

Clairmont tourney was a big success

By FRAN COMMET

CLAIRMONT — People from Bezanson, DeBolt, Sexsmith, LaGlace, Wembley and Grande Prairie made the

Clairmont and Area Senior Citizens Invitational Whist Tournament a big success.

Fourteen tables were in play at the event, held April 10 at the curling club.

Ladies' High for the evening was Emma Doucette from DeBolt; Ladies Low was Pearl Gibson, also from DeBolt; Men's High was Bob Arnold from Bezanson and the Men's Low was Nan Fraser from Sexsmith who was playing in a man's spot.

Bea Fells from Bezanson and Jennie McDonald from Grande Prairie won the travelling prizes.

There were also some spot prizes awarded. Harold Hieb from Clairmont won one of these which he auctioned off to the highest bidder — Pete Semek from Clairmont. Harold donated the proceeds to the seniors' club.

The evening wound up with a very enjoyable lunch and coffee. The seniors would like to thank all the visitors who came and helped make this event so successful.

On April 22, the seniors club held a meeting prior to the last card party of the season. Ladies' High was Jennie McDonald; Ladies' Low was Ellen Gutteau; Ritchie McRae won the Men's High, and Myrtle Jordan, playing a man's position, won the Men's Low.

Card parties will resume in the fall.

Although the curling season and card parties are over for this year, the seniors plan on being very active this summer. Several members went to Beaverlodge April 25 to take part in the South Peace Whist Tournament. Some others plan on going to Spirit River on May 2 to take part in the South Peace Crib Tournament. The seniors also plan on doing some fund-raising this summer, so watch for further details.

The Clairmont preschool kids are planning on doing some spring clean-up on Wednesday the 29 and Friday the 1st, weather permitting. They want to clean up the preschool playgrounds and the 75th Anniversary Park, so if you see the little ones running around with garbage bags twice their size, don't hesitate to lend a helping hand.

McDonald clan's roots run deep in the Peace Country

Herald-Tribune staff

Four young men bought a pack horse in Edson 76 years ago this August, loaded it with blankets, bacon and beans plus a couple of pots to boil tea and prairie chickens, and headed north to la grande prairie.

Brothers Jock and Bill McDonald were two members of the group.

Born in southern Ontario, the two eldest sons of a first-generation Canadian whose father came to Canada from the Isle of Skye off the west coast of Scotland in the mid-1850s, the McDonald brothers had worked their way across Western Canada for two years.

Feasting on ducks, rabbits and prairie chickens as they plodded along the famed Edson Trail, the quartet – which included Tommy Warden and an unidentified companion – finally got a change of diet at Sturgeon Lake.

"Got some fish from the Indians and got provisions for the journey," Bill McDonald's diary of the trek said.

Sixteen days after leaving Edson, the group arrived in Grande Prairie.

The McDonalds toured the virgin prairie to the west, looking for homestead land, before finally settling on acreage in the Crystal Creek district northeast of Grande Prairie.

They filed on their land, hiked back to Edson for the winter, and returned the following spring.

Bill, the eldest of the two, stayed on in the Peace Country for 15 years before returning to Ontario to marry. He never returned.

But Jock (John Alexander) remained.

In 1922, he married Jennie Clarkson, a 19-year-old whose family had settled in the district three years earlier. The couple raised four children – Lena, who died in 1958 when she was only 35; Don, who still farms in the Crystal Creek district; his brother Bruce; and another girl, Margaret.

Jock died in 1973, aged 86. His wife, Jennie, a spry and sprightly 84-year-old eventually moved into Grande Prairie to live at Heritage Lodge.



Jock and Jennie McDonald on their 44th anniversary in 1966

The McDonald clan – there are several but Jock and Bill's Scottish roots make them members of the MacDonalds of the Isles – is being honored as Clan of the Day at Saturday's 3rd annual Grande Prairie Highland Games.

Mrs. McDonald, her family and descendants from the Grande Prairie district, will be honored guests at the event, being held this year in Muskosepepi Park.

