

'Spirit' of Cherry Hill Farm still lives



A plaque has been erected at Markville Shopping Centre to mark the location of Cherry Hill Farm. Shown with the plaque (from left) is Jack Disraeli of mall owners JDS Ltd.; Betty Madsen, who owned Cherry Hill Farm; and Markham Mayor Carole Bell. — Sjoerd Witteveen

By ROBERT DONNELLY
Although nothing remains of the 100-year-old red barn at the top of the hill on McCowan Rd. and Hwy. 7, its spirit still lives on.

The Markville Shopping Centre is now located on the site of the old Cherry Hill Farm which was vacated to make way for progress in June 1980.

Markville paid tribute to this legacy recently by erecting a plaque commemorating "a special place," that was "an oasis of artistic and spiritual inspiration for many people over the years."

For 35 years Markham's Madsen family called Cherry Hill Farm home. But, it was also much more. It was a factory for gym equipment, a Danish folk school and art studio, and a spiritual retreat for Christians of all denominations.

"It was there to fulfill a need, whatever it may have been," reflected Betty Madsen, who at 76 is as youthful and optimistic as ever.

Betty Madsen emigrated to Canada from Denmark in 1929. She was married in 1935 to John Madsen, who died in 1952 of a heart attack. Ironically, although

they both came from the same county in Denmark and emigrated at the same time, they met each other for the first time on Canadian soil.

According to Mrs. Madsen, Cherry Hill was her husband's vision. "He had a clear picture of what he wanted, like a dream," she recalls.

After two years of searching they finally stumbled upon the Cherry Hill site which was not for sale at the time and was in a dilapidated state.

In order to cover the increasing costs of operating the farm, they sold off the original 100 acres in small increments.

However, Mrs. Madsen, who is currently living in Markham with her daughter, Anne-Lis, is optimistic about the future.

Together, they have turned their creative talent in sculpting to making ceramic jewelry. This jewelry, each set unique and colorful, will be displayed at a boutique at Expo in Vancouver, where Anne-Lis adds, "there will be more than 40,000 people going through the Canadian Pavilion each day."

Anglers can fish locally

Anglers in Stouffville, Markham, Uxbridge and area don't have to travel far to cast a line today (April 26) on the opening day of trout season.

The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA) offers a total of five fishing sites, including Bruce's Mill Conservation Area on Stouffville Road, east of Warden Ave.

The public's also welcome at MTRCA'S Greenwood facility in northern Pickering; Albion Hills, Bolton; Glen Haffy near Mono Mills; and Heart Lake in the Brampton area.

Fishermen can try to land rainbow, brown and brook trout at these facilities beginning today at 8 a.m.

After the opening weekend, fishing hours at Authority sites change to 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Parking is \$2.50 per car on weekdays and \$4 on weekends.

For more information contact MTRCA offices at (416) 661-6600.

March 26 is also the date Uxbridge branch 170 of the Royal Canadian Legion hosts its annual Walter Bryant Memorial Trout Derby. Boys and girls aged 14 and under are invited to take part in the day-long event at Elgin Pond.

TEA holds Markham meeting

The Markham chapter of the Toronto Executives Association (TEA) is holding a breakfast meeting at the ChimoHotel next Tuesday for new and potential members.

Though invitation only, any company wishing to attend can call Helen Faver, director of the Toronto chapter.

Only one company within any business class is allowed to join the TEA. Mrs. Faver advises interested parties to call her for information and eligibility requests at 481-5148.

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