

Hillbillies workin' hard doing their thing for our kids

By Cuzin' Noble Barry L. Jones

HILLBILLY SHRINE CLUB - CLAN 46

Howdy dear friends and kind-hearted neighbours. Here's a quiz: How many appearances by Hillbilly Club members does it take to make the Shrine Circus tour one of the most successful years? Well, it takes 261 - cause that's how many we did this year.

We also realize there were many other very dedicated Shriners who took much personal time to show up and work along side of us on fire watch. Each Shriner who made it his job to help out deserves much credit and I am certain your efforts were much appreciated by the Divan, the Shrine and the folks who attended each performance.

For several years, around late September, Noble Bob O'Brien and his wife, Hillbilly Mama/Lady Marion, host the very famous and sought-after Hillbilly Degree at their country residence beside the Talbot River in Kirkfield, Ontario. This year a new name: "Gathering of the Clans" (it was once called the Hillbilly Degree and Chowdown) was held on Saturday, September 27th and Shriners and Hillbillies from far and near showed up to enjoy a fun-filled afternoon, renew old acquaintances and make new friends. Amongst the 80 or so Shriner and Lady attendees, eleven Shriners and thirteen of their Ladies got up the nerve to take either the Pa or the Ma Hillbilly Degree.

Mother Nature proved kind to us - although heavy rain hit just after 9:00 p.m. - long after just everybody had headed back home for chore time. Many who had taken the Degree(s) on previous occasions also returned just to add some fun to their autumn schedules. Everybody agreed - there was hardly a nicer way to spend an afternoon in the country.

Following the Degrees, a fine Hillbilly-type outdoor meal was enjoyed (slices of hot roast on buns; delicious beans, cobs of corn, salad, plenty of cake, coffee, etc.).

Two contests were held: one for the 'best dressed Hillbilly' and the other for the 'best Hillbilly hat'. Well folks, although I am very shy, I feel I should tell you I was the best dressed Hillbilly winner! It wasn't simply because I was laying on the grass stomping my feet. I reckon it does pay to get dressed up once in awhile. Hillbilly Mama, Lady Denise Davidge was real busy organizing and selling tickets for the 50/50 draw - in fact she even tempted purchasers with homemade (and delicious) cookies - "buy 50/50 tickets-and have a cookie!" Thanks for your hard work, Denise.

Well, no event would be official without a serious side and this year was no exception. Gentle readers, do you recall the Hee Haw boys on television some years back? Well, our own Hee Haw boys made their premier performance! Now, I reckon (perhaps to avoid trademark laws) we should refer to our boys as "The Oh No Boys" (while they were singing that's what most of the spectators were heard yelling).

A true Hillbilly version of pickin' and singin' as provided for by Cuzins Bill (Sanders) on ukulele, Bill (Chisholm) on banjo and vocal backup by Jim (Rennie). Also

providing some soothing background music were Cuzin' Lorne (Howard) - maintaining the frantic tempo with his spoons and two of today's Candidates - Cuzins Rick (Morreau) and Jim (France)

- both were avidly plucking out notes on the old washtub bass fiddle.

The Oh No Boys commenced to crooning or perhaps it may be more fair to say, howling at the moon with a particular lovely song dedicated to we

Rameses Hillbilly Shrine Club members. There was hardly a dry eye to be noted,

although that could have been due to most of us peeling onions. While the crowd

clapped their hands and tapped their toes, a few of us kept watch over the fields because hunting season was getting under way and we just weren't too sure what sort of attention the hog-wallerer would garner from afield.

Marion's famous Hillbilly Fleamarket was in operation all day and with the help of some of our Hillbilly (and other) gals, a great deal of money was raised - special thanks to the many purchasers of Hillbilly items. Also a big thanks to Marion and all the ladies who volunteered to help out.

Monies raised will form part of the Hillbilly Clan 46/Rameses Hillbilly Shrine Hillbilly Clubs annual donation to our Montreal Shriners Hospital for Children and those special children we, as all Shriners, work endlessly to assist. We will, once again, be donating to the Transportation Fund to assist with all their great work. Thank you one and all!

Dear reader, it seems for sure the word is spreading far and wide amongst our Shrine Fraternity as to the popularity of this Club and the Hillbilly Degrees. Our final 2008 parades are being/or were held in Milton (November) and in Stouffville

If you haven't dozed off - continued on page 30

