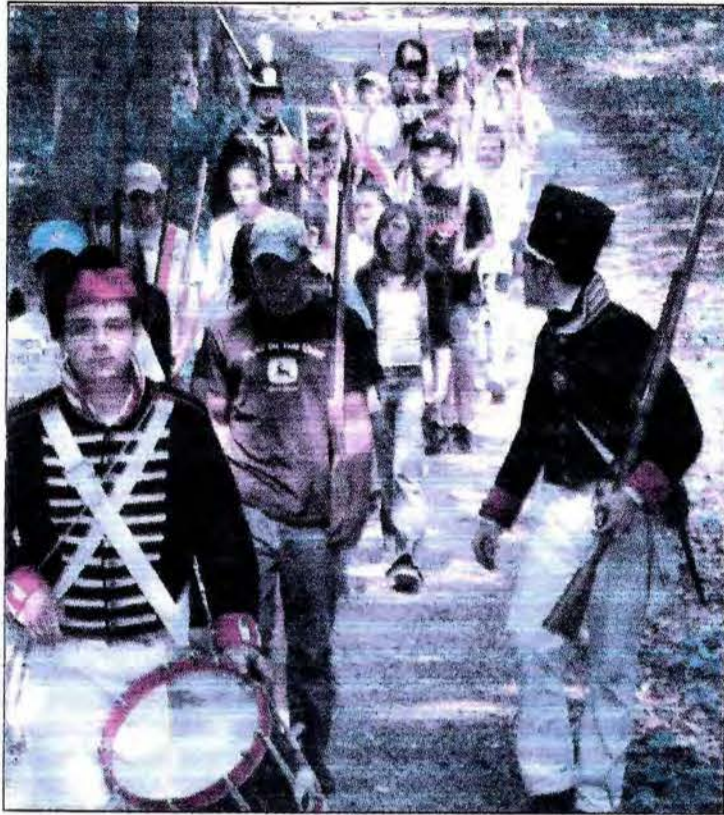
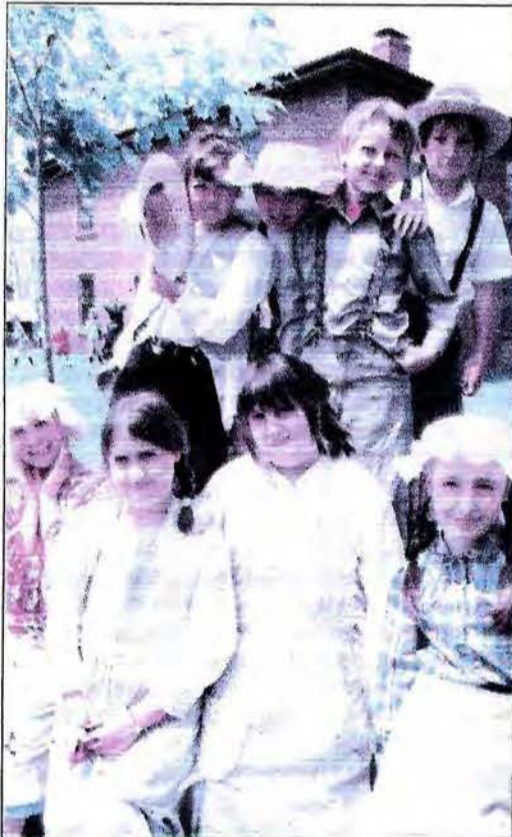


History and nature



Left right left

Grade 7 and 8 students from West Elgin Senior Elementary School march to the drum on way to a cannon at Lake Erie during Education Day at the Backus Page House May 25. Grade 7s and 8s learned about the life of a 1812 soldier while Grade 3s learned about pioneer life.



Period clothing

Adding to the pioneer atmosphere, students dressed in period clothing as did St. Mary's students Cal Horvat, Josh Goos, Dan Barfett, Mitchell Noury, Emma McDonagh, Jessica Stacy and Jade and Raine Hindley.

PHOTOS BY JEFF KEMPENAAR

The Chronicle May 31/2007

Nature

On Sunday, the West Elgin Nature Club led tours across the area as part of the weekend. Above, George Prieksaitis explains digiscoping to Evelyn Freisinger at Old Boys Memorial Park. Below Caroline Guest shows plants found in the area at Mistele Road.



