

Cookshire Fair



THE
RECORD

Supplement
August 20, 2015

President stresses importance of learning how food is produced

By Claudia Villemaire

Robert Addiss lives on the edge — the edge, that is, of country living, not far from town but not quite in farming country, although it's not far away.

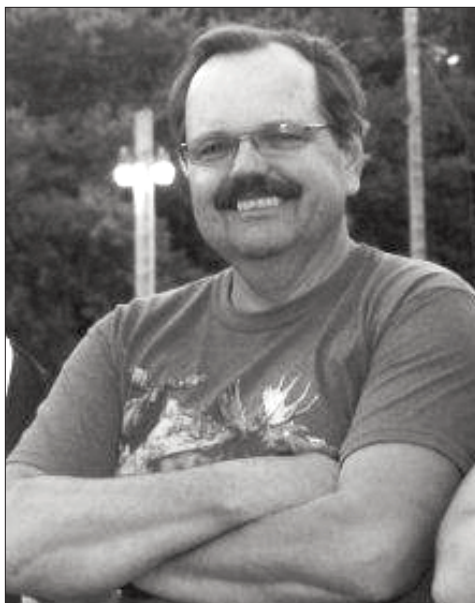
"I grew up on my grandparents' and aunt and uncle's farm near Bury and the memories I have of those days are precious and keep the longing for a return to the farm a continuous dream," Addiss said during a phone interview last Saturday.

The nearest and, according to Addiss, the best alternative in his life has been participating through nearly a quarter-century, first as a volunteer, then a director and now in recent years, as president of the Cookshire Agriculture Society. "Going to the fair was an important date for everyone and I remember clearly those days, tagging along with my grandparents and always excited and amazed. Probably that's when the seed of love for the fair began to sprout because this event has grown in importance through the years."

Remembering those days when the old grandstand would be filled with folks watching horses and cattle on parade and even seeing oxen pulling in competition, the dedicated president talks about the changes he's seen, the dwindling interest by urban folks, and he stresses the importance of making sure interesting information about food sources and production is an integral part of a county fair program.

"Farm folk already know about food production. I remember my grandmother and aunt with a huge potato field and vegetable garden. There would be a hum of activity in the kitchen as vegetables were canned and stacked in the huge canning kettle to sit in boiling water for what seemed to me hours. They made jam and jelly and wonderful pickles. There would be piglets growing to market weight in the barn, gobbling up a diet of milk and corn meal and what a great taste during the winter cold when a roast of pork was on the menu."

Addiss and the directors have been contemplating how more information could be part of the fair's program. As a



CLAUDIS VILLEMAIRE

President Robert Addiss.

result, this year a farmers market will set up shop on Sunday at the fair. The organizers of the Saturday market in Lennoxville have invited their usual vendors to bring their produce to the fair.

"It's a step towards more information if our public can see and taste farm and garden produce before the food industry puts it through their systems."

But, as with any county fair, the Cookshire event mixes plenty of fun with the serious side. There's music every afternoon and Friday and Saturday evening. Tractor pulling with both farm and modified machines is scheduled Friday evening and of course, the traditional horse pull on Sunday.

"This year, we're bringing the Bingo back to the McAuley Center but we've added music with a karaoke with Nelson Tincarre, and the opportunity for local talent to step up and show off a bit. "We're not allowed to award money prizes, but the community support has been quite generous with gift certificates and prizes."

"We expect four or five 4H Clubs this year, probably 40 or 50 young people." The program includes a judging competition on Thursday, conformation and showmanship classes start early Friday with the Parade of Champions scheduled for 4 p.m.

"You know, I'm

amazed at the response from exhibitors this year. Our heavy horse barns are totally filled and I had to turn some away; dairy and beef barns will be filled with Holsteins, Ayrshires, Shorthorn, Black Angus and Herefords; rabbit facilities had to be expanded; and the poultry exhibits will extend outside their enclosure," the president said. "We know we'll have to improve the small animals department with the increasing interest in this department. For quite a few years, we were having difficulty persuading exhibitors to take part, but that's not the case anymore."

With current emphasis on protecting the environment, Addiss commented that the public seemed more aware and were making the short stroll to a garbage container rather than simply dropping it on the ground or pitching it out a vehicle window.

"We do have a few recycle containers, but that's where we run into trouble as people tend to put all their garbage in whatever bin is handy, making it necessary to sort the waste — not always a pleasant task."