While this particular family is being singled out for its contributions over the last 7½ decades, the Clan of the Day also honors all McDonalds/MacDonalds and those who can claim membership in the clan.

The clan, founded back in the 12th century when Regulas of the Isles expelled the Norsemen from the Scottish west coast, also incorporates families whose surnames include Anderson, Hutchinson, Martin, Paton/Patten, Wilkie, Cochrane, Howe/Howie, Laing/Lang, Mackie, Wilkinson, Cook/Cooke, Hudson, Jeffrey, MacArthur, MacKay, Murphy, Shannon and Kelly.

Those interested in tracing their Scottish heritage for the MacDonald or any other clan can do so at a special booth at the Games site Saturday.

The Games run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., offering sports events, piping and dancing. There is no admission charge for the day.

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Highland Games draws 2,000 folk to Musko Park

By BALLANTINE RUSSELL
Herald-Tribune staff

Rolling pin throws, frying pan tosses, tugs of war: Sound like a bad day at home?

These were some of the events at Grande Prairie's third annual Highland Games, a success by all accounts.

Games Chairman Eric Jerrard was



Games chairman Eric Jerrard presents Jennie McDonald with a surprise birthday cake to mark her 84th birthday at the windup ceilidh.

especially impressed by the number of children that turned up at Saturday's event in Muskosepi Park: "It was a fun day," he said. "A family day."

He said total attendance was about 2,000, with most coming in the afternoon when the wind died down. Participation was up in all categories.

Brian Sibley is the new Grand Highlander, amassing 44 points in the heavy games competition. Sibley placed first in four of five events. In put the stone 28½ feet; he threw the hammer 21.55 metres; he finished first in the caber toss and weight throw.

Greg Howarth, one of the heavy events co-ordinators, finished second overall with 34 points. He set a record in the weight toss, heaving the stone 16 feet high.

Gary McKinnon was third.

1985's Grand Highlander, Dave Strang, finished fourth with six points.

There was a tie for first place in the women's events. Bonnie and Irene Finch finished with 14 points and shared the Grand Lassie title. Shelley Van Tamelen was third with 10 points.

Jerrard, in full Scottish dress, officially opened the Games, introducing the Clan of the Day, the McDonalds. Mayor Dwight Logan and Reeve Jim Tissington were also on hand to welcome the crowd and a plaque was unveiled in the memory of the late Ray Howarth, a key organizer of the Games.



Staff Photos by Laura Shuya

Holding tightly to one another, Jennifer Kiss, 13, and Fiona Hunter, 12, (centre) race their way to victory in the three-legged race

MP Albert Cooper, as part of the opening ceremonies, failed to defend the haggis hurl championship, losing to the McDonald Clan.

The open haggis hurl lured 45 participants at \$1 each, with proceeds to charity.

In the tug-of-war, the McDonald Clan defeated the Camerons, clan of the day in 1985. But the most heated tug-of-war was Heavy Horse vs. the RCMP. Heavy Horse beat the RCMP twice, although both tugs-of-war went

on for over two minutes.

The piping competitions also attracted many spectators.

Andy Smith, pipe major for Grande Prairie Pipes and Drums, said that bands are judged on their overall performance, breaks, harmony, and appearance.

The mini-band competition was won by Donna Nason, Brian Barnes, Don Hector, and David McLean on pipes, Dave Brierly on bass drum, and Don Pettypiece and Pat Thatcher on side

drums.

Marion Logan won the Grade II individual gold, Nason the Grade III gold, and Harley Johnston the Grade IV gold.

Dancing events, however, attracted the largest audiences.

Heather Pringle of St. Albert won the Pre-Open Dancer of the Day trophy and Jennifer Reid of Dawson Creek won the Open trophy.

The Games wrapped up with a ceilidh—dinner and dance Scottish style—at the Grande Prairie Inn.

Emcee Bill Hunter said: "Not only did you compete with one another but you supported each other throughout . . . and that's what makes the Games a success."

