

George Boynton's fond reminisces

By BRUCE STAPLEY
He sits at the kitchen table of his Ballantrae home, puffing contentedly on his pipe and wading through 80-year-old copies of the Farmers' Advocate and Farmers' Magazine.
There's a built-in chuckle to his speech, and he can't tell a story of days gone by that doesn't branch out into two or three more tales.
He's George Boynton, a 78-year-old retired farmer who's content to stay home, hook rugs, spin yarns, and take off every now and again to such foreign destinations as Alaska, Holland or Hawaii.
"I hook rugs, that's all I do," he'll tell you, pointing to the inscription on his hat hanging on the wall. It reads: "Retired, no address, no phone. Too old to steal, too healthy to beg, too lazy to work. No business, no money."

But it wasn't always that way for the personable gentleman with the farming background.
Born in the old house with the white picket fence that still stands on the site of the Richmond Hill Fairgrounds, he farmed in Vaughan for 10 years before taking over a 150-acre farm in Gormley for 30 years.
Lifetime farmer
Although a dairy farmer, he'll tell you: "If your name was Boynton, you had to have pigs." So he always raised a few 'mortgage lifters' as they were referred to, because of how they always helped him cover his mortgage cheque.
As a junior farmer in the 1930s, he was often asked to judge livestock at the Canadian National Exhibition, a privilege he remembers once having paid \$5 for. But he also recalls receiving a beautiful watch for his services.

"Farming has changed so much," he says. "I remember when a farmhand was paid \$70 a month, plus room and board and laundry. Today? who knows."
George goes on to tell anecdote after anecdote of his years on the farm, and of his still undying respect for such Stouffville area residents as George Timbers, Cliff Aiken and Claire McGuiken.
And he distinctly remembers skating and tobogganing in Richmond Hill as a young boy.
School board trustee
He recalls sitting on the school board of Lloyd's School on the Bethesda Sideroad just west of Woodbine, for 13 years, "way back when."
"We added two rooms onto the school in the 1940s," he says. "My neighbor built two stone walls and they're still there today."

However, they ran afoul of the Town bylaws, and the new addition went seven feet further towards the road than legally permissible.
"We just convinced the Reeve, George Richardson, to make it right for us," he chuckles.
George lost his first wife, Ruby, in 1973. Six years later, he married Lorraine, his present wife, who is originally from Gormley.
"I didn't know for sure whether I should marry Lorraine," he smiles. "So one day I pointed my finger towards the sky and asked if I should. This little voice said 'go ahead.' It might have been an airplane, I don't know, but it was good enough for me."
They were married at Stouffville United Church. A lifetime parishioner of Victoria Square Church, he was recently honored at Headford Church, just west of

Victoria Square, for his service.
Never a dull moment
And as he sits telling his stories about 'barbwire' collectors, pig farmers, and his international travels, his wife Lorraine stands watching him, an amused grin on her face.
"There's never a dull moment with George Boynton," she admits.
But there is a serious side to the man, a part that's disturbed by much of what he see around him today.
"When I see the starvation and sadness on the TV news, I'm glad I'm on the way out," he says. "I think it's a hard time to be bringing up a family."
He also sees the commercialization of Christmas as an unfortunate trend.
"When I looked under our

Christmas tree this year, I thought Eaton's and Simpson's had both moved in."
He recalls the simple Christmases of his youth. "If I received an apple and a candy cane, I was happy."
George has two sons and three grandchildren. He hooks rugs for his friends and relatives, and is so busy it took a month until he found time to grant an interview for this story.
He's a man who gives the impression of always having been in control of his own destiny. He laughingly points to the plaque on the kitchen wall that reads: "I'm the boss in this house and I have my wife's permission to say so."
For George Boynton, retired farmer, humorist and philosopher, one senses he doesn't really need permission to do anything.

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