



**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!** Chuck and Ken Petty are celebrating the family's 60 years in the auto repair business. Their father Garnet Petty opened shop in 1934. (Doug Harrison photo)

## Pettys celebrating 60 years in business

BY DOUG HARRISON  
The Rockwood Miller

Garages come and go but after 60 years, Petty continues to be a household name.

While the name, location and faces have changed, their commitment to their customers continues to be a priority for Chuck and Ken Petty.

Garnet Petty opened Petty's Garage in 1934 on Main Street in Rockwood. His two boys took over in 1966, and renamed the family business Petty Bros. Garage. It now sits on the corner of Main and Alma Streets.

"I don't think we've even had an argument," says Ken of their partnership. "When we were eight and nine-years-old Chuck used to beat the hell out of me, but we talk things out instead of getting in a big sweat now. Any decisions are made together. We've had a good partnership."

In 1988, KC (Ken and Chuck) Rentals, dealing in construction and lawn-care equipment, was added to the business. A few months later the gas pumps were taken out when it was decided the repair side of the business was

priority No. 1.

"When the construction trade goes down, rentals go down," says Chuck. "The recession really hasn't hurt us. Sometimes it's a little slow, but we seem to be repairing more."

Brakes, Chuck and Ken agree, are the most common repairs today. While they admit they're busier than they were 28 years ago, they quickly mention they have more help (two other full-time employees and a part-timer) and better equipment to speed things up.

It all adds up to providing quality service to their customers, something the Petty brothers picked up while learning the ropes of the business from Garnet.

"We've had a real good clientele. Word of mouth is the best advertiser," Chuck concedes, noting opening shop 28 years ago "seems like yesterday."

"But it doesn't get any easier to make a living," interjects Ken. "I think we'll be around for a while yet."

The official anniversary day will be Sept. 10. Complimentary coffee and donuts will be available.

## Fire victims rebuilding their lives

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The Rockwood Miller

With the generous help of family and friends, Don and Renee Brenner are rebuilding following a devastating fire at their Rockwood farm last Sunday.

Out of the ashes of the \$200,000 blaze will come Freedom Run Acres II, a new base for the Brenner's Standardbred training and racing operation.

"We already have a draw from the insurance company and the new plans are on my kitchen table," Brenner said in an interview on Sunday. "We hope to be back in business with a new barn by September 1."

The blaze killed one horse, valued at \$40,000 and levelled a two-storey barn and an apartment.

Brenner credits some "extraordinary" people with keeping the damages from being worse.

"I think that the people who risked their lives to save the horses are heroes. They are good people who did just what I hope I would do in the same circumstances," Brenner said.

"If it weren't for Don Thorpe none of the horses would have made it out alive."

Thorpe, who boards and trains a horse at the farm, was unloading hay on the upper floor of the barn

when the fire broke out and he quickly sounded the alarm.

"Thorpe was ready to jog his horse when all of a sudden he noticed smoke coming down from the top floor," Brenner said.

"He opened the doors and let five of my horses out of the back barn and then went to the front barn and started to get the horses out as quick as he could."

Brenner also credits neighbour Bob Ward and tenant Barry Walker for saving the horses.

"I was really pleased with what they did for me. Ward tried to get to the one horse that we lost by going through a barn wall with a tractor but it was too late," Brenner said.

"There also was a young couple who were driving past on Hwy. 7 who saw the flames and helped out. I don't know who they are, but they deserve thanks too," Brenner said.

Brenner was bailing hay on another Rockwood farm when he saw a huge plume of black smoke in the sky.

"I had a pretty good idea that it was my place when I saw where the smoke was coming from. It was an awful feeling but I've been kicked in the arse before and all you can do is carry on," Brenner said.

"It happened and if the good Lord says it's going to happen then there's nothing you can do about it. No one was hurt and we only lost one horse. It could have been a lot worse," Brenner said.

Tenant Barry Walker was not so lucky as he was not insured and lost all of his belongings in the apartment in the barn.

"After we got the horses out and the fire department was there I left. I'd couldn't bare to watch all my stuff go up in smoke and neither could my wife," Walker explained.

Walker and his wife are now living in the Brenner's basement as they try to sort out their lives.

In an interview with *The Rockwood Miller* on Monday, Rockwood Fire Chief Dave Sherratt said although the cause of the blaze has not been determined, investigators have narrowed it down to two probable causes.

"It looks like it might have been an electrical short or maybe a spark from the elevator motor," Sherratt said.

"The investigation is on-going but the fire was no fault of the Brennens. It was just one of those things, an act of nature."

## Cuties ball game a 'hit'

Special to The Rockwood Miller  
The Rockwood Town Hall Restoration Committee has expressed its thanks to everyone who attended the 'California Cuties' ball game last Sunday at Lloyd Dyer park.

The Rockwood Old-Timers provided some great competition.

We would like to thank Radio CJOY-Magic FM for coverage.

We would also like to thank our umpires, Bill and Brad Fisher, who donated their services.

Over 400 people attended and the weather cooperated.

The 'California Cuties' have promised to return next year.

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