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The pick of the crop

Tom Chudleigh receives award

By ANN KORNUA

On April 25 in Creelman Hall at the University of Guelph, renowned apple man Tom Chudleigh of Chudleigh's Farms received the Outstanding Service Award from Dr. Craig Pearson, Dean of the Ontario Agriculture Collage. Tom and his wife Carol started their pick-your-own farm thirty-five years ago on Highway 25 just north of Milton. Tom understood back then that farmers needed to offer more than just produce, and it was that that realization that pushed him into the entertainment industry.

"For years, farmers have helped with field trips at the University of Guelph and some of those farmers have gotten up and given lectures to the students," Tom said. "Andrews Scenic Acres, Chudleigh's and Stonehaven farms have all been big contributors to the education at the University of Guelph."

Tom and his family are recognized as leaders in the growing and marketing of apple products throughout North America. Their best sellers are their world-renowned apple pies, which began life in Carol's kitchen thirty years ago. "We started selling ten inch pies and would sell pieces on a serviette for seventy five cents, which was unheard of back then, since you could get a slice of pie with a meal for thirty five cents at most restaurants," Tom described. "My wife was in the kitchen baking and a worker ran in to tell her that someone wanted to buy the whole pie. My wife, concerned about losing the sales from one pie told her to say the pie would cost five dollars, and back then five dollars was a lot of money. Moments later, the girl came back in to tell my wife the person wanted two. From that moment on we knew we had something and we set to work making pies." The Chudleigh's pie is now featured in restaurants around the world, and is even a featured dessert at Disney World.

"I think it is gratifying to receive an award from your own industry. It is certainly appreciated by Carol and me. You have that nice warm feeling that what you have done has been recognized by your industry and that is always nice," Tom said.

Tom Chudleigh and his wife Carol have come a long way from their apple picking days. It all started with a pie and a few dwarf apple trees. The success of Chudleigh's Apple Farm is deeply rooted in the friendly neighbourliness that Carol and Tom show to all their guests. Tom continues to give lectures at the University of Guelph.



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The Guy's Weekend

The call came in. It was my friend Dan. "Jeff, I'm opening my cottage this weekend and I could use your help."

"Who's all going to be there?" I asked. "Howard, Darren, Fred, and Bruce."

"What all needs to be done?"

"The tarp over the screened area has to be installed..... leaves need to be raked..... ah..... firewood has to be piled."

This sounded serious. "OK, I'm in, what should I bring?"

"Lotsa beer and olives for the martinis."

How could I let Dan down? On Friday, I said a tearful goodbye to my wife, picked Howard up and headed off to the Kawarthas to help our dear friend in a time of need. There are some things in life you simply don't question. This was one of them.

Dan's plea was no laughing matter, and since he was counting on us being at the top of our game, we began to strategize the minute Howard got in the truck. "Do we get the almond stuffed olives, or the garlic stuffed olives?" We must have been clicking on all 8 cylinders, cause within seconds we decided on the almond olives. Motivated and mobilized we embarked, with military like precision, on our assault of the grocery store. Nothing was going to prevent us from rolling up to Dan's with our almond stuffed olives in hand. What? The only stuffed olives they have are with pimentos? "Alright, whatever, let's get going."

When we arrived a full check of our cargo was in order. Is the dog still in the back seat? Check. Had the ice sufficiently chilled the beer? By touch, yes, but I decided to open and drink one to ensure they were cold enough to the palate for the others. Guys do things like that for other guys. They were. We all had a beer to take the edge off of the mind-numbing 2-hour drive. Now it was time to plan the work activities of the day. That is best done with a clear head and a comfortable chair. So we made a fire and drained another beer.

In the process of mapping out the work plan and delegating the various jobs one of us, and I can't remember who, mentioned it was getting close to dinner. Without a word Dan began marinating the steaks, Darren and Fred threw the potatoes and onions in tin foil, I tended to the fire, Bruce ran over to his place to secure the wine, and of course Howard broke out the martini shaker. I swear if there were medals awarded for meal

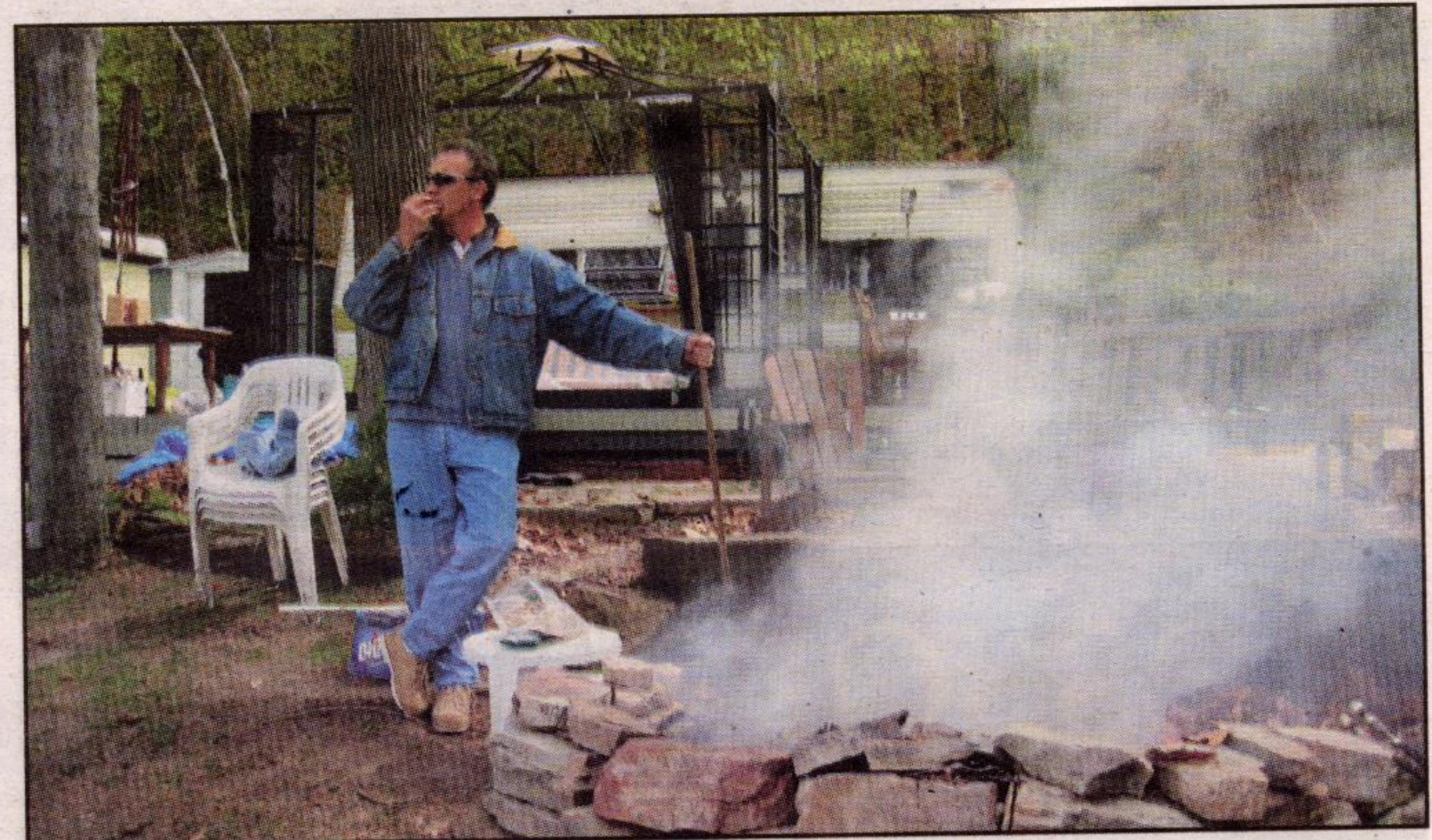
preparation our company would be the highest decorated Special Forces leisure commando unit in the army. With the rain falling, the night nearing and the words slurring, we opted to postpone all work related activities till the next day. But not before choosing our roaa bocce teams.

Saturday morning was a race for the Advil jar. And after throwing some eggs and sausages at our hangovers, it was time to get to work. I vaguely remember becoming dizzy watching Howard and Dan tossing firewood around so I slid down to the dock to sit in the rain. I made it appear that I wasn't feeling well when really I was preparing for our upcoming bocce tournament with some pre-game solitude. My partner Fred was defending park champion so the pressure fell squarely on my shoulders.

After an elaborate ceremony the night before it was determined that the other two teams consisted of Bruce and Dan, and Howard and Darren. We loaded up Dan's little red wagon with body fortifying liquids and... Game on. The object of road bocce is only slightly different from lawn or beach bocce. Instead of lobbing the balls, you must roll them down the road, carefully negotiating the ruts and swales in an effort to snuggle it up as closely to the white ball as possible. The closest ball or balls from one team each scores a point, a touchy is two points and the first of the three teams to 15 wins.

Fred and I jumped out to a commanding 11-4-1 lead and seemed in control of the title. That's when Bruce and Dan bore down and mounted an amazing comeback, somehow closing in to a 13-11-8 score with our team still narrowly in the lead. When Dan rolled the white ball into a grassy ditch, Fred declared, "that's enough of this crap" and promptly dropped his shooter right on top of whitey. All efforts to remove his ball failed and we walked away with the hardware. Now, of course afterwards all of the bitterness began trickling out of the mouths of the losers like the Peterborough floods. "Lumby's foot was over the line on the beach!" "Lumby threw out of order!" "It wasn't a sanctioned event!" To that I say, "Weep 'em and read."

In the end the tarp was installed, the leaves did get raked and the firewood was stacked. I don't know when or if I was involved, but I learned at an early age, there's no "I" in team.



Howard auditions for a job with the city

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