



PHOTO BY PETER MCCUSKER
Tomke and Peter Roelof, owners of the Wellington Maze.

Children of the Corn

Hallowe'en comes to the Wellington Maze

BY SARENA COLE

The Wellington Maze boasted live actors and lots of spooky surprises for Halloween. Visitors had more than enough to keep them occupied for an evening of fun and fright.

Tim and Jackie Morse of Rockwood visited for the first time this year and were quite impressed with the corn creation.

"It's great," said Jackie laughing. "My husband rushed through in five minutes but our kids have been in there for the last half hour."

The maze, which is located just off Jones Baseline in Guelph, is owned and operated by Albert and Tomke Roelofs and has attracted thousands of visitors over the past three years.

Open from July 31st through to October 30th the maze wound down this weekend with its annual Halloween theme. This year's adventure had twenty-four live actors working in the maze and on the grounds dressed in various scary costumes to entertain the nearly 1350 visitors who attended this weekend.

"There are so many haunted houses with just props," says Tomke Roelofs, "I want to work with real people. I want to do something different."

And different it is. Visitors enter the dark corn standing some twelve feet high. Placed throughout the maze in crypts and in the corn, wait actors prepared to scare passersby. After anywhere from five minutes to more than an hour, visitors stumble toward the exit only to be spooked by a pseudo sinkhole at the end.

"It's really a mattress buried under the ground," Roelofs says chuckling.

Whether screaming in terror or laughing in sheer delight, visitors are sure to get caught up in the thrill. The maze creators have thought of everything from "Corn Cops" who can direct lost guests towards the exit, to bonfires, the cornbox instead of a sandbox and hayrides to offer other sources of enjoyment.

The largest cornfield maze company in the world, The Maize, designed the five-acre corn maze in the shape of a T-Rex dinosaur. Founder and Owner Brett Herbst began creating the corn mazes in 1996, in Utah and has expanded the company to include nearly 200 mazes only nine years later.

The Wellington Maze, which was open during the day for select weekends during the summer, offered various activities for visitors to participate in while they were in the maze. One such activity is their passport game. Guests receive a passport card when they pay for entry and search to find six phases throughout the maze. Each phase asks a question and gives three possible answers. If you guess the correct answer, you'll be pointed in the direction to the next phase. After the sixth phase, you'll have six letters that spell out a word. Guests who dropped off their passport card at the exit were entered into the grand prize draw. The winner of this year's grand prize was Lisa Lindsay of Guelph, who won an airplane ride over the maze.

While The Wellington Maze has shutdown for the season, Roelofs says the winter is when they start thinking of their next corn creation and gearing up for the following spring. Pictures and facts about this year's maze can be found at www.thewellingtonmaze.ca

Making sense of your farm property tax bill

BY NICK KINKEL, REGIONAL INFORMATION COORDINATOR, OMFRA, SIMCOE

Paying property tax is something we do each year. Understanding your tax bill may be another matter and can bring about many different questions. Every situation tends to be unique, but each is based on a common property tax system.

Property tax bills are seen as one uniform system since the bottom-line is, how much do we owe this year? Knowing there are three distinct parts to the property tax system can help in answering your question.

1. Property Assessment Valuation

Assessment values are intended to reflect a property's value and its use. The land and farm buildings may be eligible for the farm property tax rate, which is normally set at 25 percent of the residential rate. The farm residence and one acre of land surrounding is normally taxed as part of the residential class. To test your assessment, ask yourself if you could have sold your property on January 1 of the given year for its assessed value.

Farmland values are based on farmer to farmer sales, as opposed to, for example, a farmer to developer sale. Farmland valuation considers a land class system. The higher the land class the higher the value and agricultural capability (i.e. class 1 agricultural land vs class 4).

The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) classifies and assesses all properties in Ontario. If you are concerned about your assessment or changes to your assessment contact MPAC at 1-866-296-6722.

2. Property Class

If your assessment notice from MPAC reads 'Farm Taxable', this indicates the property is eligible for the farm property class and associated tax rate; 'Residential Taxable' indicates the property is for the residential property class and associated tax rate. Other categories include: commercial, industrial, managed forest etc.

For a property to be included in the Farm Property Class Tax Program, i.e. 'Farm Taxable' category, it must be used as part of a farming operation and have a Farm Business Registration (FBR) number linked to it. According to the Farm Registration and Farm

Organizations Act, a valid farm business must gross at least \$7,000 in reported income. Farm Business Registration numbers are issued by AgriCorp. If you or the farmer renting, leasing or using your property requires an FBR number, contact AgriCorp at 1-866-327-3678.

Prior to 2000 farm property owners made yearly application to OMAFRA's Farm Property Class Tax Program. Since then a multi-year application has been used. Although this makes it more convenient, it puts the responsibility on the property owner to report any changes to the associated FBR (i.e. change in ownership, change in renter etc). To report changes or make a request for reconsideration contact OMAFRA's Farm Property Class Tax Rate Program at: 1-800-469-2285.

If there is an unreported break in the Farm Business Registration (FBR) number linked to your property the category may change from 'Farm Taxable' to 'Residential Taxable'. A break usually happens when a property is sold, transferred, or if a farmer does not renew his/her FBR. FBR numbers are renewed through AgriCorp (1-866-327-3678). The FBR renewal fee is directed to one of the general farm organizations such as the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario or National Farmers Union - Ontario.