Asked if he thought a county fair still had the importance in the community it once had, he replied, "I firmly believe in the importance of a county fair. Bringing more and more urban people in to see the living source of their food, chatting with producers and exhibitors, and beginning to understand the event is not just a bunch of people taking their animals for a walk. A county fair puts qual-

ity in the spotlight from the best cow to the best potato. It gives a producer a chance not only to show off the results of careful herd sire selection or searching for the best seed. It is also a window on agriculture and the more the consumer knows about food production, the better."

Another first this year is a cattle auction on Saturday. And, to lighten the mood and make people forget they've spent their allowance, Slightly Haggard Band will play their best both Friday and Saturday evening in the McAuley Center.

The Rainbow County Cloggers, (the president is one of the early cloggers which began 23 years ago), will be presented with new patterns on the Cookshire Fair stage on Sunday afternoon. Also on Sunday, four-legged friends will parade in front of the grandstand in the annual costume class, and of course, the traditional Cattle and Horse Parade starts at 2 p.m.

"All we need now is decent weather," the president said, "not another day like last year's Sunday. But first and foremost, rain or shine, there have been lots of folks who helped get us ready, sponsors, and a wonderful board of directors, turning up to help whenever they could. Many thanks go to one and all."

Admission is \$12 Friday through Sunday. Thursday, with the midway starting up at 5 p.m., admission is \$5. Children 4 years old and under — free. A weekend pass is \$30. All attractions are included and parking is free.



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A little history on the way to the fair

By Claudia Villemaire

Highways leading to Cookshire could lead one travelling to the Cookshire (Compton County) Fair, if an early start means there's time for a bit of exploring. Just about any side road could lead to a memorable tour of this historic area — perhaps an hour or two at the Johnville Bog and Preserve where wildlife, especially early in the day, abounds and delights.

Or perhaps a right turn at the sign for Eaton Corner could tempt the early arriver with a tour of the Eaton Corner Museum, a well-panned step into the past with displays and documentation describing the black powder mill or simply an appreciation of lifestyles in this early village with women's and men's fashions, home furnishings and documentation proving Cookshire is the oldest settlement in the Eastern Townships.

Then there's always the John Cook covered bridge where initials carved into the sturdy timbers and rafters reveal the secrets of young lovers who found shelter in this safe haven during intemperate weather or simply stopping for a bit of lovin' on a leisurely stroll. Bassin Road opens onto a vista of fertile fields and forests that gently rise to the distant Beauce region and once in awhile gives a glimpse of the mountainous terrain across the border in the US.

But if there's no time to wander very far, a slow turn around the town of Cookshire is somewhat of an adventure on its own. Homes and businesses perched on a fairly steep hillside flow down to what was once the all-important railway line. Its importance a century ago played a major role in the development of the area. Timber was the principal resource and logging, a winter occupation that took local farmers away from their homestead for the winter season, cutting and 'teaming' the virgin hardwood logs that would be shipped across Canada and beyond. There are still old-timers who remember their grandfathers' tales of transporting loads of logs down mountain slopes, endangering life and limb of man and beast, always in a hurry to get to the 'yard' where logs were stockpiled and eventually loaded on the steam-powered trains. Or maybe there were orders for logs at one of the many sawmills in the area where boards and beams were produced as settlers rebuilt their first cabins and constructed

larger, more comfortable homes. They'll tell you about the dangers their forefathers faced and the determination of the women and families left at home. A few cows, horses, sheep, and poultry, spinning, weaving, preserving every type of vegetable or fruit possible and caring for several children were all in a day's work.

Even if there's no time to wander and explore, knowing a bit of history about this fair, now in its 170th year could prove quite interesting. At one time, just about the only large animals exhibited here were either dual purpose short-horns or heavy workhorses. Sheep and poultry turned up in smaller numbers, and even about 50 years ago, before the highway we travel today was built, animals were housed in open sheds built around the perimeter of the fairgrounds. The racetrack was operational and harness races were the highpoint for many years. There were ox pulls 40 years ago as well, attracting hundreds of spectators, many of whom actually still used oxen on their farms. Modern trends have resulted in stables for horses and cattle where comfort and safety are priorities. A new grandstand stands where the historic old one once stood, there's an entertainment center, and a special ring near the highway for the light horse show. But in spite of the changes, which are always inevitable when weather and age take their toll, the spirit of a country fair still flows. Beef and dairy animals fill the barns, heavy horses in their modern digs just at the rear of the main building enjoy the large stalls and extra wide walkways, a widened area in front of the grandstand gives heavy horses and truck and tractor pulls plenty of room. Local 4H Club members run their dairy booth just under one end of the grandstand and the local chapter of the Quebec Farmers Association still serve up home grown beef burgers, donuts and sandwiches. There are goodies on sale on the second floor of the Main Building where local crafts people and artisans and gardening folk display their best, and a children's department has grown large enough to fill one end of the building.

