

“Show Ring – Wallacetown Fair” © J. Phillips

Wallacetown Fair is a real country gem. This fair held the last weekend in September is what country fairs are all about. The Four H livestock shows encourage youth, teach skills and confidence that will assist them in their journey through life. I love the fair!

I love the smells, the sounds and the excitement in the air. The wind is brisk making the clouds skid across the sky creating long shadows with burst of sunlight.

Antique farm equipment is trucked in; cattle and horses too; along with ladies baking and handiwork. There is something for everyone. The air is charged with anticipation.

Dave and I lived in St. Thomas just after we married. We saw an ad in the paper and rented a cheap old farm house in Dunwich Township. We first met Barb Robb with her Regal catalogue. Next a spry elderly man, Johnny Bobier dropped in to say “Hi”. Johnny lived down the road, he had a team of Hereford oxen that he showed at plowing matches, fairs and parades. Johnny invited us to attend a dance at the Wallacetown Fair. *“Great place to meet your neighbours and folks in our community. I’ll save you a space at our table.”* We hired a sitter for our baby. Dave cleaned our 1963 MGB convertible. He wore his navy 3 piece crimpolene suit with the bell-bottom trousers. I wore a floaty turquoise caftan with gold metallic braid cuffs and Mandarin collar and piled up my black hair in sausage curls.

When we arrived we saw the light shining from a large open barn door and we could hear the music emanating from the building. We paused in the doorway and to my horror everyone turned to look at us. The majority wore denim, gingham and were square dancing. Johnny came forward. He gave us an out. Told us to go home and get comfortable and come back. We did and I’m so glad. We danced till dawn.

The citizens of Dutton and Dunwich are awesome.

Our family grew and our four children all participated in the fair. One of our girls became Fair Ambassador in 1993 and Dave’s niece in 2000.

Our fair was initiated by Scottish immigrants well before Canada’s confederation but it embodies all that makes Canada a great place to live and raise a family.

Jenny Phillips is best known as an artist, cartoonist, historian and writer. In the late 1970’s Mother Earth Magazine published Jenny’s first story in their “Barter and Bootstraps” section. Her cartoons were a regular feature in Farming Today and several agricultural related periodicals. Jenny went on to publish her own quarterly magazine “The Elgin County Coupon Club” (64 pages, 28,500 copies) with her folksy anecdotes, stories and recipes filling 25%. Jenny later was the feature columnist for the Dutton-Dunwich Horizon for several years and a contributor to various tourism publications. She organized the John Kenneth Galbraith Literary Award; has compiled the early writings of Galbraith when he was a young reporter for the St. Thomas Times-Journal. Her gallery in Dutton where she resides with her husband Town Crier David features Jenny’s art and her book *“Does It Pay?”* Village Crier Gallery, 194 Currie Rd., Dutton, ON N0L 1J0