Wednesday, May 16, 2007

The Dutton-Dunwich HORIZON - Page

TENTS FOR TYRCONNELL

Tents for Tyrconnell Heritage Society was one of the successful recipients of a grant made available through the Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO).

Elgin District 41 RTO submitted an application to Project - Service to Others, a Provincial RTO/ERO program which provides grants to Districts for initiatives that support the concept of "Service to Others". A cheque for \$4000 was received for a tent and fly (canopies) that can be used for various events. These may include Education Days, Relive the Early Talbot Settlement

Pioneer days, Seniors Day in the Park, children's daycamps, the Heritage Farm Show and as a protection for displays set up at Wallacetown Fair.

All of these events proceed rain or shine so if weather is inclement sheltered areas are needed and have to be planned for in advance. In future these tents will augment those borrowed from neighbouring communities and individuals. For the upcoming Education Day being planned for May 25th Grade 3 students will experience a Pioneer Day and grade 7/8's

have a focus on the War of 1812-14. Classes from public, separate and home-schooled groups will participate. They are guided from one activity to another by volunteers in period outfits. The presenters for the approximately 30 varied stations involve local people and others from a distance. These skilled craftspeople, re-enactors and natives provide a real living history experience to interest and inform students. All give of their time and expertise voluntarily. Some stations will be in the area of the Backus-Page House Museum, others on the

St. Peter's Tyrconnell Church property or in John E. Pearce Provincial Park.

It is community projects such as this that Project - Service

to Others through RTO becomes involved. Not only have retired teachers provided financial assistance to this education-related endeavour, at least

ten locals are active participating presenters, guides and committee members organizing the day. *submitted*



Above: Fran Wren, provincial member of the Retired Teachers of Ontario Project - Service to Others; and Carolyn Cameron, RTC District 41 president, present a cheque for \$4000 to Leta West (centre) chairperson of the Tyrconnell Heritage Society for the purchase of a tent and fly (canopies). -submitted

St. Thomas Times-Journal, Tuesday, September 4,

Farm heritage at Backus-Page

A trip back in time for those who appreciate the rural life

BY KYLE REA
TIMES-JOURNAL STAFF
TYRCONNELL

More demonstrators and displays meant extra fun for young and old at the Backus-Page House on the weekend as the Heritage Farm Show returned for its fourth year.

More than 400 people are estimated to have attended the two-day event

— significantly more than last year when a deluge washed out Saturday.

"I think things are going very good, especially compared to last year. One day of rain can make quite a difference," said Laurence Grant, curator of the Backus-Page House Museum. "In gate receipts yesterday (Saturday), I think we saw more

people than we did all of last year (at the show)."

The festival offered everything from machine and farm displays, to blacksmithing and threshing demonstrations, butter-making and storytelling. Behind the Backus-Page House, local farmer John Van Beers had his team of horses out to plow the field and plant wheat, showing how it was done in the 19th century. Guided tours of the 156-year-old house itself were also available.

While traditional events drew the usual crowds, Grant said there were more demonstrators on hand, including steam threshing and wood cutting as well as traditional lawn cutting, corn husking and a lot more farm vehicles such as antique tractors.

"The first time I came here was three years ago. I spent about 45 minutes and saw everything. This year, I think it's going to take someone a good two hours to look around here," said Mel Blundell, co-chairman of the organizing committee. "I

think we'll really be able to make it grow."

Taking in the warm weather and activities was Joanne Reive of West Lorne.

"It's a great little show. My husband brings his tractors to display, which is good. We get a chance to look around and see everything that's here,"

she said. "There's plenty to see and do here. Tractors, steam threshers and everything. There's lots to see and lots to do for little kids."



Blacksmith Patrick Mooney demonstrate his techniques during Farm Heritage Days at