Cookshire Fair is still a typical county fair where the young might watch a dairy cow being milked or beef animals getting a final wash and clipping just before joining other competitors in the show ring. Perhaps someone will put on a sheep shearing display or the thunder



and jangle of a heavy team crossing the fairgrounds towards the show ring will draw people to the fence to watch as horses, weighing sometimes close to a ton apiece, prance past.

There's country music most every afternoon and evening for dancing, home-

cooked meals in the dining room, and refreshments in the McAuley Center for anyone determined to celebrate another fair. There's something for all tastes and ages at this fair, with that country flavour now a rare and precious attribute, still intact.

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THURSDAY AUGUST 20, 2015

- 4:00 p.m. Midway Opens
- 6:30 p.m. Bingo - McAuley Center
- 7:30 p.m. 4-H judging competition
- 8:30 p.m. Nelson Tincarre Karaoke
McAuley Center



FRIDAY AUGUST 21, 2015

- 4:00 p.m. 4-H Parade
- 7:00 p.m. LOCAL TRUCK PULL
Street trucks welcome
Info: Lynn Rothney 819-875-5292
- 9:00 p.m. Dance Slightly Haggard
McAuley Center



SATURDAY AUGUST 22, 2015

- 12:00 p.m. Dairy Cattle Auction
- 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Night Train - McAuley Center
- 7:00 p.m. Tractor Pull
- 9:30 p.m. Dance Slightly Haggard
McAuley Center



SUNDAY AUGUST 23, 2015

- 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Lennoxville Farmer's market
Products to be bought
- 11:00 a.m. & 4:00 p.m.
Abeille Beausoleil
- 1:00 p.m. Rainbow Country Cloggers
- 2:00 p.m. Animal and Machinery Parade
- 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Night Train
McAuley Center
- 7:00 p.m. HORSE PULL



JUDGING TIMETABLE FRIDAY

- 9:00 a.m. Light Horses
- 10:00 a.m. Main Building Exhibits
4-H Conformation
- 10:30 a.m. Draft Horse Halter
- 1:00 p.m. 4-H Showmanship
Poultry
Sheep & Goats
- 4:30 p.m. Draft Horse Hitches
Pony and Light
Horse Costume Classes

SATURDAY

- 9:00 a.m. Light Horses
Beef Cattle
- 2:00 p.m. Draft and Light Horse Hitches
- 3:00 p.m. Ayrshire
- 6:00 p.m. Holstein

SUNDAY

- 9:00 a.m. Light Horses
- 11:30 a.m. Draft Horse Children's Classes

After the parade
Draft and Light Horses
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Early Show and Shine event raises \$10K for fair

By Claudia Villemaire

Some folks would call them a bit nuts — young men with a passion for modified, shiny, semi-trailer trucks that not only look outstanding with every possible tank, pipe, and decoration chromed, the cabs artfully designed, modified, sometimes cut down to give them a sleek look, painted artfully. Putting together a Show and Shine event has been a bee in their bonnets for some time and finally, with help from the Coaticook Sled Group, (we're talking about a pulling sled). Joe Coates, Serge Dawson, and Shane Sparkes realized their dream with the first Show and Shine and Semi-Trailer Truck and Farm Tractor Pull, held in June at the Cookshire fairgrounds.

With the support of several sponsors, plans took shape as spring approached. The Agriculture Society offered the grounds for the event and plans soon began to resemble a daylong folk festival that would promise the excitement of big rigs on parade with the public choosing the best on display. Then the fun began with the semi-trailers hooking onto the mechanical sled to prove they had the power to win.

Crowds filled the grandstand and there was standing room only by the fences.

"The crowd seemed to love the event. Maybe it was because it was the first time this type of event was organized right here," commented Serge Dawson last week.

"We had a couple of things going for us," said Shane Sparkes. "By deciding on an early date, we were ahead of other pulls in other towns and by the time winter gives way to spring, folks who love this type of event were making plans to get out to the first one they could find. And we were the first one in this region," he explained.

The program included inflatable games for kiddies, a snack bar and refreshments on the site, and, after an afternoon of roaring motors and black smoke settling on the excited crowd, an evening of dancing rounded out a well-attended event.

