

Mansonville Elementary spaghetti fundraiser



THE SCOOP
MABLE HASTINGS

On Friday, Nov. 29, Mansonville Elementary School held a spaghetti supper and bake sale fundraiser at the school. Spaghetti with a variety of sauces as well as salads was on the menu. The bake sale table gave people the opportunity to enjoy a variety of homemade desserts.

With over 100 people in attendance, the evening was a big success and those who attended really enjoyed the meal. Some of the door prizes were donated by Virgin Hill Coffee, as well as a variety of gifts donated by Shawn Jersey, the chair

of the parent participation organization and Tara Graves, the school secretary. Jane Woodard won the hockey tickets that were donated by school principal Nathalie Chartrand and her husband.

Members of the Students Against Destructive Decisions group served mocktails with a Holiday theme. The red drink was called “Rockin’ Red New Year’s Punch” and the green drink was called “Green Greetings.”

The SADD youth presented Chartrand and the students at MES with a new microwave to improve the school’s hot lunch program. This is the second microwave that SADD has donated to the school.

A second microwave will also be presented to the Baluchon French school next week.

With an increase in student numbers, parent participation and a great showing of community support, Mansonville Elementary School continues to look to the future with optimism and pride.

MES staff, students and parents wish to extend their appreciation to all who



A group of students at the recent Mansonville Elementary fundraiser. At the centre, two SADD members with the microwave that the group donated to the school.

contributed to, attended and supported this fundraising event. For more information about Mansonville Elementary, visit their page on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/MansonvilleElementarySchool.

Their cheese doesn’t stink

A dairy from the Townships is named winner of the best Quebec cheese in 2014.

By Myriam Beaulieu
Special to The Record
RACINE

The cheese dairy “Fromagerie Nouvelle-France” from Racine was honoured this fall during the biggest cheese competition in the Quebec industry: “Selection Caseus 2014.” The 15th edition of this event, which took place at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Quebec City highlights the work of cheese makers from around the province.

Among the 175 cheeses competing, the three cheeses submitted by the Fromagerie Nouvelle-France won prizes. “Le Pionier” was chosen as the best cheese made with a mix of two kinds of milk (cow and sheep). The “La Madelaine”

was the winner in the category “ewe milk soft cheese”. Finally, the “Zacharie Cloutier,” in addition to being the winner in the category “firm dough ewe milk cheese,” won the Golden Caseus 2014. This award recognizes the best Quebec cheese of the year and since it was the second time it was recipient of this award, it also received the Caseus Emeritus.

For a company that established itself only five years ago, it is an impressive success. But this success is based on a business model crafted with great care. In 2009, Marie-Chantal Houde and her brother, Jean-Paul Houde, became co-owners of the farm on which they grew up, located in the village of Racine. Marie-Chantal was already an agronomist and had completed a one-year training course in cheesemaking in the French region of Jura.

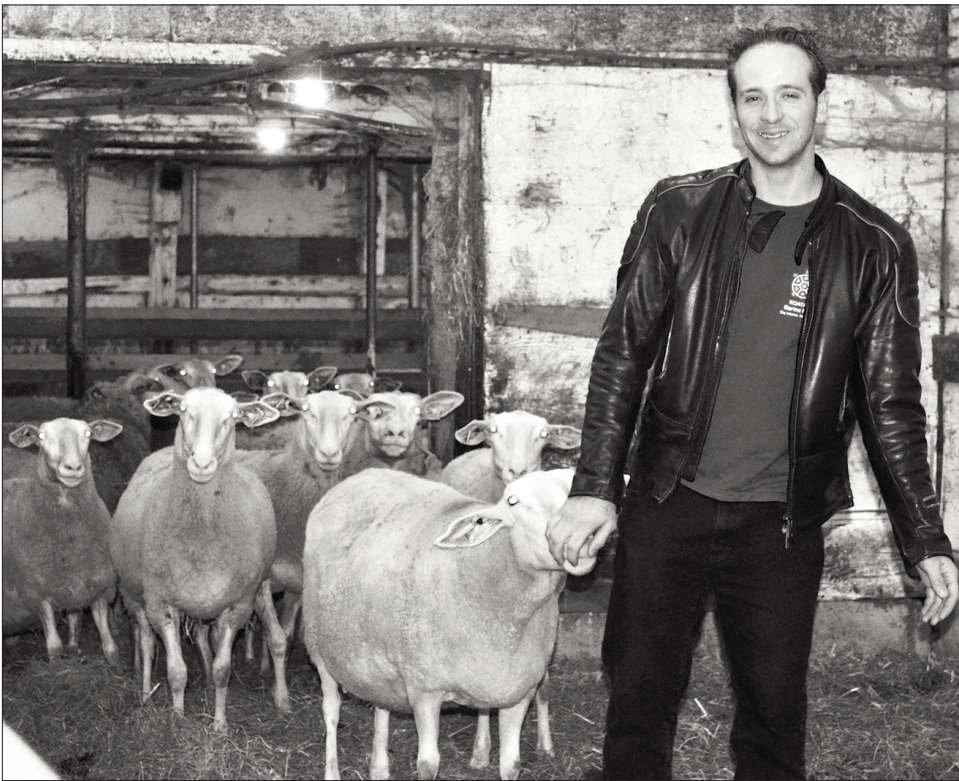
Jean-Paul had always worked on the farm, first with dairy cows and then with beef cows and was an experienced farmer. Together they decided to buy a herd of dairy sheep to transform their own ewe milk into cheese.

Very quickly, the cheese production increased, turning the Fromagerie Nouvelle-France into one of the biggest ewe milk processors in Quebec.

Although they have a herd of about 300 sheep, and milk about one hundred of them daily, the cheese factory soon needed more milk to keep up with the demand.

They then started to buy milk from two other farms, one in Sainte-Catherine-de-Hatley, that agreed to meet the same rigorous set of specifications.

“The quality of the milk is of great importance for the cheese. No silage is given to the ewes because this would have a huge impact on the taste. The sheep are fed with forage and grains, which are mostly produced on the



Jean-Paul Houde with some of his ewes, whose milk is the basis for his award-winning cheeses.

farm,” says Jean-Paul Houde.

When it comes to selling the cheese, the Houdes value greatly their local consumers. A small boutique has been installed in the house of the “Marché Locavore de Racine,” and is open year-round. “It’s important for us to have a storefront. It allows us to have a close contact with people. We also have some exclusive products” explains Jean-Paul Houde. Moreover, thanks to a partnership with the company “Plaisirs Gourmet”, the cheeses are distributed in over 200 outlets in Quebec and in a few specialty stores across Canada.

However, when looking ahead, Jean-Paul Houde is a little concerned.

“The new free trade agreement with Europe,” he says, “will allow an additional 17,700 tons of European specialty cheeses to enter the country. We know that we will soon have more competition and that it might be difficult for us. Although we are already well established, we can’t rest on our Caseus prizes. We must constantly seek improvement. Fortunately, my sister is very strict about all the little details and that’s what makes our success.”

The construction of a cheese dairy on the farm is part of their long term plan because, for now, all the milk is processed at the Fromagerie du Presbitère in St-Élizabeth de Warwick.



The Zacharie Cloutier cheese, which won the Golden Caseus award