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HAPPY ENDING

North Grenville District High School teacher pictured with husband Frank at her retirement party at the school. **3**



60 YEARS AND COUNTING

Norma and George Fisher look forward to 60 years of marriage this June. The Kempsville couple share their story. **7**



GIRL THANKS PARAMEDICS

North Gower girl meets life saving team who looked after her following an accident. **10**

The Advance

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CELEBRATE LOVE

It's the Sweetheart Brunch this Sunday

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www.yourottawaregion.com

Thursday, February 10, 2011

Ryan's Well Foundation celebrates 10 years

LJ MATHESON

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What a difference 10 years can make – an example of that is the progress that has been made by Ryan Hreljac of Kempsville, the founder of the Ryan's Well Foundation.

This year marks 10 years that the foundation has been in existence, but it was earlier than that when Hreljac decided to do something about water.

In 1998, just a young Grade 1 student, he had a plan to help deliver water to those who didn't have clean, safe drinking water.

With the support of friends, family and the community, Hreljac raised enough money to build a well in Africa. In 1999, at age seven, the first well was built at Angolo Primary School in northern Uganda. To this day, the well continues to serve the community.

"Looking back, it first started in his basement and he used to joke that the family dog was his secretary," said Erica Bruce, communications coordinator for the foundation.

Bruce said that to celebrate the 10-year anniversary, they were going to be spreading good news stories about the foundation and the work that has been done.

Although Hreljac started raising money for water projects in 1998, the Foundation was not formed until 2001.

RYAN'S WELL see page 2



J. Morin Photos/Advance Staff

AWAY WE GO!

The Alfred Taylor Recreational Hall in North Gower was the place to be for carnival fun this weekend. In this photo, Julia and Meghan Haluke and Brayden Mercer have fun on the hill behind the hall.

MORE PHOTOS see page 19

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Sixty years of Happy Valentine's Days

JOSEPH MORIN

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The secret to that perfect relationship, life-long mate and kindred spirit is more elusive than the fountain of youth.

Every year, on Valentine's Day, couples celebrate a perfect pairing or at least the potential for one. George and Norma Fisher are a Kemptville couple who have used the secret of their unique relationship to travel on a path that has taken them on a 60-year journey.

Married in 1951, the couple have lived and loved their way through good times and bad, raising a family and pursuing careers. Along the way, they never lost sight of why they married and why they are so happy together. The couple have two children Bob and Ann.

George is closing in on his 94th birthday. Norma is moving up to her 90th. Their romance was not all that assured when they first met back in Ormstown, Quebec in the late 1940's.

George was training to be a veterinarian and had spent two years in the area. Norma, a teacher at the time, in far away Montreal, came from a family farm. Norma had four brothers. She can remember the youngest one telling her, when she came back for the summer from teaching in Montreal, about the new veterinarian in town, "I was not very interested," she laughingly recalls.

George, went into the navy.



J. Morin Photo/Advance Staff

George and Norma Fisher in their home in Kemptville.

When he returned, he established a new veterinary practice in Ormstown. He was originally from Sackville New Brunswick but most of his training had been around Ormsville. "We went to the same dances," explained Norma, "but we never met each other." The first real time they took notice of one another was at a friend's wedding. George wanted to be the one to be with Norma but Norma was already committed to take the newly married couple to the train. "She stood me up," said George. That same summer, the two started dating but George was keeping his plans to himself. "I could not tell if he was serious," remembers Norma. Eventually George invited Norma, who was back at work, to come with him to a veterinary convention in Montreal. "I had two dates lined up for that weekend," said Norma,

ring. He had already proposed. George had made up his mind that Norma was the one. They were married in June 1951. "On our wedding day it was raining," said Norma, "As we came out of the church the sun was shining and it has been shining ever since."

The secret to their successful marriage has a great deal to do with their personal values about themselves and those around them. "I am a firm believer that there is never a need for two people to lose respect for each other," George said. "We would not always agree on everything but we would always find a way to work things out," added Norma. They both agreed that there were times when they were far apart on different issues but after thinking over how they felt, and the information they had,

they were always able to find the middle ground.

In 1969, George and Norma came to Kemptville, after spending 10 years in Prince Edward Island and eight years in Peterborough. In Kemptville, George worked at the Kemptville Campus heading up the veterinary diagnostic laboratory for eastern Ontario. He retired from that position in 1982 after 29 years at the college. The couple say they could never leave Kemptville. Their grandchildren and great grand children are close by. They both feel Kemptville is the best place in the country to be living in. Norma described the Kemptville community as a very kind and generous one.

This June, George and Norma will be celebrating 60 years together. "We really have a wonderful marriage," said Norma.

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Please send a short covering letter and resume to:
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