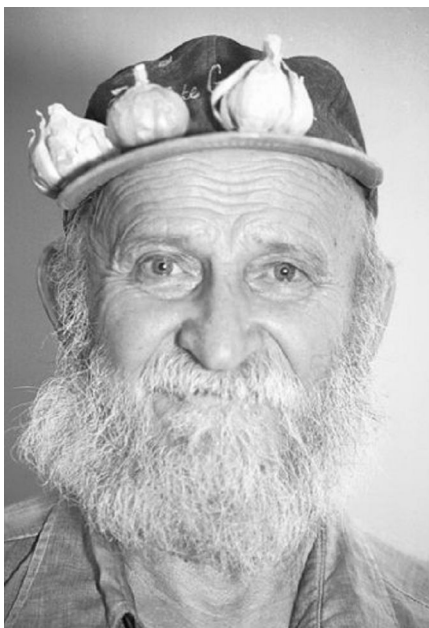


NEWS LOCAL**Garlic Man known for his optimism**

By Emily Mountney, The Intelligencer
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Ted Maczka

A well-known Prince Edward County man died this week.

Ted Maczka, also known as the Fish Lake Garlic Man, died Monday after suffering a stroke.

Though they may not have known his name, residents here and across the region could recognize Maczka by the baseball cap he used to wear – with large bulbs of garlic affixed to it – and his car, with a giant garlic statue seated on top.

He was a common sight around the area, selling his home grown bulbs and touting the bulb's health benefits; he believed there's no better way to fight the flu than to chew on a couple bulbs of garlic.

Maczka was born in Poland. He survived World War II and was imprisoned in a slave labour camp for a period of time. He came to Canada in the 1970s and eventually bought a small farm near Fish Lake.

After learning that a lot of Canada's garlic comes from China, Maczka became determined to change that.

He attended farmers' markets and produce and garlic festivals across the province, even taking it to the Royal Winter Fair.

Tim Noxon, co-owner of Vicki's Veggies in Milford, had known Maczka for about 10 years.

"Ted was a very determined person," Noxon said. "He cared incredibly and was very passionate about garlic, but also about the reality that we can be very self-sustaining in Ontario with agriculture, much more so than we are, and he knew that from hard work and doing it.

"He did some amazing things on his own little farm there."

Noxon said Maczka made a "big impact" on a lot of existing and new farmers.

"I know people who just dabble in farming but really want to grow their own garlic and they do it now because of him," he said. "One of the varieties of garlic that did the best for us this year was actually one variety called Fish Lake.

"Interestingly enough, we got it from a friend, who got it from somebody in Nova Scotia. So it had traveled from here to Nova Scotia and back again."

Noxon also describes Maczka as a very strong-minded person "when it came to the issue of Quinte Conservation and the Ministry of the Environment altering waterways and flooding his land. It was revealing of his character, he was very strong-minded and passionate about a lot of things.

"It's happening more and more these days that we're losing people in the farming world who had a lot of impact and made a lot of changes and there's not a lot of young people to replace them," said Noxon.

Local artist Milé Murtanovski met Maczka during his Field to Canvas project in 2011. The painter featured the Garlic Man in a series of portraits of Prince Edward County farmers.

In his portrait, Maczka was shown wearing a giant garland of garlic around his shoulders.

"I was really happy to meet Ted," Murtanovski said. "He loves to talk about garlic, and he has all kinds of amazing stories about his life. He lived a long life, very complicated, and often difficult.

"What interested me was that he never dwelt on those difficulties, he sort of just mentions those in passing. He mentions that he was in a Russian slave camp, but he doesn't go on and on about it."

Instead, Maczka was focused on the future.

"I felt that was really inspirational," Murtanovski said. "He certainly made a huge impact on a lot of lives. The chatter on Facebook is quite heavy with people sharing reminiscences and stories of Ted.

"I think the strongest characteristic was that he was always optimistic. That's what I learned from Ted, aside from a lot about garlic."

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