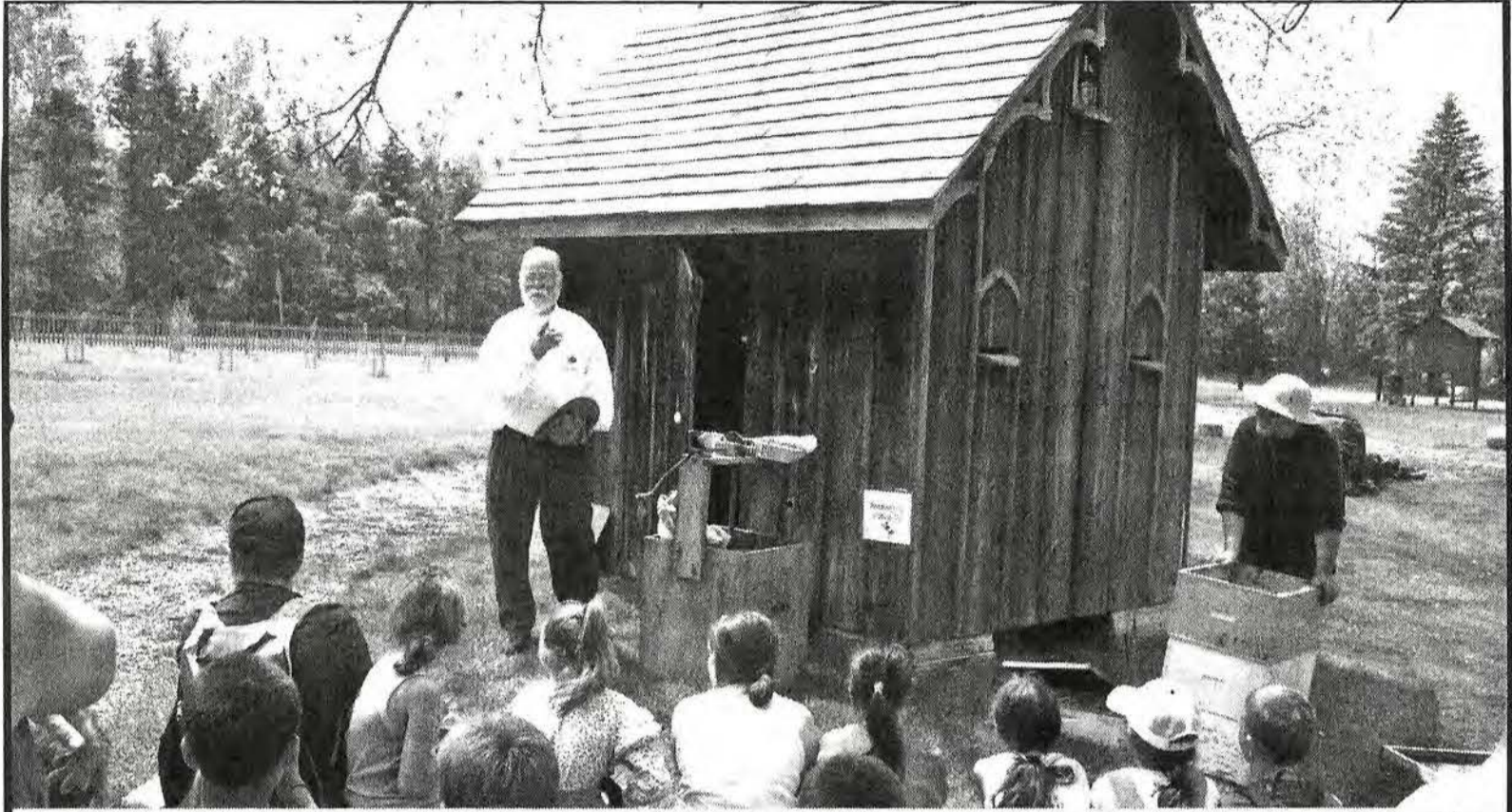


Katie Hathaway, with the help of horses Chance, left, and Hope, demonstrates plowing and tilling for curious on-lookers Sunday at the fourth annual Farm Heritage Days at the Backus-Page House south of Walacetown. (T-J photo by Kyle Rea)





BACKUS-PAGE PIONEER DAYS *May 30th / 2007*



On Friday, May 25 2007, five hundred grade 3 & 7 students from 10 area schools were treated to a educational and fun-filled experience at the Backus-Page House Museum and grounds in Tyrconnel. Grade 3 students were exposed to what life was like for a typical pioneer in the Talbot Settlement. ***Pictured above:*** The Honey House, where students learned about honey bees and the importance of bees. Grade 7 students had exposure to the war of 1812. Interactive militia training, a live cannon as well as a surprise ambush from British Militia soldiers were just but a taste of the whole day. The Tyrconnel Heritage Society truly captured the essence of the early days of the Talbot Settlement and gave the students an experience that they soon will not forget. The Tyrconnel Heritage Society surpassed their attendance expectations by over 100 students during the education day. Activities continued through out the weekend finishing off Sunday with the West Elgin Open Trails Annual Car Tour. A memorable and fun experience by all! -gkelly/HORIZON





Brian Wilton

Bee house back

Oct 1984

Deborah Herkimer, curator of the Elgin County Pioneer Museum, talks to Grade 3 pupils from Forest City Public School in St. Thomas outside the Pearce bee house, which was returned to its site at the museum Friday. The 150-year-old structure, destroyed by arson in 1978, was rebuilt to the original — including Gothic openings, carved fretwork beneath the eaves and weathered boards — by students at Parkside Collegiate Institute in St. Thomas during the last six years.

