

Throwback to days of real farming

There aren't many legitimate farmers left in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

There are, of course, pretenders to the trade, the wannabe farmers who, in recent years, have moved into the area and established an estate operation on 10 or 15 acres. However, for some of these Johnny-come-latelies, the understanding of real work will never be realized.

Then there are the retirees or former farmers who've never lost the skills of their trade but still, on occasion, enjoy being reminded of the good times they once knew.

Friday afternoon was one such event, an old-time threshing bee on the property of Harry and Murray Lewis, on McCowan Road south of Stouffville.

I was there, not in the role of a worker, but an observer. And so were many others, ranging from the very young to the very old, all with a desire for a moment at least, to reverse the hands of time a half century or more.

This event, held at the discretion of the weather fore-caster, provides grist for the mill at both the Markham Museum and Markham Fair where country meets city each fall.

While most were content to watch, the role players made it work, including 94-year-old Earl Appleton. Displaying the agility of someone half his age, he rode a Frost & Wood binder behind a Super A Farmall, guided by Gord Lewis of Roseville.

A step back in history was brought to the fore by Blair Purcell aboard a Massey-Harris binder, hauled by a trio of beautiful Belgians. Despite the heat of a mid-day sun, these heavy-haulers handled the task with ease.

The twine-bound sheaves were quickly handled by a contingent of willing volunteers including Kevin Smith, Scott Redshaw, Blake Purcell and Wesley Howe, all nine years old. It was an event they'll never forget.

The threshing machine, found in Grand Valley and manufactured by Lobsinger Bros. of Mildmay, was powered by a 10-20 McCormack-Deering. This tractor, purchased new in 1937 by Allan Lewis Sr., came with flat steel wheels.

Murray Lewis vividly recalls the difficulties encountered backing the machine up the barn hill when the grade was the least bit slippery. Steel lugs were later added, then rubber tires.

The threshing machine was expertly fed by Trevor Watson of Stouffville and Les Smith of Blackwater. Although a few bugs were encountered, nothing was so serious it couldn't be fixed with a twist of a wrench.

All activities were recorded by video pros Betty Burkholder and Lorne Smith.

While much of the interest centred around the cutting and threshing of grain, there were other things to see as well. These included an International cutting box, an International corn binder, a Frost & Wood hay mower and a walking plow.

ABANDONED AT FAIRGROUNDS

The hay mower is a story on its own: it was abandoned on Markham fairgrounds and later purchased by Harry Lewis for \$50.

"It was in terrible shape," brother Gord recalls, "broken down and covered with rust." Today, it looks like new.

While news of the bee was mostly word-of-mouth, the event has become a tradition. People, some from a distance, come to be apart.

And, as it was in years past, they brought their appetites, even those who, like myself, were only spectators. Goodies such as pie, cake and ice cream were available in abundance.

"It's great that country folk can still get together," said Marion Wells of Lemonville. With a few town infiltrators mixed in.

How long will this last? In Whitchurch-Stouffville, even York Region, the years of the legitimate farmer are numbered.

But memories kept fresh by the fortitude of a few, will continue to be renewed thanks to history in action.

Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 50 years.



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

ROXY
THEATRES OF UXBRIDGE
CALL 852-ROXY (7699)
FOR SHOWS & TIMES
www.roxytheatres.com

Wild For Herbs Festival & SALE
Sunday Aug. 17, 10am-4pm
HERBS!
plants, herb crafts, food & drink, free demos, free samples and more!
FREE ADMISSION
Richters
357 Hwy. 47, Goodwood
905-640-6677 www.richters.com

PROSTATE
MET A NICE DOCTOR

PROSTATE CANCER. IT'S A GUY THING.

Canadian Society of Prostate Cancer
www.prostatecancer.ca

Prostate Cancer. It's a Guy Thing.

Get the Canadian Cancer Society's free Cancer Information Service at 1-888-979-1133.

Art in the Park 2003
August 16-17 • 10-5pm Elgin Park Uxbridge, Ont.

- Over 70 artists
- Silent Auction
- Roving Entertainers
- Original Creations
- Childrens Art Projects
- Food & Refreshments

FREE Admission
Plenty of FREE Parking

SEARS Outlet Store
...Off Price Everyday!®

SHOPS ON STEELES & 404 Location

OFF PRICE EVERYDAY!!
Our stores receive merchandise already drastically reduced plus special buys and everyday good values.

SALE IN EFFECT FRI. AUGUST 15 TO FRI. AUGUST 22
While quantities last.

BACK TO SCHOOL EVENT!

All Children's DENIM PANTS 25% OFF Our Outlet Prices	Children's Selected BHPC SWEAT TOPS 25% OFF Our Outlet Prices	Children's Selected FALL JACKETS 25% OFF Our Outlet Prices	All Men's DENIM PANTS & OVERALLS 50% OFF Our Outlet Prices	All Women's DENIM FASHIONS 50% OFF Our Outlet Prices
Men's & Women's Selected WIND SUITS & NYLON PANTS 40% OFF Our Outlet Prices Excludes: Adidas, Nike, Fila, Reebok	Selected SATIN STRIPE COMFORTERS, BED SPREADS & BED SKIRTS 40% OFF Our Outlet Prices	Selected BURGUNDY COLOUR TOWELS 25% OFF Our Outlet Prices	All SHOWER CURTAINS 40% OFF Our Outlet Prices	Selected PICTURE FRAMES \$2.99 ea. Excludes: Delta Graphics

CHECK OUT OUR UNADVERTISED IN-STORE MANAGER'S SPECIALS

Personal shopping only. All merchandise sold as is and all sales are final. No exchanges, returns or adjustments on previously purchased merchandise; savings offers cannot be combined. No dealers. We reserve the right to limit quantities. Prices do not include home delivery. Although we strive for accuracy, unintentional errors may occur. We reserve the right to correct any error. Reg. "Was" and "Sears selling price" refer to the Sears Catalogue or Retail store price current at time of merchandise receipt. Offers valid at Sears Shops on Steeles & 404 Outlet Store shown only. Merchandise selection varies by store. For other hot deals, visit the Outlet Site at www.sears.ca

SPECIAL OFFERS IN EFFECT FRIDAY AUGUST 15 to FRIDAY AUGUST 22, 2003 UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED OR WHILE QUANTITIES LAST.

Shop often... save big on Sears Quality & Value.

HOURS
Mon-Fri 10:00 am - 9 pm
Sat 9:30 am - 6 pm
Sun 11:00 am - 6 pm
Shop often... save big on Sears quality at discounted prices!

24 HOUR CATALOGUE SHOPPING
1-800-26SEARS
2003 SEARS CANADA INC.
VISIT OUR OUTLET SITE AT www.sears.ca
FOR MORE HOT DEALS!

SEARS
Master Card VISA AMERICAN EXPRESS

Copyright 2003 Sears Canada Inc.