

CASTOR REVIEW

Vol. 2, No. 5

One Canada

Friday, Feb. 9, 1979

HEY RUSSELL, YOU'RE 100!



Carnival cooking with a Queen's touch

Those weren't just ordinary pancakes that were served up at a Greely carnival breakfast earlier this month. The flapjacks were flipped with regal flair by none other than Greely carnival queen Valerie St. Jean, 16 whose smile indicates she didn't mind

taking over the spatula from Osgoode firefighter John Smiley. The firefighter's presence had nothing to do with Valerie's handling of the stove. (Photo by Rowsell)

Province says —

Osgoode old too rich for Home

Osgoode Township senior citizens are being penalized by the provincial housing ministry for their years of frugality, Reeve Albert Bouwers contends.

Council has been trying unsuccessfully during the past four years to approve senior citizen accommodation for the township, the reeve said. But, Osgoode seniors have one major fault, they've salted away too much money during their years of labor.

Although surveys conducted by council have shown 120 township residents interested in apartment style accommodation, the ministry maintains only nine of them are needy enough, the reeve explained.

He claims that it's unfair to hold the thrift of senior residents against them, pointing out that it's difficult for older people to maintain the large homes many of them now live in.

Council hasn't given up the cause and Reeve Bouwers planned last week to go over the situation again with ministry officials in Toronto.

Ideally, he would like to see senior apartment units in Metcalfe and Osgoode Village. Each community could easily find takers for as many as 30 units, but he would be satisfied with 15 at each location.

The reeve doesn't see why Osgoode residents would be deprived while construction of 30 units is going ahead this spring in Russell Village.

"I guess we would have been in a better position to get apart-

ments had our seniors blown all their savings," he noted wryly.

If the province can't be persuaded to reconsider, perhaps an agreement can be reached with a private developer for the

construction of some apartments with partly subsidized rent for those in need, he said.

He added that informal discussions have already taken place with at least one developer.

Spring start for Registry addition

Construction of a \$266,000 addition to the Russell Registry office is expected to begin this spring, Prescott-Russell MLA Albert Belanger has informed the Castor Review.

The one-storey extension to the rear of the historic building was not expected to be provided until 1980. But cramped conditions caused registrar Wendell Stanley to press for the earlier start.

Once completed, the addition will double space now available to Mr. Stanley and his staff of five employees. Major interior renovations will be undertaken in the existing building.

Lorne Henderson, Minister of Government Services, has told Mr. Belanger that the work is to be tendered shortly.

The project had been delayed while it was revised to reduce the original anticipated cost.

Mr. Stanley still remains a little skeptical: "I won't believe it till I see it," he stated. He noted that there are "still a few wrinkles to clean up" before tenders can be called.

Commenting on the suggestion

a new building be constructed to accommodate the registry office and the existing building be left unaltered for heritage considerations, Mr. Stanley said he was in full agreement.

However, he added, he has always been concerned that if the office was removed from the present site, it might be transferred right out of Russell Village where it has operated for at least a century.

In the past, both Casselman and Rockland have indicated they would like to have the office.

There has also been agitation from some quarters to close the office and move the files downtown to the Ottawa-Carleton office. But this talk appears to have subsided, the registrar added.

Mr. Stanley ruled out the suggestion from Rev. James Paul that the Russell Baptist Church, now for sale, be used as an annex to the registry office for storing records.

"The church isn't fire-proof and our documents are priceless," he noted.

... for Pete's sake

Russell Village is about to have its 100th birthday, apparently without any notice.

According to a booklet supplied to the Castor Review by resident historian Edgar Loucks, the village was named Russell in 1880. That will be 100 years, eleven months from now and so far the Review has heard of no plans to celebrate the village centennial.

The booklet, a souvenir program marking Russell Village fire department's sponsorship of the 45th annual Eastern Ontario Fire Fighters Association convention in 1957, says that, in 1880, Hon. Peter Russell, lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada, by an order-in-council, changed the village name to Russell in what seemed to be the result of his own melagomania. The county and the township were already named after him and he wanted the theme carried through. For whatever reason, changed it was. Until then, it had been called Duncanville, after John Duncan, one of the first settlers.

So on the eve of the village's 100th anniversary, the traditional "big birthday" for communities throughout North America, Russell seems to have forgotten the typical politician who deemed it worthy of bearing his name for eternity.

Feedback to the Castor Review strongly suggests that, if the booklet is correct and no celebrations are planned, then something in honor of the Hon. Peter should be initiated to prevent the community from becoming known as one that forgot its centennial.



Sidewalk Talk

By Mark Van Dusen

Ol' "Porky" Pumper, Our Lost Heirloom

The collector's program, which was loaned to the Castor Review by Russell resident Edgar Loucks and was used as a basis for the surprising story at the top of this page, contains a photograph on the back cover of the old "porcupine" pumper that served Russell Fire Department (and the village) for 40 years.

According to the booklet, the coal-fired boiler was powered by a turbine engine that delivered 25 horse-power with 40 pounds per square inch of pressure and could pump 500 gallons of water per minute. Built about 1885, it was purchased by Ottawa Fire Department in 1890 then by Russell in 1916 where it remained until 1955.

The old pumper, which had helped fight a fire between Ottawa and Hull in 1900 and which did its job as a safeguard against a repeat of the fire that destroyed a large part of Russell's business section in 1915, was displayed until recently in front of the Town and Country Motel on Carling Avenue. Its whereabouts at the moment are not known but it would sure be nice to have it on permanent display in Russell.

From Norman Walsh, of Russell, a nostalgic magazine look at how our farming forefathers did it in the first half of this century. This rear view is contained in Norman's collection of popular agricultural magazines which were once widely circulated in rural Canada. Perhaps chief among these was the Canadian Countryman which at one time had the largest weekly magazine circulation in the country. Norman's collection of Countryman, which covers the period 1920-34, portrays a farming industry that, aside from developments in technology, generally resembled today's: ever indispensable, often uncertain but ultimately rewarding.

Keeping in mind that the cost-of-living was much lower, a 35-acre farm with house and barn, running stream, five miles from the city was advertised for sale at \$11,000 in 1920. The Toronto Stock Market top price for steers in the 1,000 - 1,200 pound class was at a healthy \$13.25 per hundredweight the same year but had slumped to a miserable \$5.25 in the wake of the depression. The same with hay (Timothy, no. 1, new) which plummeted from \$32 per ton to \$13 over the same period.

The horse was still the commanding force as evidenced by such articles as How I Make Big Money Out Of Ornerly Horses, History of the Clydesdales and How to Keep the Farm Team Fit. The farm wife, too, had her place. In the pages of the Countryman, under the heading, The Countrywoman at Home, she showed how to concoct such things as hot school lunches (women's libbers seethe). Humor was simple (Wife: "Why do you go on the balcony when I sing? Don't you like to hear me?" Husband: "It isn't that. I want the neighbours to see that I'm not beating my wife") and the ideals of farming were uncomplicated as outlined in a letter from a young farmer: "What lover of nature would not love the farm with broad green acres and its beauty and freshness everywhere."