Honey House Moved *May 2007*

Originating from the Pearce farm near Wallacetown and spending a number of years behind the former Elgin County Museum on old Talbot Street in St. Thomas, the honey house has returned to the Municipality of Dutton-Dunwich. The original 1820s structure was destroyed by vandals in the 1970s and was reconstructed by students at Parkside Collegiate in the 1980s. With the relocation of the Elgin County Museum to the county administration building, the house was made available to the Tyrconnell Heritage Society by the County of Elgin.

Such structures were generally used for the storage of equipment relating to the harvesting of honey. The House & Outbuildings Committee is planning to re-roof the structure this summer.



The Honey House is eased into its new location on the grounds of the Backus-Page House, December, 2006

Rebuilding historic bee house

By J. J. Kirby
Museum Curator

In January of 1968 the Elgin County Pioneer Museum was the recipient of a pioneer bee house. Built about 1826 it was a building of historic and architectural interest. It survived its usefulness as a honey house and 155 years of Canadian weather only to succumb to the hands of vandals on the museum grounds. Thus was the bee house burned to the ground.

In 1809 John Pearce along with the Patterson and Storey families arrived at Port Talbot from Erie, Pennsylvania. It is said that Colonel Talbot carried the young Pearce boy, William, in his arms up the steep hill to his home. John settled a few miles west of Port Talbot and when William had grown to manhood and married Anne Moorehouse, he took his bride to his own farm a few miles north of his father's and just southwest of Wallace-town.

A honey house was an important building on a pioneer farm and one of the first erected after the home. Honey took the place of sugar as a sweetener which was not available then. Empty boxes would be placed in the bee house and swarms of bees caught in the wild would be put there to build their comb and fill it with honey.

Travelling Carpenter

William Pearce had his honey house built by a travelling carpenter, said to be Samuel Hockridge of Yarmouth Centre. He must have had a flair for the artistic since gothic windows were made as entrances for the bees and carved fretwork decorated the eaves. It was an imposing building (7 feet x 10 feet, standing 10 feet high at the peak) made of unpainted pine board and batten siding. The roof was covered with hand made split shingles.

It was from the estate of Stewart L. Pearce, a grandson of William Pearce, that this bee house was donated to the Elgin County Pioneer Museum. It was understood that at that time it was one of only two such buildings remaining in this part of the province. Miss Gladys Elliott relates the story of the bee house and its arrival at

the museum in the January 27, 1968 edition of The Times-Journal. It is also interesting to read Miss Elliott's description of the original treed and floral setting of the bee house as she tells it in the Hamilton Spectator of May 5, 1956.

Surprise

Toward the end of June, the museum and the many who have inquired about the bee house over the years are due for a most pleasant surprise. What could be more acceptable for our 25th anniversary year than the return of our long lost bee house? Resurrected in all its original glory of weathered pine boards, cedar shake shingles and fretwork under the eaves, the bee house is going to grace our museum lawns once again.

The museum has always been lacking something since the demise of the bee house. Now, thanks to the professors and students at Parkside Collegiate, past and present who worked on the bee house, it will be complete and whole once again. In the years to come they will be able to see it and realize that they have taken part in rewriting history.

A special 'Thank You' is due Bob Hatherall for the effort and cooperation required to complete the bee house before the end of the year. It will add significantly to the memories of the silver anniversary year of the museum.

We anticipate a fitting reception for the new arrival and to further commemorate its homecoming Pioneer Bee House hasti notes will be available.

Through the years these have been and will continue to be a pictorial memento of the original structure in its garden setting as sketched for us by Carolyn Curtis.

In conclusion, the Elgin County Pioneer Museum Board wishes to express appreciation to all who contributed to the construction and return of the bee house. It is only through such efforts of interested citizens that your museum can remain as a memorial to the past and its traditions.