After dinner, with bagpipes droning, Jerrard brought in a birthday cake for Jennie McDonald, matriarch of the local clan, to honor her 84th birthday.

Meanwhile, the man identified as Bruce McKinnon in yesterday's Herald-Tribune photo feature on the Games was, in fact, Brian Sibley.

Seniors' home living:

Good outlook key to the good life

By MARY-ANN THURBER
Herald-Tribune staff

Making the decision to leave your home and many possessions and move into a seniors' lodge can be a wrenching experience, but three residents of Heritage Lodge in Grande Prairie say time and a good outlook help new residents adapt.

Elizabeth Fraser, 92, has been living at Heritage Lodge since it opened 12 years ago. Before that she lived for a time at Pioneer Lodge.

Fraser said she moved into the seniors' home five years after her husband died because it was becoming increasingly difficult for her to take care of herself.

"It was hard to get help with the work, and the work was too much for me in the winter, and I was too lonely."

She said she made the decision to move into the lodge quickly.

"I came into town one day and put my name on the list for the Pioneer Lodge and two weeks later I moved. I sold my house - when I left it I even left the butter on the plate on the table."

Fraser said she was a little bit nervous about moving into the lodge but was determined to make the best of it.

She said she has tried to keep active and although she doesn't get out much anymore she likes to work on puzzles, play cards, go for walks or join in on small, informal prayer group meetings with some of the other residents.

The home is comfortable, she said, because everyone there has a similar background and is in similar circumstances.

"We're all in the same boat. We're here till the time comes to go into a nursing home or a hospital or otherwise."

Roy Watson, 77, moved into Heritage Lodge about two months ago after years of living on his own.

He said the staff of the lodge is very friendly and helpful and gives him his privacy. He said he was lonely for a while when he first moved in but he is starting to feel at home now.

"The girls here are just the best, they make you feel at home," he said. "It's a good place for anyone that can't look after themselves just right."

Jennie McDonald, 85, has been living in Heritage Lodge for five years. She said that she came into the lodge with a positive attitude

about living there and has never regretted her decision.

"Some people who come here say they're not going to like it or 'my family put me here' - but that's a bad attitude. You have to come in with the idea that you're going to like it."

McDonald likes keeping busy and involving herself with the operations of the lodge by being president of Heritage Lodge Recreation Club and attending meetings of Lodge residents.

"If there is anything we're not satisfied with we bring it up at the meetings, everybody has input,"

she said.

She is more mobile than most of the residents of the lodge since she owns her own car, and often takes friends to the Golden Age Centre for activities such as carpet bowling and floor curling.

McDonald said she has many friends in the lodge and her family visits often. She understands how difficult it must be for people who have no relatives nearby, but thinks a good attitude is important to enjoying life in a senior's home.

"You've got to go half way," said McDonald, "you've got to be a friend to make a friend."



Jennie McDonald keeps heavily involved with Lodge activities.

Grande Spirit Awards



Pioneer Lodge — Ron Floen, 5 years; (left), Velma Gravel, 3 years; Harry Anderson, 3 years; and Aasmund Skarberg, 5 years, were recognized by the Grande Spirit Foundation at its annual spring awards.



Heritage Lodge — Florence Bass, 15 years; A. Roy Watson, 5 years; and Jennie McDonald, 10 years, were recognized by the Grande spirit Foundation at its annual spring awards.

