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By CATHY HAMILL-HILL
Correspondent

Simon Southwell of Beaverton grew a lot of giants this year including Stefan, Mattie and Halifax. Stefan weighed in the heaviest at 928 pounds. Simon grows giant pumpkins.

Simon, a Grade 6 student, in his second year of the Brock-Georgina Garden 4-H club was the grower with the heaviest pumpkin this year. He said part of his success is with using lots of fertilizer and "I hug and pat all my giant pumpkins," he says demonstrating by giving Stefan a big hug. He says he thinks naming his pumpkins help them "grow bigger" too.

He says this "year was even crazier" for all that came to his garden. There were cucumber beetles followed an infestation of stink bugs then the massive rain storms, the young gardener said. He added there were also spells of really dry weather to the point, "we had to have three water deliveries." Simon reports this had to happen to keep the water levels topped up for watering the thirsty giants in Simon's garden because the well couldn't meet the need of the giants.

The work paid off though for Simon and he began a little business as he's had some sales for his named orange giants. They sold for .50 cents a pound and sales have included Stefan to Newmarket, Mattie to Peterborough and Halifax to Lindsay. Simon gives back 10% of all his pumpkin sales to the local food banks to help his community.

Simon was part of a large group of enthusiastic youth gardeners of the Brock-Georgiana 4-H Garden Club. The club held an achievement day at Pefferlaw Peat in Pefferlaw recently.

By ANGELIQUE FAWNS

Correspondent

The nights are getting chilly, the leaves are changing colour, sweaters and jeans are pulled out of closets, roadside stands are starting to display squash and pumpkins And it's time for the Brooks Farms Fall Festival!

At the corner of Durham Road 30 and Ashworth Road in Mount Albert, the extremely popular Brooks Family Farm looks like an agri-



Stefan (pumpkin) gets another hug from his owner, Simon Southwell of Beaverton. Simon says hugs, pats and being named are all reasons why his pumpkins grew into such giants. Simon was amazed his Stefan outweighed all the others in the enthusiastic large group of youth that made up this year's Georgina-Brock 4-H Garden Club.
Photo/CATHY HAMILL-HILL

It's time for the popular Brooks Farms Fall Festival!

cultural wonderland for children! Painted hay bales beckon, a pirate ship lures in little sailors, sheep, pigs, geese, goats and chickens beg for treats, the corn maze intrigues, and the resounding boom of the pumpkin cannon can be heard above it all!

Kelly Brooks, an owner of Brooks Farms says, "Our annual Fall Festival is on now weekends and Thanksgiving Monday until November 3. Highlights of our festival include our pumpkin cannon show, pig races,

See "A", page 2

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'A Pumpkin Cannon'

from page 1

pirate ship, corn maze, corn cob blasters, live music, zip lines, train and wagon rides, straw jumps, jumping pillow, Merk our mascot, pumpkins and more!"

Brooks Farms is a popular destination for tourists and school groups alike during the summer and fall. Many summer camps load up their little charges onto school buses and spend the day discovering farm life and playing on and with the activities.

How did this farm-based entertainment complex get its start?

Edward Brooks immigrated to Canada back in the mid 1800s when he moved his family from England to Uxbridge. A few years later they bought the farm in Mount Albert and started up a cash cropping operation.

The website explains, "For over 150 years the farm grew corn, wheat, barley, turnips, potatoes, and all sorts of farm animals. In 1990, the fourth generation farmer, Alvin Brooks and his wife Brenda, decided that growing pick your own strawberries and raspberries would help put their sons and daughter through school. In 1994, their second oldest son, Paul, decided to farm full-time with his father.

In 1998, after several years of growth with strawberries and raspberries, Brooks Farms started to offer pick your own pumpkins, and the Fall Fun Festival was born. In 2007, Kelly joined the Brooks family. Her graphic design skills were put to use rebranding the farm and giving it the quirky character's customers have come to know and love: The Barnyard Bumpkins.

Paul and Kelly were married in 2010. The festival continues to grow each year adding more attractions."

Brenda Brooks confides the farm is always busy and lots of fun! She says they hope to expand even more soon and have a bigger store on the farm with farm fresh produce and homemade baked goods, as well as even a restaurant.



Paul Brooks and Miguel Sandoval demonstrate proper pumpkin firing procedure at their annual Fall Fun Festival at Brooks Farms in Mount Albert. Photo/SUBMITTED



Brenda Brooks, Alvin Brooks, Paul Brooks and Kelly Brooks are all aboard their Brooks Farm trolley train as they get ready for another season of fall festival fun at their Mount Albert farm. Photo/SUBMITTED

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