

Bruce's Mill Harvest Fest offers fun for the family

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Correspondent

The second annual Harvest Fest at Bruce's Mill Conservation Area on Stouffville Road offers a fun-filled weekend for all the family on Sept. 18 and 19.

Last year's event drew more than 3,000 people, said the facility's assistant superintendent, Mark Doherty.

"The theme is centred around our historic mill on site, which will be operating on the weekend."

A host of activities is planned, including a farmers' market, arts and crafts sales, a country bake sale, children's games and horse-drawn wagon rides. As well, Model A and Model T cars will be on display.

Clog dancers from Newmarket, along with musicians, singers and clowns, will offer entertainment throughout the weekend.

History buffs will enjoy browsing through the fascinating collection of antique farm tools, steam engines, tractors and other farm implements which will be on display during Harvest Fest.

"The York-Durham Heritage Railway Association is doing rides for the kids and we'll have a blacksmith on site," Doherty said.

"Sundance Balloons are sponsoring a raffle for us, which gives you a chance to win one of two champagne balloon flights for two."

Proceeds from Harvest Fest will go towards the restoration of the mill itself, which dates back to the mid-19th Century. A mill was originally built on the site in 1829 by a German settler called Casper Sherk, whose family was brought to the area from Genessee, New York by William Berczy in 1794.

The land was subsequently purchased by the Bruce family,

who built the present mill in 1858, and it remained in the family until the late 1950s.

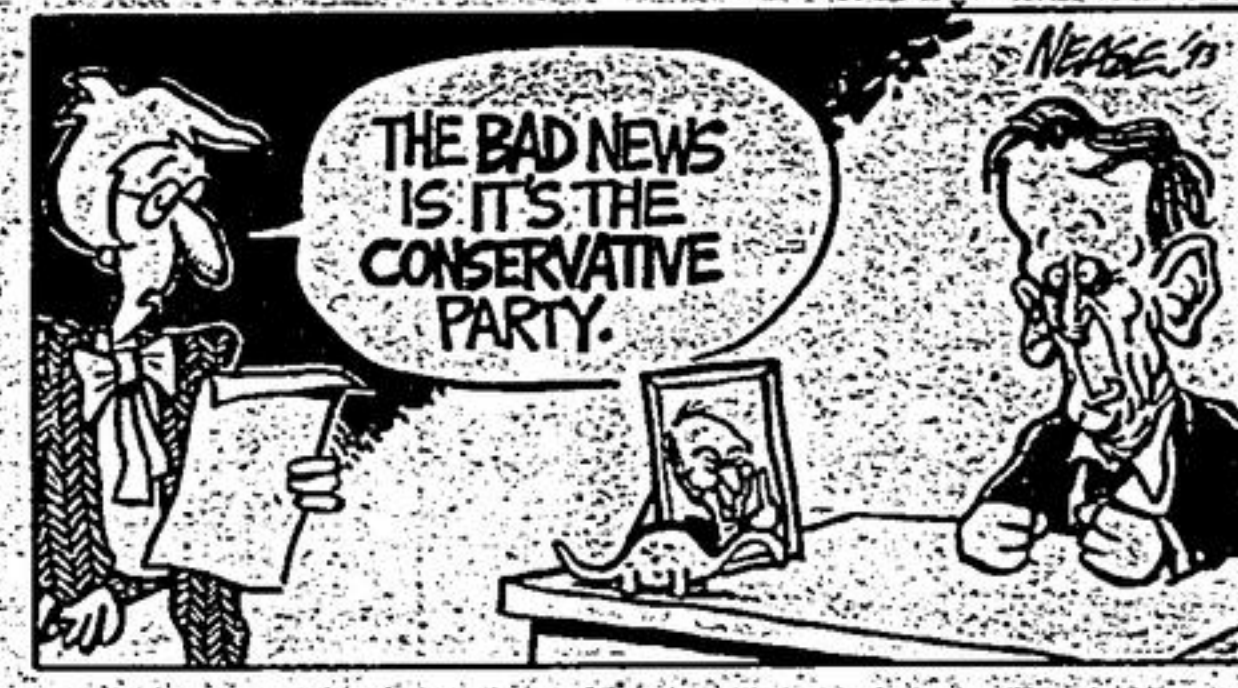
At that time, the property was purchased by the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

Since then, the area surrounding the mill has been transformed into a public park, with picnic sites and a swimming area. Each spring, Bruce's Mill hosts a maple syrup festival, drawing large crowds from a wide area.

The machinery in the mill dates from the early 1920s and a considerable amount of renovation work on the building has already been carried out.

Admission to Harvest Fest is \$2 for adults, \$1.50 for seniors and \$1 for children 5 to 14, with younger children admitted free of charge.

Bruce's Mill is located on Stouffville Road, three kilometres east of Highway 404. For more information call 661-6600, ext. 203.



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