

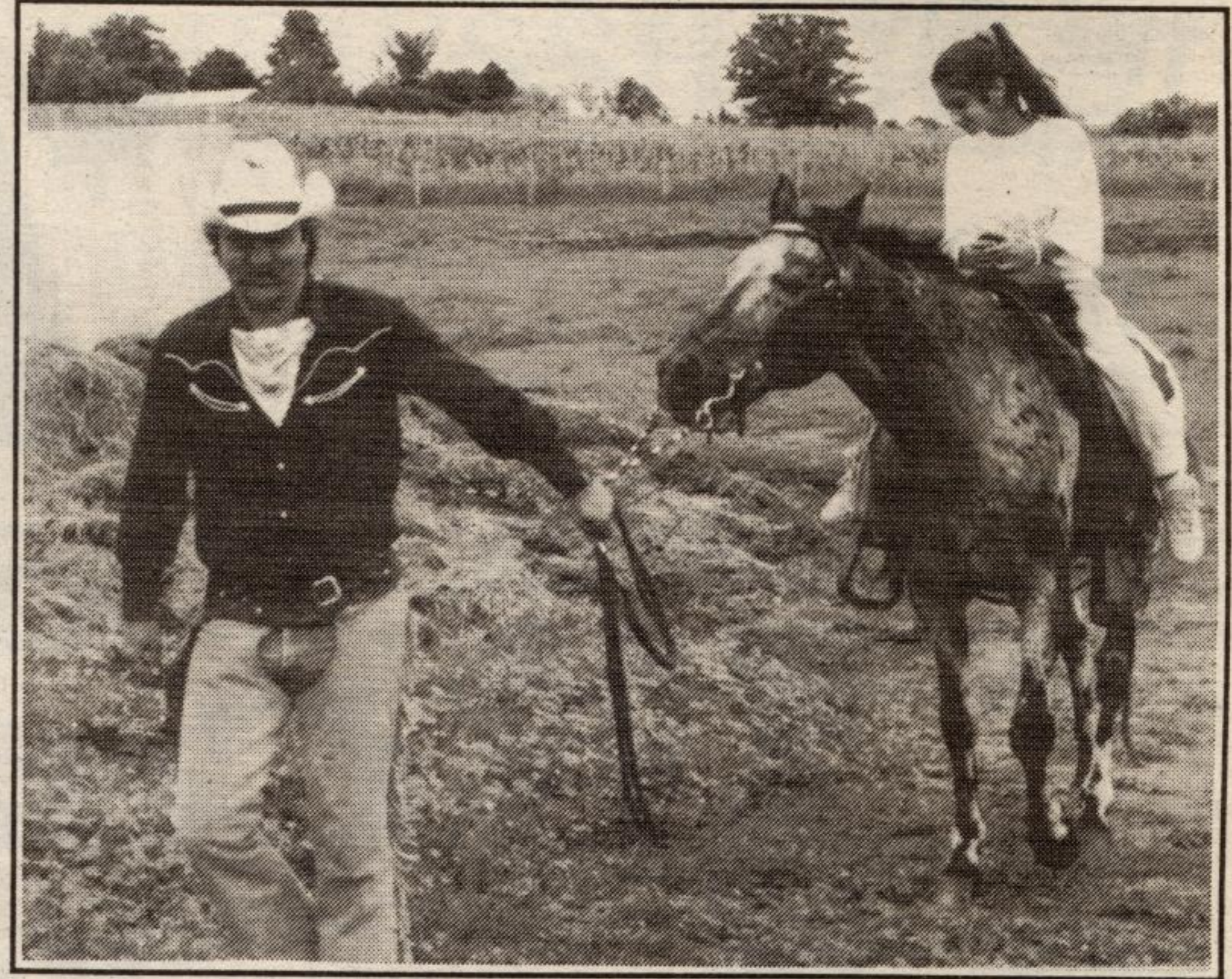
Mrs. Cowboy Jim added that the smile, the happiness and the

twinkle in the children's eyes makes the parties worthwhile. "When you're having fun and seeing others having fun the parties are far from being a chore," she said.

Hilda Burns, a parent who opted for the Westernstyle birthday party thought it was an excellent idea. "It sure beats McDonald's or a mess in my home."

Birthday girl Amy Burns said she enjoyed the fresh air and the animals. "I like it better than being stuck at home. Here I get to ride the horses and pet all kinds of animals."

Cowboy Jim said these parties appeal to both children and adults because it gives them an opportunity to experience a totally different way of life. "We had an adult who swore he wouldn't enjoy himself at our 'old farm' and that it would be 'boring'. When he got here and had the opportunity to pet his first horse, his smile and the look of wonder on his face were irreplaceable," Jim said.



Cowboy Jim breaks trail for another eager cheechako visitor at Appaloosa Springs. (Photo by Candyce Rowlandson)

The Anscorb's intend to offer year-round birthday services. They also hope to hold summer camps for the children next summer. Judy says she would like to have T-shirts made for the children saying "I had my party at Appaloosa Springs. As long as the children love and idolize Cowboy

Jim," says Judy, "we'll continue having parties. Out here everyone has a feeling of freedom and no one has to worry about breaking anything, making a mess or being quiet. The children can run and play as they please. If the children are having a good time, so are we."

Hard work is paying off

The idea started three or four years ago. Most people scoffed at it; as far as they were concerned the old town hall in the Village of Rockwood was a worthless piece of junk, an eyesore that should be demolished. But a handful of people felt that it was definitely worth saving — they formed a committee and today the results of their work are obvious to all.

The original deed for the hall dates back to March 31, 1870, when Henry Strange and his wife Elizabeth Ann, deeded the property to be known as the "Rockwood Town Hall Lot" to the Trustees of Rockwood for just \$50.00. The building itself was erected largely through donations from private citizens.

The restoration committee includes John Root, Marla Reid, Jan Osborne, Ray & Betty Death and Helen Lavery, who replaced the late Gladys Campbell. They gath-

Around Rockwood

With Debbie Tilson



ered together a number of ideas, they became involved in fundraising and they also got to work on the actual building.

Concentrating on the most visible, they tackled the front face first by taking off the old insul brick and board and batten; they installed insulation and put up new board and batten to restore the original appearance. Today, three sides have been completed and also interlocking paving stone runs from the side entrance out to the front.

Hank Demolder is responsible for the impressive lettering on the front of the hall; the new kitchen is due to a very generous donation from the Optimists Club. The door and windows on the front have already been replaced and new

units are on order for the sides. The new electrical system will accommodate a 200 amp service.

All this hard work has been entirely voluntary and the committee has been continuously delighted by the super "turn-outs" on designated "working weekends." Come September, the plan is to get in gear again; it is hoped that the funds raised from the Rubber Ducky Race and the outdoor dance at Pioneer Days will be enough to replace the old, dark panelling inside the hall with new drywall. The committee would be glad to have anyone come forward to help out. You don't need to be an expert, you just need a desire to see the Rockwood Hall look like it should.

Thursday, Aug. 20 at 10 am and again at 1.30 pm the Eramosa Community Library will have a make-and-take crafts workshop. Pre-registration and pre-payment of \$4 per child (ages 6-12) is required.

Sunday, Aug. 23 — Fun Olympics for Junior Farmers and 4H members. Registration at 10 am at the G. Leslie farm on the Sixth Line north of Hwy 24. Open to the public.

Saturday, Aug. 29, 10 - 4 pm. Rockwood Leos host a fundraising car wash at the Rockmosa Community Centre.

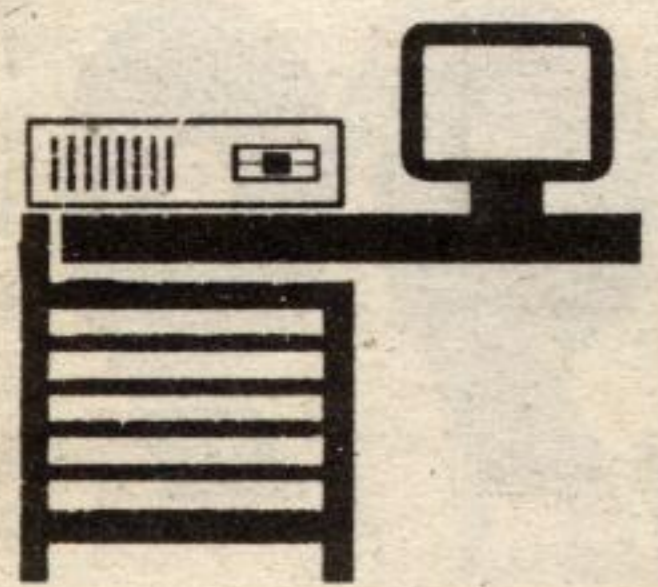
Saturday, Aug. 29, 9 am. Don't miss the annual bake sale at St. John's Parish Hall in Rockwood. Come early and get your home-cooked jams, jellies, baking and small, handcrafted items.

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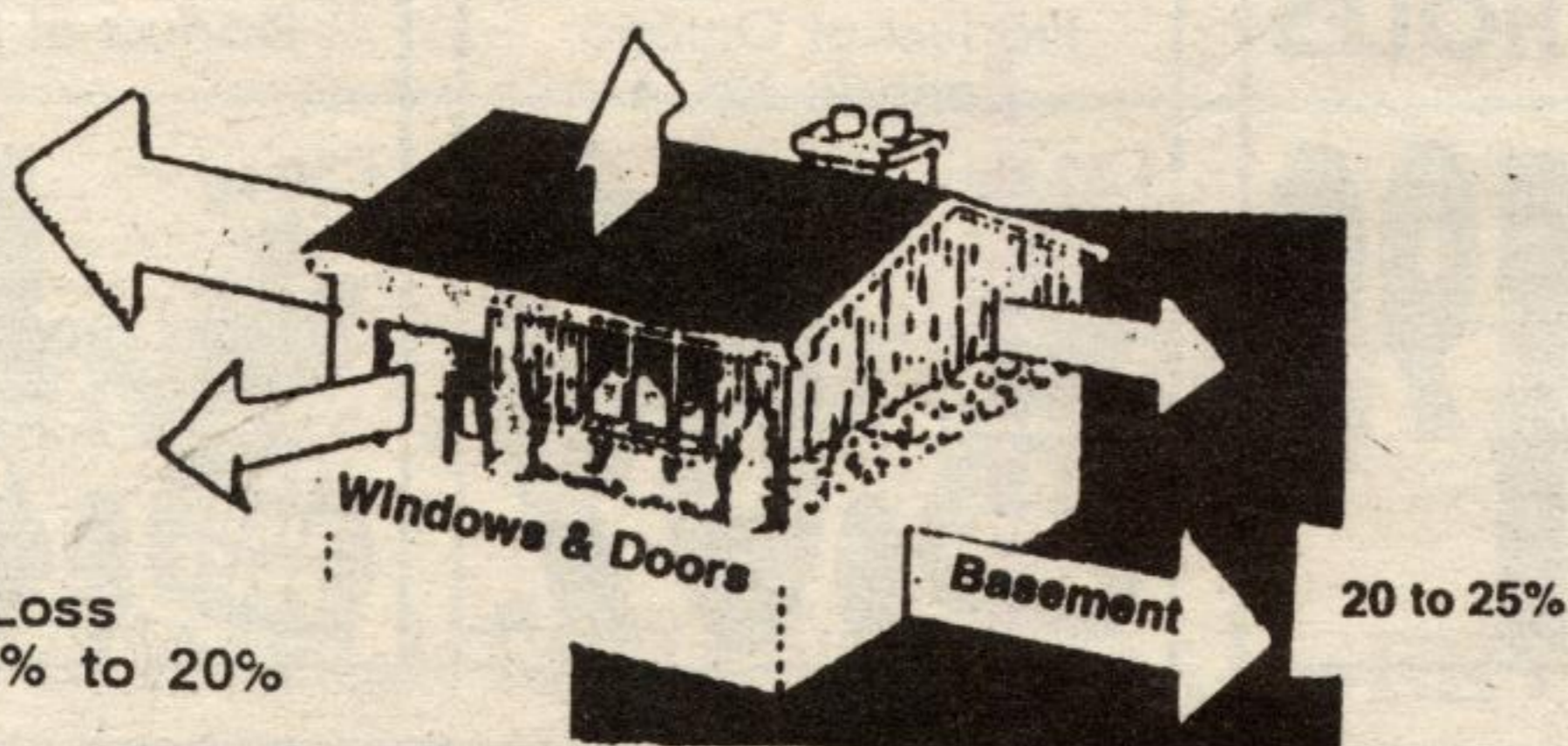
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