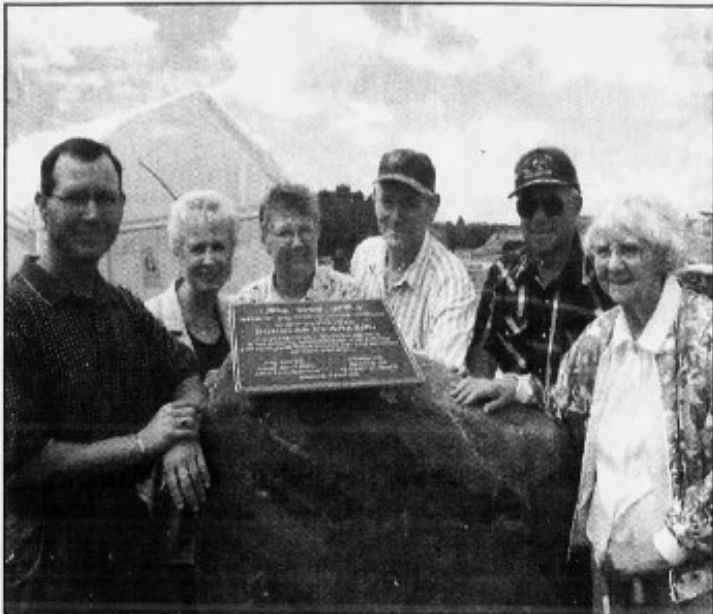


Wild Rose Manor — Matrona Wielezko, 3 years; Nora Goodall, 3 years; Gifford Hellerud, 3 years; Anton Jensen, 5 years; and Jane Howell, 5 years, were recognized by the Grande Spirit Foundation at its annual spring awards. Missing was Marion Cote, 5 years.

Clarkson honoured

LAURA TESTER

Herald-Tribune staff



Everett McDonald (left), Marion Clarkson, Margaret Ladwig, Keith Ladwig, Bruce McDonald, and Jennie McDonald were on hand for the unveiling of a plaque in honor of relative Douglas Clarkson at Kleskun Hills.

Ray Boyer and the rest of the Kleskun Hills Museum Society couldn't ignore that this is the International Year of Older Persons.

So they invited young and old to the Kleskun Hills museum site east of Grande Prairie Saturday to commemorate the efforts of pioneers. Boyer, the museum's president, celebrated with others for the unveiling of two plaques — one honouring all the settlers who came over the Edson Trail and the other in recognition of Senior of the Year for 1999.

Dorothy Ireland from the Grande Prairie & Area Oldtimers Association unveiled the Edson Trail plaque after travelling by horse-drawn cart to the destination— just like the pioneers would have done.

Then the family members of Douglas Clarkson, who died in March at the age of 85, unveiled a plaque in honour of him. He was selected as the Senior of the Year.

"Douglas did give us a generous donation for our society," Boyer said. "He did a tremendous amount of work for this area. He located native burial grounds and we have fenced them in now."

Clarkson was a tireless volunteer who also contributed time and materials to the Grande Prairie Museum. He also helped extensively at Evergreen Park for which a hall was named after him.

"I think it's a great honour," his 96-year-old sister Jennie McDonald said of Saturday's unveiling.

Boyer also said this was the day to celebrate all the pioneers who came over the Edson Trail in 1911.

Visitors were able to take a look around on the grounds to see the tremendous changes over the past year. A school, originally opened in 1919, was moved to the site. Along with that, a Catholic church once situated along Highway 43 now sits on the grounds. The Hubert Manning building on the "Fourteen Mile Farm" east of Grande Prairie was also relocated there.

The structures, with the exception of the Manning building, have been renovated. Boyer did a lot of the work and received help from Jack Fitzpatrick.

"He's got more expertise with carpentry work than I have," says a humble Boyer.

Then there were others who provided much needed equipment for the endeavour to move buildings and level the ground — Lynne and Jerry Oe, Annie Bulford, Albert and Pearl Klimack, Danny Antonio, and Bruce Fenton.

Fran Moore of the DeBolt and District Pioneer Museum presented a book on the Edson Trail to the Kleskun Hills Museum Society.

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Thank You

The families of the late **JENNIE MCDONALD** would like to extend our sincere thanks to our many friends and relatives for their support during our recent loss.

Thank you to Dr. I. Renfree and the staff of 3 North for the wonderful care our mother received and for the kindness shown our families.

Thank you to Oliver's Funeral Chapel & Gene Krause. Thank you to Rev. Begalke, Ruth Boyd, Marg Bowes and the pallbearers.

To all those who sent cards, donations, food trays, baskets and flowers. Your kindness was very appreciated.

