Patches are packed

Rush is on with beginning of strawberry season

by Terri Howell

If it's true the early bird gets the worm, it's doubly true the early bird gets the berries.

The Strawberry Season only opened last Friday and already the rush at the berry patches is on.

If you plan to pick your own count on rising before 8 a.m. and having your berries picked before 10. At Foster's, a local strawberry picking place located a half mile off the Balm Beach Road, cars filled with eager pickers were lined up at 9 a.m. Wednesday morning waiting to getting a parking spot and get picking. By 10 a.m. people were already complaining the berries "were picked out."

Midland only has a few places close at hand were you can pick your own strawberries. However, for those who are willing to travel further afield there's a number of places on Highway 12, 93 and 27. Prices range from 45 to 60 cents a quart.

Mrs. Foster told The Times they had to close the patch down by noon several times this week because the ripe berries were picked out. She advises pickers to come at 8 a.m.

At Foster's there is a number of different patches. Pickers are loaned baskets if they require them and pointed toward a patch. Several workers in the patch assign each picker a row. It isn't uncommon to see people wandering in search of greener pastures and picking in someone elses assigned row.

Once the baskets are full the cost is tabulated by a worker sitting in a strategic position between patches in a half ton truck. Loaned baskets have to be returned.

At 9 a.m. Wednesday, Foster's berry patch was dotted with stooped pickers of all ages. Occasionally a strawberry still wet with dew didn't make it past a picker s mouth.

There wasn't much conversation since most people were more concerned with picking enough berries before the patch was "picked out". However, people who were talking were discussing the fate of the berries at home.

'I'll make a little jam, freeze a few for the winter and we'll enjoy the rest now," one lady told her friend.

At 10 a.m. the pickers began to wander more as the ripe berries became sparser and sparser. Several people began to complain to each other as they surveyed the rows. However, none of them took time to stoop and search out the succulent ripe berries the first person over the row had missed.

One of the workers, who was too busy too stop and talk, said once one patch is picked out he has another one to go to. He wasn't disclosing were it was until all the ripe berries had been picked. He also said he couldn't begin to guess how many people came through the patch in a day.

"It usually drops off at noon," he said.

By 10:30 the volume of traffic had dropped off and it looked as though his prediction would be right.

Canadian strawberries are second to none in the world because of the growing season. Mr. Foster told The Times last week before his patch opened that he had some "really big ones" this year.

They're going fast, so would be pickers had better get their baskets out of moth balls and get going before the season is over for another year.

One for all

One for the basket and one for the mouth. Many a strawberry doesn't get passed the picker's mouth. If you plan on picking berries this year count on rising early and being in the berry patch b efore 9 a.m.

Staff photo

Stooped

Stooped bodies literally covered Foster's Strawberry patch Wednesday as area residents rushed to pick their own before the season is over. There are several places around Midland for people to pick their own berries.

Staff photo

Lacrosse juveniles win 10-4

Goaltender Dunc Brownell played a standout game in net and added three assists to lead Midland's juvenile lacrosse team to a 10-4 victory over Orillia last Thursday in Huronia Minor Lacrosse action at Orillia.

Seven Midland players counted in the goal scoring, indicative of the fine team effort displayed in the convincing win. Chris Wright and Kirk Swales scored three times each for the winners, and Dave Ironside, Dave Rutherford, Jeff Wright and Martin Veall had one each.

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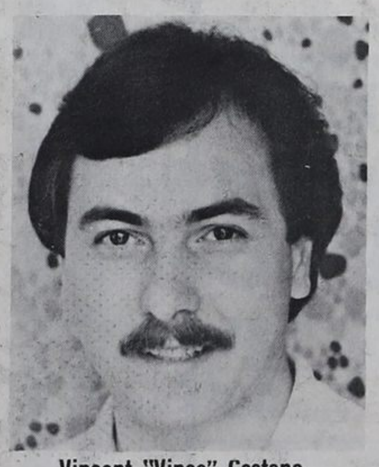

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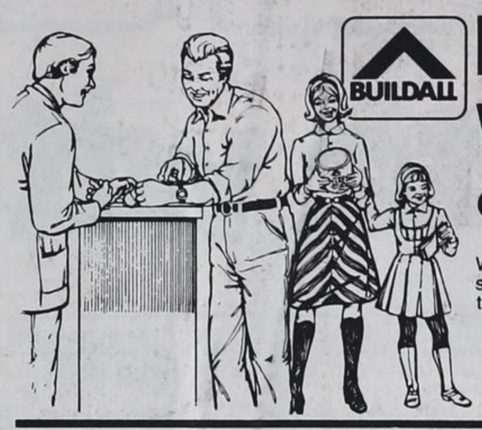

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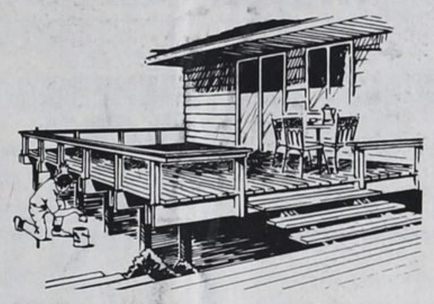

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