

## Keith's Corner/McGill News

There wasn't much happening in our fair town this week. It is rather quiet, since all the out of towners left. Kind of nice to visit with them. Too bad it is only once a year. That has always been the problem here, so many great friends have moved to other parts. Whit Pine County raises a lot of wonderful folks and then they move away, to find better jobs and further education opportunities.

The work on the IOOF Hall has not started yet. I still haven't found out who owns the new cell tower. Nobody around. Don't even know if it is working.

The McGill birthday party is just around the corner, so I hope lots of you plan on attending. It is a great place to visit old friends and the kiddies can get in on the free swimming in the world's greatest natural pool.



The firemen serve up some great hot dogs. There is a street dance on main street and of course a parade. Plan to attend and have some fun.

# Keith's Corner

Speaking of BBQs made me remember how lucky we are to have the best wood to use for cooking, the good old mountain mahogany. It is one of the hardest woods known to mankind. The local chefs have figured out the best way to get some coals, building a burn barrel. It is better than just having a bonfire and saves on wood. They are easy to make and are well worth the effort.



*Figure 1--Burn barrel at Monte Neva BBQ*

The mahogany itself is getting hard to find, but most locals have a favorite top secret place to get it. The actual trip to get a load is almost as much fun as the BBQ. I remember one time when Kendal Horton, Pinky Krmpotic and museld went ot get some wood for a BBQ in Duck Creek. We found a good spot and got the chain saws out and trimmed up some close trees down to a stump. Pinky then informed us that the best and hottest burning mahogany was found under the ground in the form of roots. So we decided to take out some stumps and

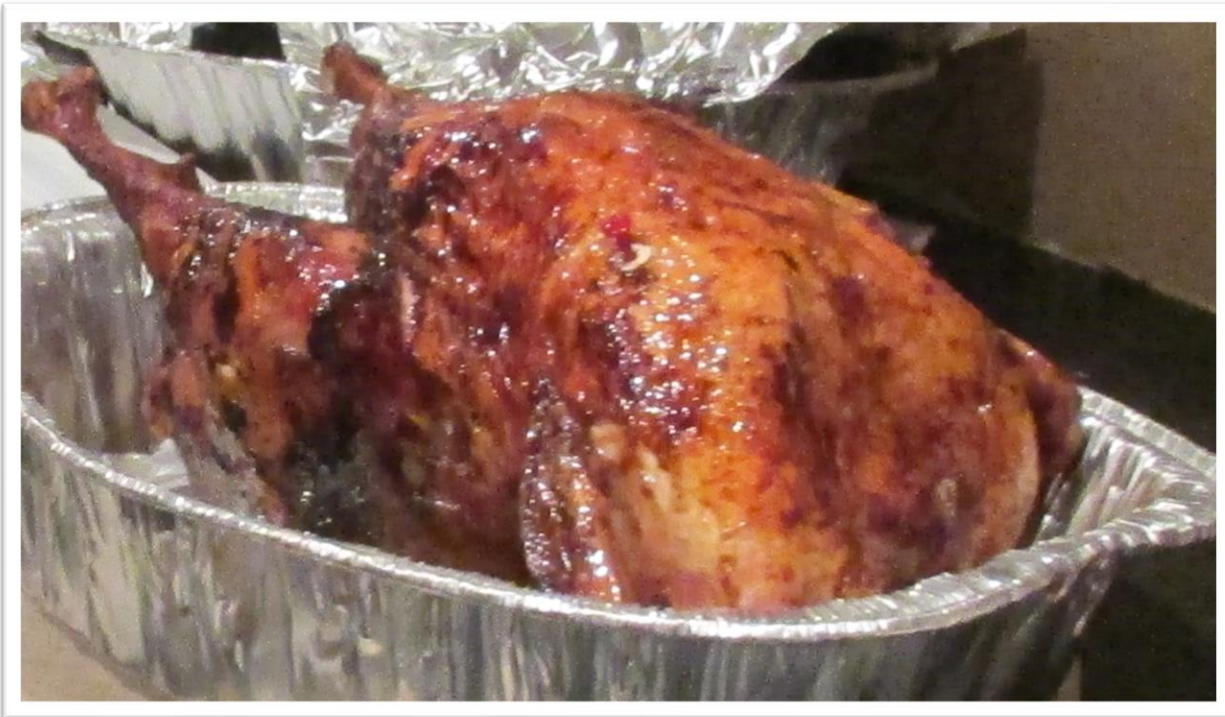
roots. Kendal and I hiked up the hill and hooked a long 25 foot chain on a stump and to Pinky's trusted old blue Chev. He had backed up the hill, which was a bit steep but he used his 4 wheel drive. He started to pull the stump, but it wouldn't move. He kept trying and then he hopped out and told us to get out of the way. He backed right up to the stump and gunned the motor and headed down the hill. I thought the chain would break or he would lose his bumper. The stump did come out and shot into the air and started to bounce down the hill. It looked for a minute like it would catch up to the Chevy, but Pinky saw it coming and gunned the motor and managed to stay ahead of the stump. We took out several stumps, had a few cold beers and headed for the barn. At the place I was staying in Duck Creek we, proceeded to cut up the roots. They are a red color and are twisted around all kinds of rocks. That didn't stop Pinky, he cut right thru the roots AND rocks. He was one of a kind. We ended up with a nice pile of BBQ wood. Then it was time for some relaxing in the shade and some good bourbon on the rocks. What a great way to spend a day. Fresh air, sunshine, beautiful country, good exercise, great buddies and tasty bourbon.

The step in the process is to invite some buddies and get a party going. We got the burn barrel out and filled it with mahogany small branches. Pinky poured some gasoline in the barrel and threw a match in and barroom, the fire was roaring. While it was burning down, we cut up oranges, apples, onions limes and anything else handy and added some wine, after we all tasted it to make sure it was a good vintage. That usually wipes out more than half the wine. We mix all the stuff together and stuff the turkeys. Then with a burlap sack curved needle we sew up the birds and slide them onto the spit. After a few beers we put the spit on the motor and around it goes. Someone adds the proper amount of coals in the prescribed places and start the cooking. About an hour later we have some turkeys starting to brown up a bit. Using someone's old pair of shorts we baste the birds. The shorts are part of the ritual for the newcomers to get nervous.

Everyone knows exactly what to do and the whole process runs like a well beered machine. Someone puts more wood in the barrel and others put more coals when needed to keep the heat at the precise tenth of a degree. It is a wonderful thing to watch. After lots of stories and beer the master chef announces that the birds are done. We let them rotate without hear for a few moments and then to the cutting table. After at least one cut finger the meat is put in a cooler to stay

hot until served. More beer and more wild stories and then we eat all the and other platters of food that the guest brought. After gorging ourselves on those items , we hit the dessert table and cram some more into our bodies. It is amazing how much one can cram in at one time, when you know how and practice it many times over the years.

Then it is time to get the guitars out and massacre some old songs. All in all it is one of the best times in my life. Eating at the Ritz in NY is child's play to a good old BBQ.



*Figure 2--The end product.*