Donald, Bruce, Margaret and families

McDonalds celebrate century on the farm

Coming over the Edson Trail: Family settled in the Crystal Creek area in 1910

KIRSTEN GORUK
Herald-Tribune Staff

When Donald McDonald's father came to the South Peace looking for a place to settle down, he paid \$10 for the 160 acres his family still farms today.

"They paid \$10 and had to break 10 acres before getting the title. I think it took them about four years to do that," Donald recalls of his father and uncle's early days home-seeding in the Crystal Creek region, about 16 kilometres east of Grande Prairie.

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"They were just coming with their hopes."

Donald McDonald

Jock McDon-

ald and his brother William arrived in Grande Prairie by way of the Edson Trail in August 1911. The brothers were originally from Ontario, but had slowly moved west in search of work.

Donald says his father heard about the available farmland in the Peace while working on the railway in Edson.

"Land was cheap and I think they had no money. They were just coming with their hopes."

Memories of their journey are preserved through a journal his uncle kept.

"I think Bill was the secretary and Dad was the cook," Donald says.

For years to come, the family made a living on that land, and this year marks the centenary of their settlement.

In the early days, they focused on harvesting grain to feed their livestock. The entire farm was broken using plows pulled by oxen.

Donald remembers traveling around by horse and in the winter on a sleigh. They didn't use cars very often. When he wasn't in school, he had his list of chores, things such as feeding the cattle and hauling water.

Gathering wood wasn't one of his favourite chores and as his son Alex recalls the story, it couldn't have been easy. Prairie fires had wiped out most of the trees in the surrounding area. McDonald and his neighbours had to walk about

eight kilometres down to Bear Creek for firewood.

"They had to haul all that wood down from there, across the creek. That's where the wood came from, there was nothing on this side," Alex says.

Money was tight on the farm, Donald remembers as a kid, buying his .22 rifle with squirrel hides. When he wasn't hunting them, he kept a look out for partridges or rabbits, which the family used for their meat.

"You know what five cents was worth because you didn't have it," he says.

The work was hard and the winters were long and cold, but Grande Prairie became home.

"It's all we knew," Donald says. "The opportunities were all here, and we wouldn't have had them if we'd stayed somewhere else. So we owe them quite a little, I guess."

One hundred years later, the McDonald's extended family boasts over 100 members, each of them a part of the family's history on the farm.

"It's kind of humbling," says Donald's wife, Nancy.

Their son agrees, adding that this milestone didn't just arrive on its own.

"There's certainly a sense of accomplishment. It's hard to do. The feeling overwhelms you," Alex says.

"To remain sustainable in the last 25 years, we've all had to grow and become more efficient. And in order for that to happen, others (landowners) had to end their chances of being a century farm."

The family celebrated its accomplishment over the July long weekend. They kicked things off by driving Donald's 1989 BEX Spooch wagon in the city's Canada Day parade.

"All of us kids drove it. Everybody's driven

that truck. We hauled grain in it," Alex says.

On the Friday night, 87 family members got together for a potluck and many of them camped out on the farm that night. The Saturday of the long weekend started with a pancake breakfast and afterwards, hundreds of visitors stopped by for an open house.

Parts of the shop were turned into display areas, which featured family artifacts. Among the pictures were a set of cupboards built by Jock, an old lantern, and the .22 short rifle Donald says his father and uncle lived by on their ride across the Edson Trail.

"We had a wagon ride with a team of horses and we just did a loop out here in the wheat field, about a mile long. For lots of them, it was the first time they've ridden in 30, 40 or 50 years," Alex says.

Jock married Jennie Clarkson in 1922. His brother Bill had homesteaded on an adjacent quarter but returned to Ontario in 1927.

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KIRSTEN GORUK/DAILY HERALD TRIBUNE

Donald McDonald and his wife, Nancy (centre) still live on the land McDonald's father settled 100 years ago. His son Alex (left) and his daughter-in-law Shelley helped out with the family's centenary celebrations over July long weekend. The plow between them is the original one used to break the land in 1911.