Building Continues

The bee house which stood for many years behind the Elgin County Pioneer Museum was

destroyed more than four years ago, but a Parkside Collegiate project to construct a replica of the historic building is underway.

Parkside students undertook the ambitious project after the original bee house was burned to the ground on April 1, 1978.

Although early predictions that it could be completed by the end of that year proved unrealistic, "we have not forgotten about it," said building construction teacher Robert Hatherall.

Each year it has been part of the building course but the necessity of making it authentic with old materials or facsimiles presented certain complications, Mr. Hatherall said.

For example the Kettle Creek Conservation Authority cut the cedar shingles with an old shingle cutting machine so that they would be the same as the original ones.

Mr. Hatherall said he had hoped to have the house finished in time to donate it to the museum this spring but there is still quite a bit of work left such as the Gothic design windows and the elaborately carved fretwork under the eaves.

It took the students considerable time to do the fretwork on one end and the other end remains to be done.

The Pearce bee house was probably one of only two remaining in this part of the province when it was donated to the museum in January 1968.

It was part of the Stewart Pearce estate, following his death the previous November.

Mr. Hatherall is now hoping to complete the task next fall but said he is "making no promises."

When it is finished a spot will be waiting for it at the museum.

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Marjorie Simpson

Our friend and longtime member of this congregation passed away on Friday, April 30th, 2004. Marjorie was in her 72nd year.

For those who were unable to attend her funeral on May 3rd, we have Joan's tribute to her mom.

My brothers and I are feeling out of place sitting at the front of the church today. The Simpson pew, our pew, was always at the very back, to the right - furthest from the preacher. This was just in case Mom or Dad had to make a quick exit when one of us misbehaved.

We soon learned, however, that an escape of that kind did not lead to quality time with either of our parents, or an extra hour of play. Mom's idea was to have us sit in the family car until the service was over, remaining quiet and still as if we were still in church. You can only imagine the kind of prayers that were extended to God by my mother and the guilty party during those incidents.

Well Mom, we sit here today at the front of this church - quiet and still - and our prayer is this. We thank God for blessing us with you as our mother - and for your love and support throughout the years. And we especially pray that you now have the peace and comfort in the hands of the Lord that you recently longed for.

One of the most difficult times my mother had to face was the day we finally moved her to Woodstock in order to be closer to us. She told me how hard it was to leave you, and how it felt to leave this area

that she had called home for most of her life.

Speaking for Allan, Larry, Ross, myself - and all of our families - I want to extend our sincere thanks to this community for your care and concern during Mom's illness. The miles between us made communicating awkward for the family. But we knew how easy it was for Mom to call upon a close friend or neighbour when necessary, and we knew that you were always there for her.

Communities like Wallacetown are reflective of more than just raising a child. A very special kind of support, for instance, came from her friends Mary and Maxine - from this church community - from the "Red Hatters" at Tall Tales Café - from her card cronies - from the Cancer society - and many more.

I particularly want to mention and thank Peter and Tina Hentz. Our two families have shared so much together that we are more than just neighbours. It was no surprise when Tina called on the day of Mom's passing, inviting us to their house for supper between funeral home visitations. I informed the boys that it wasn't really an invitation - it was just the way things were going to be!

We thank you all, not only being there for our Mom, but for us too.

Mom was very much aware of what lay ahead as her health declined. As a family we were able to share our thoughts and feelings, and we had some very special last moments with her. We especially enjoyed reliving memories from her very productive, successful and happy days.

To illustrate I will close with a poem, from happier times, that I was able to share with mom just prior to her passing.

*When my mother passed away
And from this earth did part,
She took along the recipe
For the perfect butter tart..*

*The church is holding a pot-luck,
From the pulpit the Rev. would
voice,
And while others pondered what to
bring
Mom simply had no choice.*

*At each Simpson family reunion,
Guaranteed without a doubt,
Among the sweets, set out to eat,
Mom's tarts would be about..*

*She donated them to auctions,
Brought them to many a social fete,
And often she'd bake in exchange
for a cake
With neighbours Tina and Pete.*

*She'd mix sugar, nuts and raisins,
I recall sitting to watch her stir it,
And if I'm not mistaken
There was a touch of maple syrup.*

*No matter what went into
The making of each tart,
I sense that the secret ingredient
Was the love from my mother's
heart.*

*I know she's taken those butter tarts
Up to heaven's smorgasbord,
And forever will be honored
To now truly serve her Lord.*

*A certain peace has come to us
In a thought that we hold true,
Instead of watching out for mom
She's now watching over you.*

Joan later observed, in a thank-you note to Diane, that her mom no doubt enjoyed another smile when she looked down upon the red hats in the congregation on Mother's day, that were worn in her honour.