"We actually based our plans on the wish to help out



Sergey322

<https://www.youtube.com/user/Sergey322>

the fair folks and perhaps have a reasonable amount of money after expenses we would donate to the fair board," Dawson and his friends explained.

These young men, with their heart in the right place were able to turn over \$10,000 to the fair committee, proving to the organizers this was an event that would certainly be repeated next year.

"Thanks to these people, we have been able to cover those maintenance and electrical repair jobs needed to bring the grounds up to par for this year's fair," said fair President Robert Addiss. "To have a group of young

adults come forward, offer to help us out, organize an event that made it all possible is quite outstanding and we are very, very grateful," he added.

"We began to realize this early event would probably be successful when the list of supporters came to our attention. I guess we weren't the only people who were persuaded this type of pulling competition would be popular," he added.

The three organizers also were unanimous in their thanks to all the sponsors and volunteers, as well as the fair board for letting this event happen.



CLAUDIA VILLEMAIRE

In no particular order, Joe Coates, Serge Dawson, Shane Sparkes, and Robert Addiss, president, Cookshire Agriculture Society.

Best wishes to the Cookshire Fair!

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Insurance company pitches in to prepare grounds for fair

By Claudia Villemaire

An insurance company that is a cut above the others, Global Excel, is a company not only providing insurance for health costs, but also offering a long list of services designed to help people cope with medical costs for care, convalescence, and related expense.

This is also a company with a strong commitment to the communities it serves. Each year, employees give themselves the reward of going out to non-profit organizations that could use a bit of help for a variety of reasons.

This year, Global Excel's Sherbrooke office, looking over the list submitted by various non-profit groups, selected the Cookshire Fair where organizers were struggling with maintenance costs due to last year's very rainy Sunday, which ended the fair a day earlier than expected. Tracey Badger, spokesperson at the Sherbrooke office explained.

"We chose to offer our help to the fair organizers. So, over 80 of the employees

from this office turned out ready to do whatever was needed."

Eighty-three people showed up, armed themselves with paint brushes, hammers and saws and, by sundown, the grandstand had been painted, fences repaired, and several barbecues constructed, some staying at the fairgrounds, others destined for donation to other organizations.

"To say a simple thank you doesn't seem nearly enough for the work these people did. Painting the grandstand seats is a long, tiresome job. Believe me we really appreciate what the wonderful crowd did," said fair President Robert Ad-

diss. The Cookshire fairgrounds are in tip-top shape this year. Grass is clipped, fences painted and litter is nowhere to be seen. "The help they so freely gave has made the difference between getting maintenance completed and delaying some until next year. The public can rest assured everything has been done to ensure safety and security is up to par,"



Addis added. "You know if it wasn't for the generosity and belief in this fair shown by sponsors, volunteers, and groups like this one, or the 4H Club, or the guys who put on the Show and Shine

event, yes, there would still be a fair, but we wouldn't be boasting about being ready with repairs all completed."

Once again many thanks to the folks at Global Excel.

4H Clubs at the fair

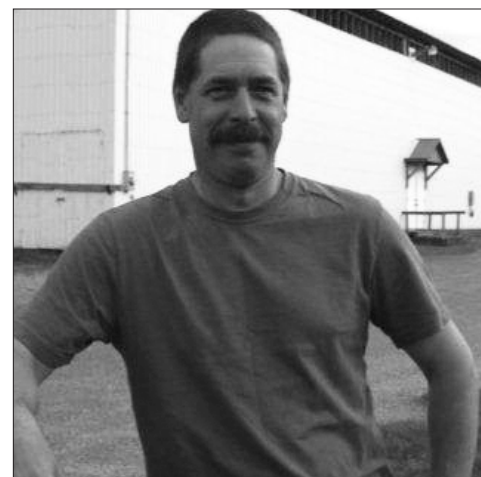


CLAUDIA VILLEMAIRE

Sawyerville 4-H Club members, in no particular order, Cameron Burns, president; Matthew Burns; Alex and Hannah Dougherty; Cheyenne McNabb; Thomas Rothney; and Meaghan Rivett.

Horseman prepares the stable

Jonathan Sylvester, a dyed-in-the-cloth heavy horseman, always turns up as fair time approaches, putting the final touches on the heavy horse stable where every stall will be filled this year. "Yup, record entries," he said last week. "Finding room for them all is turning into quite a challenge but that only means we'll have a great show for the folks."




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