

An Argument for Country Living

By Kimberlee Pearce

At first glance, city life appears to be more up-beat, fast-paced and captivating than country living. Chic, sophisticated city dwellers would scoff at the suggestion that country bumpkins lead more "happening" lives than do they.

"Yeah, right! What could possibly go on in the country? The men bale hay, the women bake muffins, and the kids clean stalls. Yessiree, life in the boondocks sounds really fun!"

My family held these expectations when we moved to a farm in Goodwood last spring. (Read Goodwood, a town where the entire populace resides in Rural Route One, where Main St. consists of but a gas station and a general store, where night out with the boys translates to haggling for semen straws at the local Black Angus auction). Need-

less to say, we were in for a pleasant surprise.

Our new lifestyle began on day three, when we received an abrupt visit from a neighboring farmer. The suave, attractive, blue-eyed Dan Barkey, who lives at Toad Hall, who speaks in a drawl incoherent to urbanites, all, auctioneer and horsedealer, savant, known to hundreds simply as "Farmer Dan" was here to speak to us.

"So, whey, y' all comin' frum?" he asked. "Whet, are yuz plannin' tuh doo with all this here fahmland? My father revealed his plan to cultivate 20 acres of hay - enough to feed the cows for the winter. (We had ordered two Scottish highland cattle, which were due to arrive from Vancouver Island at any time).

"Whet!? Yuh can't doo thet! This here's the best darn drazin' pasture

in Nawth' Americah! Ah, I'll tell yuh whet." Later that week, Dan delivered 35 horses to our place. The deal? He's entitled to leave his animals to graze on our land. In return, he supplies our cows with food for the winter.

At seven in the morning on a hazy day early in July, there was a knock on the door. As our house is set back a quarter mile from the road, it is unusual for us to have unexpected guests drop by. My mother (dressed in her unsightly, apres-shower garb of bathrobe and a towel) took the call. She was greeted by a strange bug-eyed man who carried champagne and a picnic basket.

"Good morning, madam," he chirped. "Would you care to join me for a champagne breakfast?" Taken aback, my mother responded shrilly,

Summer Fiction CONTEST 1991



"Who the hell are you?"

"Oh, pardon me!", the insect-like gentleman replied. "I'm from Air-Borne. I just landed in front of your house. On the front lawn, sat a giant jack-o-lantern hot air balloon, from which a spritely young couple eagerly beckoned my mother to, indeed, join them in their festivities. Hot air balloons, it seems, are cumbersome, awkward entities, their landing, while impossible to manoeuvre with any degree of accuracy, is inevitable. And this one had invariably landed in our yard at the time of morning, when my parents are rushing to get ready for work. Accordingly, Mum declined

the insect's kind offer, and she and my father hastily bid the triad good eating, and good-morn and went to work, leaving them to munch and sip at their leisure.

One, cold, bitter, December evening, my sister, Samantha was summoned from her bed by our Afghan hound, Sundri, whose urgent necessity was to answer the call of nature. Samantha let Sundri out and waited patiently for her to pee and return. That Sundri exercised the former right is undoubtful, the latter, negligible.

She began to bark at something in the yard, and wouldn't respond to Sam's demands to get her "tail end back" into the house, this instant! The threat of being left out to die of exposure is one which Sundri habitually avoids at all costs.

However, she continued to howl incessantly.

Sam continued to stand in the doorway, (scantily clad in a camisole and bikini underwear), and to holler at Sundri.

But then she discovered the cause of Sundri's concern, and froze. Just feet away, staring back at her from behind the pine tree was a man.

Shocked, Sam screamed, slammed the door shut and bolted downstairs to my parents' room shrieking hysterically.

"Dad! There's someone out there!"

My father, startled awake, leapt out of bed and into his clothes. He ran upstairs like a shot and grabbed the closest weapon at hand, a sawed-off hockey stick. Thus armed, he fumbled his way into the night, clambered into his four-wheel drive truck and (aided by his plug in high power searchlight) began to comb and scan the countryside about our dwelling.

The police showed up soon thereafter (having been notified by my mother) and together with my father retraced in the snow the path that the prowler had taken through the woods.

After a search for the culprit turned up short, and convinced by the authorities that our intruder had probably been scared off for the night, my family, including Sundri, went back to bed. But we've been wary of undressing near our windows ever since.

The preceding incidents are a mere sampling of the many exciting events which have befallen us since we gave up city life to become rural folk. I haven't even touched upon some of the more bizarre activities considered mundane to us (now!) but regarded as remarkable by those hapless souls who remain, as yet, uninitiated into the "know" of farm life, those sophisticated city slickers.

Show me a Torontonion who wakes in the night to find a wolf growling at him from outside his bedroom window, who rises in the morning and goes out to his Mr. Turtle Pool to discover that his beloved pet fly-eating Muscovy ducks have been devoured by foxes ("Well, ah, figured thet wuz bound tuh happen!" exclaimed Dan, his blue eyes sparkling), who has worm-pickers pay him thousands of dollars per annum for the privilege of harvesting night crawlers in his backyard, whose grass is cut and fertilized free of charge by Texas longhorns and appaloosas, and I'll show you a town where the men

WORK WITH US TO SITE A NEW LANDFILL

The Interim Waste Authority Ltd. (IWA), an agency of the provincial government, has been formed to undertake three concurrent site searches in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) - one in Peel Region, one for Metro/York Regions, and one in Durham Region. Public open houses were recently conducted in each region to inform these communities about the search for new landfill sites.

Now is the time for you to work with the IWA, to assess what issues are important to your community, and to incorporate your concerns and criteria into the selection of the optimum landfill site for Durham Region. To reach these goals, public workshops have been planned in your area.

In order to receive vital background information prior to the workshops listed below, please pre-register. Return the coupon below or call the toll free number indicated.

Workshops

1. Tuesday, September 17
6:30-9:45 PM

2. Thursday, September 19
6:30-9:45 PM

3. Saturday, September 21
8:45 AM - 3:45 PM

Yes, I want to participate in finding a new landfill site!

I would like to register for the following workshop(s):

1 2 3

I would like more information

Put my name on your mailing list

I would like to correspond with you in French English

Pour renseignements en français, composer 1-800-661-9294

Name _____

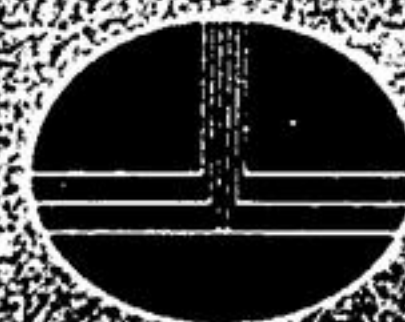
Address _____

Postal Code _____

Telephone _____

Complete and mail coupon to:

Ms. Karla Livsey
Durham Site Search
Public Information Office
47 Sheppard Ave. East
P.O. Box 1850, Station A
Willowdale, Ont. M2N 6M5
Phone: 1-800-661-9294
Fax: (416) 229-4692



Interim Waste Authority Limited
Office provisoire de sélection de lieux
d'élimination des déchets Life