Jane is retiring from teaching after 42 years (37 teaching and 5 off). She started at Tecumseh Public School in London, then moved on to Southwold Central. Next she taught a Special Education class at Balclava P.S. for 8 years, an experience that she still holds dear, judging by her comments and the photo display. Her last 14 years have been at Dunwich-Dutton Public School in the role of Learning Support Teacher.

A very large number of parents, past and present students and personal friends came to the school on Sunday afternoon, June 13th, to say 'thanks and congratulations' to Jane and her fellow teacher, Cyril Heidt, also retiring.



In answer to the obvious question, Jane replied "I am going to do anything I want", or some similar words to that effect. Bruce tried to be helpful by suggesting activities that would probably attract Jane's interest. At the top of his list was quilting, and told us Jane is already on a waiting list to join an exclusive quilting club in Ingersol. He also thought Jane might become more active in the T Club, a loosely knit group of 500 or so who travel

about and share their love of antique automobiles.

Bruce also mentioned Jane's interest in the Red Hat Society. Sounds like we may have another 'wild thing' on our hands! Someone should warn the Wallacetown Fair Board.



Stewart West

Our good friend, Stewart West, passed on to his heavenly reward on March 9th, 2005. He had recently celebrated his 99th birthday on the first day of February.

Stewart was a faithful member of this church for longer than many of us can remember, always seated in his familiar chair near the door, greeting everyone with a friendly smile, ever dependable in performing his duties as usher. He acted as treasurer for Mission & Service for 30 years, and as secretary of the pastoral charge for 25 years.

Stewart and Jane were married for 66 years. They came originally from Ridgetown where they were active members at Erie St. United Church and on the Ridgetown Fair Board. They moved to Wallacetown in 1954 where Stewart joined the Wallacetown Fair Board in 1957. He was named president in 1963 and contributed to the Board in various capacities for 42 years. He served as chairman and custodian of the Wallacetown Community Hall for part of this time.

He was well known in the area as the Dekalb Seed Corn Company agent, and could always be recognized in his 'uniform' green jacket and cap. It seemed fitting that these same garments were placed on Stewart's chair at the back of the church the Sunday morning following his funeral.

How appropriate that Stewart should leave us with a smile!

Bessie Lyons

Is it a loving thing or a not-so-nice thing when your family conspires to throw a surprise 75th birthday party for you? Do you think it's OK for them to get a dear friend to treat you to brunch at the Lions Club, while they put a huge banner on your garage door telling the whole world how old you are, turn your home inside out (they called it "decorating") and invite hordes of friends to invade your space?

Well, that's exactly what the Lyons girls and their families did to Bessie on Sunday, March 13th. People came in droves for the whole afternoon. Kristin, Donna's daughter, was very nearly trampled in the front closet as she tried to manage the non-stop flood of coats and boots moving in and out.

Bessie is usually the gracious hostess at events like this. She's not used to being on the receiving end. Whenever she stood to help someone would push her back down into the 'queen-for-a-day' chair, and give her another piece of cake and another cup of tea.

Still, despite having to switch roles like this, Bessie seemed to thrive on the good wishes that everyone came to give her.

She certainly appears to be having a good time here, don't you agree?



Louie & Don Lackey

Louie and Don thought they had escaped all the hoopla when they celebrated their 54th wedding anniversary, quietly, on April 2nd.

But then granddaughter Kelly phoned and told them not to ask any questions, but just to be all dressed up and ready to party at 4 pm on April 9th.

Sure enough, at the appointed time, in rolled a huge white stretch SUV limo with 14 whoopin' and hollerin' party animals inside.

Actually, they were all members of their big loving family. And off they went to the Seven Dwarfs in London for another celebration!

Louie will be pleased to show you the hand-crafted scrap-book album that she and Don received to mark the event.

*To laugh often and much. ...
To win the respect of intelligent people
and the affection of children ...
To earn the appreciation of honest critics
and endure the betrayal of false
friends ... To appreciate beauty and
find the best in others ...
To leave the world a bit better, whether
by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a
redeemed social condition ...
To know even one life has breathed
easier because you have lived ...
This is to have succeeded.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson