Telford Advent

Life & Times

By Rick Neilson

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Telford Advent can't explain why he quit school at the age of fourteen.

"But I was lucky. I was involved in 4-H and [Ag Rep] Dick Herd thought I should go back to school,"Telford recalled.

Every year the University of Guelph would take one or two students even though they didn't have the required educational background. Telford had grade

Dick Herd was highly thought of, so it was on his recommendation that Telford was accepted into the Agriculture and Business Management Diploma Program.

"I went for an interview when I first got there and was instructed not to tell anyone what education I had. Everybody else had grade twelve or thirteen.

"It was the hardest I've ever worked at studying. I was given until Christmas to prove myself. There were over a hundred of us and I was tenth in the class at Christmas. From then on I was in the top five.

"I will always be thankful for it... It's not necessarily what you learned in the books, it's the people you meet...

Before Guelph, Telford remembers not being hepped up about farming in the Rainy River District. He soon began to realize, however, that this area has much to offer.

"Your whole outlook changes when you get away and see what's out there. It was quite a switch from here to Guelph in 1965.

At graduation, Telford went for job interviews but didn't find anything of real interest so he came home. He was visiting in Atikokan when a pipeline company was hiring, so he went down.

"This guy came walking down the line with his hat pulled down. He stopped in front of me and looked out from under his hat and said, 'Are you looking for work?' I told him I was and he said, Come with me,"Telford recounted.

His pipelining career began with a shovel in his hand.

"It was such good money and I kept investing in farmland then I quit and went totally farming,"he explained

Telford bought his parents', Frank and Olive Advent's, 480 acre farm, and expanded it to 2000 acres. He built a slatted barn which housed 250 head of feeders; with another 250 on feed outside, and 200 cow/

"I had up to 900 head. That was a lot of cattle in Northern Ontario at that time,"he stated.

"And then in the early eighties interest rates went from eleven to twenty-three percent.

"Well, she was all over! You just can't absorb that.

"People have asked me how I could get through that. But you know, I don't think about it. If it was meant to be it was meant to

"I don't regret doing it. We lost everything - that's part of life,"he suggested.

After a stint in 1980, as Consultant to Federal Minister of Agriculture, Eugene Whalen, Telford returned to pipelining, picking up where he left off as Ditch Foreman. His most recent pipelining activity has been as a bid consultant for a 1.3 billion dollar project.

"Pipelining made it possible for me to go farming the way I did and then it helped me get back on my feet.

"If I had it to do over again... If circumstances were the same, I don't know if I would do anything different. People have told me that I was just ten years ahead of my time,'

Telford Advent is optimistic about the future of agriculture in the Rainy River District and says he would like to see another hundred thousand acres cleared and tile drained.

He expects to see big changes in the next 10 to 20 years.

Auctioneering

When he was 16 or 17, Telford took an auctioneering home study course.

"I would practice all the time when I drove tractor. On the road, every time I passed a telephone pole, I changed the bid,"he remembered."There was a fundraiser in Stratton and they asked me if I would do it so I got up and did it. Mr. Horvath heard me and wanted to know if I would

Telford Advent tries to

coax another bid at the

rain-soaked Salchert

Auction, south of Devlin

on Saturday.



A University of Guelph graduation photo of Telford. One of his classmates at that time was Jack Elliott. The story goes that Telford convinced Jack to come for a visit to the Rainy River District and he enjoyed Telford's Mom's cooking so much that he never left

do his sale."

...And it just went from there. I didn't advertise. It's just people heard me and they seemed to

Riverbend Auctioneering Services has evolved into a family business with the Advents' children and ten grandchildren

Thirty years after he began auctioneering, Telford went to Western School of Auctioneering. "So I am a licensed auctioneer

now,"he explained. "We sell something every 20 to 30 seconds. I don't know the price

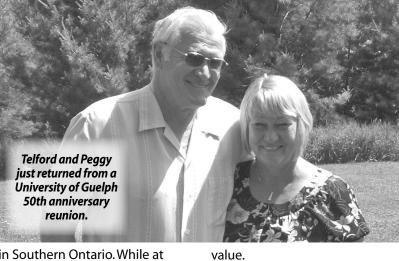
of everything but I do know the price of a lot of stuff. "I'll go up \$2 at a time, or \$3 at a time but if it's going really fast I will switch to \$5 at a time because there's something there

that somebody knows that I don't "At the Anderson sale last year there was this thing. I held it up and said I had no idea what this was. It went for \$75. I asked the buyer later what it was and he

Telford brought the idea of the Steer Auction at the fair back from the Royal Winter Fair.

said, 'I haven't got a clue,'"Telford

"They have this thing called the Queen's Ginnies. It is an auction for the top 4-H market steers



in Southern Ontario. While at Guelph I would go to these things and you would see these kids getting eight or nine dollars a pound for their steer. I thought, wouldn't it be great if they could do something like that here. It got started and it's never stopped."

"I am a big fan of 4H and I admire the businesses that support the 4H Champion Steer auction at the fair. They make it a success. They should be applauded for how they support it year after year. It helps the kids pay for university.

"It gets bigger and better every year,"he suggested.

Telford likes doing charities and remembers selling tickets to a football game for \$1,100 at a fundraiser.

"Two businesses had each decided that they wanted them. You have a lot of fun at those events,"he concluded.

Telford Advent was Reeve of Morley Township "for eight or nine years"when the township made many improvements to infrastructure: bridge replacements, drainage and other road improvements. The Curling Club was built then, with half of the project being done by volunteer labour.

He has served on the Hospital Board, The Stratton Rec Committee and Rainy River Future Development Corporation. He was founding president of the Kainy River Federation of Agriculture and President of Cattlemens' when the pens were covered. Telford also was chair of the Stratton Centennial

"I enjoy working with community and when I was away working, that is one of the things that I missed so much. Communities survive on volunteers. If we needed to pay for everything, we wouldn't have much,"Telford suggested.

Over the years, Telford Advent has received awards recognizing his contributions but the one that stands above all the others in his mind is that of Outstanding Young Canadian. The fact that he may never know who it was that considered him worthy of this recognition seems to add to its

Peggy Advent grew up in a family of five on a small beef farm at Harris Hill west of Berglund. Her dad, Amil Kreger, was a guide, trapper and partolman for the Department of Highways. Her mom, Louena was at home tending to the children, the garden and the farm.

Peggy has lived in the Stratton area for about 35 years. She and Telford were married in 2006.

Peggy attended Lakehead University for two years before starting a family and when her children were older, she went back to college, studying office administration. She then worked at the mill in Barwick for seven years, before it downsized.

"I needed a job so Telford told me to come and see if I liked pipelining,"Peggy recalled.

She started in Quality Control, then worked as Office Manager for seven years until things started to slow down about two years ago. She then did office management and payroll work at the solar farm; and then a contract position at New Gold.

"I do the administration for the auction business and Telford and I both like to volunteer when we can,"she stated.

When I moved to Stratton, I became involved with Sunday School, and as secretary of the United Church and Meadowside Manor boards as well as on Sturgeon Creek and Rainy River High School Councils.

Peggy was recruited into 4H by a couple of members who needed a leader.

"I told them that I had no experience with 4H and they said that they would teach me,"she recalled.

She was leader for 16 years and co-creator of the Community Involvement Club, which became part of the provincial 4H program.

"It is designed to help high school students, especially rural students, accumulate their required community hours as well as cultivating the idea of community involvement,"Peggy explained.

Peggy is proud to see that some of her former members are 4H leaders today.

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