

Economist Kenneth Galbraith returns to his west Elgin roots

A semi-autobiographical book written 30 years ago pulled no punches and still rankles some local residents

By TOM FROESE
Staff Reporter

The big man still stands tall.

His graceful movements have been slowed since he travelled the globe as an international diplomat, his intriguing speeches are quieter from his days as a Harvard professor, and his press conferences are a mere shadow of the time when he basked under the light of public acclaim.

But John Kenneth Galbraith still stands tall.

After a distinguished career that befalls but a small number of men, Mr. Galbraith still knows he's a small-town Ontario boy and he gives credit to his roots in Elgin County.

Born in Iona Station in 1908, he recalls the small local library where he could take out only two books a week. It opened a window to a larger world, he says, in addition to providing him an alternative from the farming life that would have undoubtedly weighed heavy on his lean build and his aversion to physical toil.

To repay his debt, Mr. Galbraith gave a fundraising speech Wednesday at the University of Western Ontario, raising \$8,000 for the new Dutton-Dunwich library. That was followed by a brief visit Thursday to West Elgin to continue his chat about economics and other matters.

In high school by age 10, it was obvious to his peers he had a propensity for taking huge strides.

Mr. Galbraith served former U.S. presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy, having been an early confidant of President Kennedy and later his ambassador to India.

Since retiring with his wife Catherine (Kitty) to their Massachusetts home 20 years ago, Mr. Galbraith has maintained influence through his persuasive writings.

But after all the books are written, and all the speeches are presented, and all the trophies collected, Mr. Galbraith will still be known as the man who put West Elgin on the map for what some consider all the wrong reasons.

His 1961 semi-autobiographical *The Scotch* embarrassed some in his home town, as much as it showed he could reveal his dry wit through his literary skills in the same way as in his often-en-



CONTROVERSIAL BOOK — Kenneth Galbraith, 82, holds copies of his book about growing up in west Elgin. He returned to his roots in Dunwich Township on Thursday to chat about economics and other matters.

—(Staff)

tertaining speech.

The book was remembered with laughter Thursday, but some locals admit Mr. Galbraith has enemies to this day in West Elgin for the book's references, by name, to those he grew up with.

"In any calling Old Tommy would have been counted a man of remarkable ignorance," he recalled of his high school principal. "But as an educator he excelled."

That's one line from *The Scotch* repeated every so often, but then, "there's no form of scholarship so high as plagiarizing yourself," he says in his defense of his repitition.

"I forgive him," he adds.

Much to the surprise of the author, if not the characters, *The Scotch* was eventually published for readers around the world.

"I could never picture them in Tokyo wanting to read about Iona Station."

Mr. Galbraith's latest best-seller is *Culture of Contentment*, published last year. It suggests see society's affluent contribute more to the economy and social institutions.

He's now writing a history of the world's economy from the First World War, *A Short History of Financial Euphoria*.

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BEST PAIRS OF CLOWNS – Pictured with their "look-alike" toys are from the left, Amanda Green, third; Laurie Ford, first; Cherie Hunter, fourth, and Michaela McCready, second.

133rd Wallacetown Fair

AGE 8--DUTTON ADVANCE--WEDNESDAY--OCTOBER 6--1993



1993 PET SHOW KING – Ian Rowe is pictured with his dog Tess at Wallacetown Fair.



OFFICIALLY OPENS FAIR – Ross Daily of CFPL-TV, London, performed the official opening ceremonies.



CHAMPIONS OF THE FAIR – These young ladies made an excellent showing at this year's fair and were named, from the left, Michaela McCready, Junior Baking Champion; Brianne McCready, Teen Champion, and Amanda Breen, Junior Champion.



BABY SHOW WINNERS – First prize winners of the Baby Show at Wallacetown Fair in the boys' division were, from the left: 0-4 months, Michael McCallum, R.R. 1, Iona Station, held by mom Ida; 5-8 months, Derek Schramowsky, Dutton, with mom Rhonda, and 9-12 months, Dalton Jones, Wallacetown, and mom Colleen. Placing second and third in 0-4 were Jacob Leblanc, Kitchener, and Ricky Prestage, Wallacetown; 5-8 - Ryan Murdock, London and Jamie McMillan, West Lorne.



ENTERTAIN FAIRGOERS – Mocha Temple Shriners Oriental Band from London were an added feature at this year's fair.

**HIGHLIGHTS
OF 1993
WALLACETOWN
FAIR**



4-H at
Wallacetown
Fair 1993