

Adele Harris celebrates her 80th birthday

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Rockwood Miller

Surrounded by her loving family and friends, Rockwood's Adele Harris celebrated her 80th birthday on Sunday.

The party was held at the family farm on Harris Street — on the land purchased by her great grandfather and Rockwood's founder, John Harris, in 1820.

As well-wishers offered congratulations, the spry grandmother of 10 noted that she was truly at home at the Harris Street farm.

"My roots in Eramosa run deep," Adele said as she presided over the gathering.

"I came here 51 years ago as the bride of Arthur Harris. I've raised my family here and now they are raising their families here."

The Harris clan have raised their families in Rockwood since John Harris, a Scottish seaman, purchased 50 acres of land in Eramosa for \$75 dollars.

Harris's 1855 survey of what he called Brothers Town, shows Main Street (now Harris Street) and John Street (now Highway 25) as the centre of the village.

When the Grand Trunk Railway came through in 1856 the centre of town shifted north.

Eramosa Township Councillor Leverne Harris is Adele's son and he now lives on the farm.

"The first 50 acres is where the cemetery and subdivision are now. Then John Harris bought another 100 acres and began working the land and well as teaching school and surveying," Leverne recounted.

John Harris married Jane Wetherald in 1836. She was the sister of James Wetherald who founded the Rockwood Academy, to which Harris donated three acres of land for a Quaker meeting house.

"This land is Crown Land from King George III so it's been home all my life. I grew up here, and the history is very important to me," Leverne said.

Adele married into the Harris family and moved to Rockwood in 1943. She became the salesperson for her husband's farm equipment business.

Leverne Harris marvels at his mother's life: "She sold manure spreaders and elevators and trav-



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MOM! Leverne Harris, left, and brother Carl flank mother Adele, who celebrated No. 80 on Sunday at the family farm on Harris Street. (Lori Frechette photo)

elled all over the Province while raising my two brothers and me. She did that for several years after my father passed away in 1983 and then she retired. She's put in a lot of miles."

Asked for her secret to long life, Adele Harris laughed and said she stays young by staying busy.

"I enjoy life and I enjoy meeting people. I enjoyed our business and I enjoy my family."

Phone stolen from pickup truck

An Eramosa man reported the theft of a \$500 Motorola cellular phone which had been stolen from the seat of his truck sometime Wednesday night.

The 1989 Chevy pickup was parked outside the victim's home on Concession 2 when the theft occurred.

Guelph OPP say there were no signs of forcible entry into the vehicle and are cautioning people to make sure vehicles are securely locked and valuables are left out of sight.

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The result: another business folds and more of our neighbours end up out of work or even bankrupt. If this keeps up, there will be too few services and shops in Rockwood to support each other.

The consequences of this will be many. Everybody will have to go to Guelph for their shopping. The small commercial tax base will result in higher residential taxes. Community newspapers will continue to disappear for lack of commercial support. Community groups will have a harder time publicizing their events and will likewise lose their effectiveness.

Rockwood won't cease to exist, but do we want to live in a bedroom community?

The challenge then, is to keep our dollars circulating within the township. How? A glitzy advertising campaign to buy locally? Nah, too many of us are already saturated with advertising.

One possibility suggested by the Eramosa 2020 Strategic Plan is an Eramosa Green Dollar System. Somewhat along the lines of Canadian Tire money, this com-

munity could create and control its own currency that is only redeemable within the township.

Envision this: you go to Knechtel's and pay 20 per cent of your groceries with ECUs (Eramosa Currency Units). Knechtel's then pays its employees and local producers partly again with ECUs. The latter then spend their ECUs at the Rockwood Cafe, Village Video ... With the ECUs, our economic trading goes round and round within the town-

ship. We keep our own wealth.

See GREEN, Page 20

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