3. Tax Rates

Tax rates (formerly known as mill rates) are set by municipal governments to pay for local services. Property class tax rates are set by municipally elected officials. The farm property tax rate is normally 25% of the residential rate. Education tax rates are set by the provincial government. Taxes are collected by and payable to your municipal government.

Tax bills are typically mailed out twice per year. Each municipal government may have different payment/reimbursement policies when dealing with changes to assessments and property tax categories. If you have questions regarding your tax bill (not MPAC notice of assessment) contact your municipal government.

Like a big hug

STORY & PHOTO BY ANN KORNUA

For three years now, Gail Spence and the quilters of Georgetown's Hobby Horse have been participating in the Run for a Cure fundraiser for breast cancer. They have been donating quilts to patients and victims from all over. Spence started her business in Glen Williams 23 years ago. When she couldn't find any good fabric places in her area she started a business, working from the farm. Spence operated out of her living room selling fabrics for quilts. The business grew as word spread of her range of fabric selections. The business now involves her two children; Dwight and Angela who run over eighty quilt supply stores across Canada.

The Cancer Quilt Marathon took place in the shop classroom during store hours to create cozy quilts as gifts for people undergoing cancer treatment. The Hobby Horse also had a walking team in the CIBC Run or Walk for a Cure to help breast cancer victims and research for the future. Customers were pleased to know that with every limited edition Pink Rotary Cutter, fifty cents was donated to the National Breast Cancer Foundation. "We worked Wednesday to Sunday for the last six weeks to create the quilts," Spence explained. "Quilts are so nice and giving one is a nice way to show that someone cares. It has always been one of our focuses to give to friends and people undergoing treatment."

They send quilts to any cancer patient in the



Volunteer quilters along with Hobby Horse owner Gail Spence display one of the quilts that they have been hard at work making to give to cancer patients. From left are volunteers Karen Free, Beverly Schafer, Owner Gail Spence, and Betty Barber.

area. Spence understands how important support is for patients undergoing treatment for Breast Cancer.

She explains. "These are not heirloom quilts, but we just want that person to be warm because wrapping one around you is like a big hug."

It maybe a little thing, but it makes a big difference to the people who receive them. Spence and her team are always looking for volunteers to help put together these lovely quilts and urges anyone with the heart and spare time to contact her at the store and find out how they can help.

For more information call 905-877-9292 or go online at www.thehobbyhorse.on.ca.



Taylor Nursery

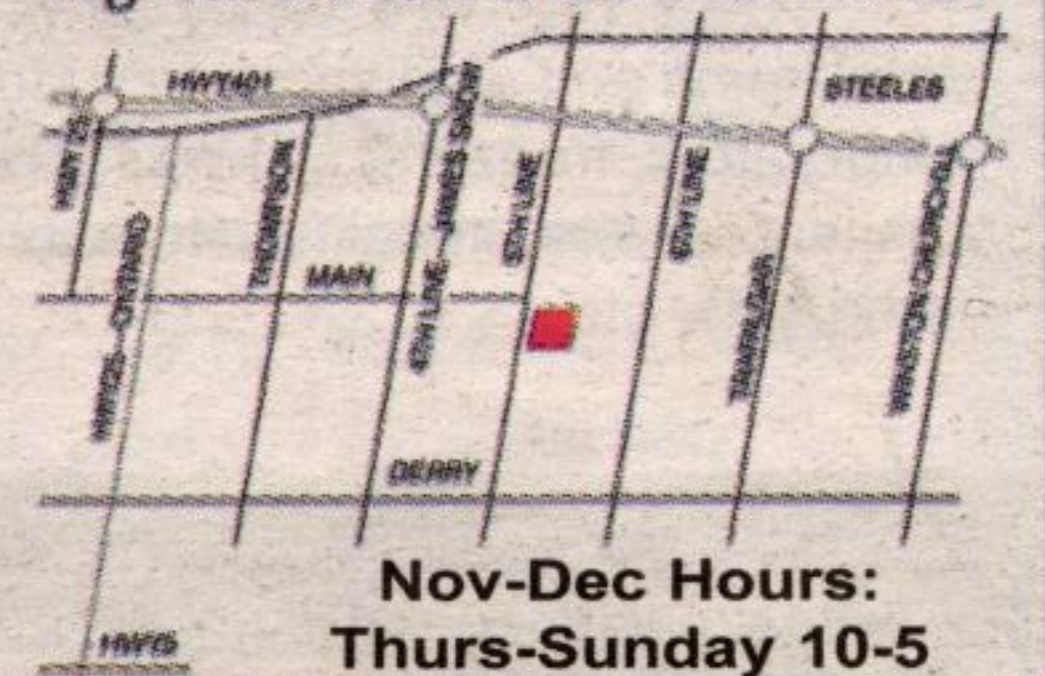
Your Town and Country Gardening
—and Christmas!—Centre

Our gift shop is filled with unique and unusual ideas for home & garden, including fountains & garden antiques, statuary & collectibles, country crafts, pottery & urns, Christmas décor & much, much more!

Fresh Christmas greens,
wreaths, swags
& Kriss Kringle™ trees
(mid-late November)

905-876-4100

7429 Fifth Line, Milton
Right at the east end of Main Street



Nov-Dec Hours:
Thurs-Sunday 10-5