

PARADISE

"Do you think that you could ever get used to living in downtown Toronto again?" I asked Valerie several weeks ago as we drove toward the city. Well there was no answer to the question at that time but I knew that it would come up again in our conversation.

We were on our way to visit the Royal Winter Fair as we had done last year at this time. Eastern Ontario was operating a booth again this year and we had been invited to the opening.

I had not attended the Royal for a number of years until last year. When daughter Ann was active with horses we did visit it although I found it much more interesting to attend the many local horse shows in which she competed. Also I had a friend who boarded pregnant mares from the Race Track and he and I often visited the show, particularly to see the high jump championships but it was never at the top of my must see list.

The booth is sponsored by the 15 Community Futures Development Corporations in eastern Ontario and we, at Prince Edward Lennox and Addington {PELA} CFDC were again, through our staff and local businesses, very active.

Last year we had not had any products to sell on the site and if you wanted to taste local wines and beers you had to go over to the LCBO site. This year, after much negotiating we had won the right to sell our products and tastes of our wines.

It was very different this year. The official opening which Valerie and I were attending was on Saturday morning. We were staying at the Sheraton (across from the City Hall) and as our cab meandered its way towards Exhibition grounds traffic was extremely heavy. Inside, the hall was crowded with adults, babies and children visiting the various booths and ours was jammed.

Immediately Valerie's "urge to shop" which she had exercised the previous day at IKEA and later at the Eaton Cen-

tre, re-awakened.

We wandered through the many booths from all over Ontario and some presents were purchased and goods sampled but of major interest was our own booth with familiar County merchants offering their goods for everyone to sample and buy.

These suppliers included, Copper Kettle Chocolate, County Crackers, Topsy Farms, Honey Pie Hives and Herbs, B. Hogan Apiaries, The Waring House, Calypso Moon Alpacas, PEC Lavender, Fosterholm Farms and Black River Cheese. Fifth Town Cheese was also there and won top prize in the Royal's cheese competition.

As an aside, Valerie and I have as much as possible, bought from local suppliers and we were most gratified to see that County suppliers were second to none at the Fair.

Just in case you think that's it, let me mention our wines. There were a total of 13 wineries in the wine section of our booth. We, of course had been invited to the opening and sampling of the wines which included a vast array of samples from other suppliers both from the County and elsewhere in Eastern Ontario. Of particular interest is, of the eight (8) awards given out at the Fair for wines five (5) were awarded to the County. All in all a most successful endeavor and from comments we have heard many more suppliers want to participate next year.

As we left for home on Sunday we decided to drive through our old neighborhood in the Beach along Queen Street. It has changed of course since we left. The race track is now apartment buildings and condos but the main features of the area are pretty much the same. Where we walked the dog every morning, the board walk, the Park and of course the Beach itself hasn't changed very much nor really has the stretch of Kingston Road out to its junction with 401 at West Hill.

As we entered the County Valerie remembered my earlier unanswered question about living in the city again, even though neither one of us has any such intention. "Wherever you live you tend to live in a small community even if it is located in a huge city. Our community in the County is indeed small but it has so many advantages. Could I live again in the City? Probably, but thankfully the City will remain a place to visit and the County will remain our place to live" she said.

- John A. Jackson

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