

Bicycle still won't get you to tomorrow's prom

I was 17 and in Grade 12 when fate had me attend my first formal dance.

The location was Markham High, then at Church and Albert streets. While the site was anything but grandiose, the occasion was exclusive, a highlight of the school's social season.

Most guys and gals, then considered seniors, were paired months in advance. Because some were already going steady, there was no need for last-minute match making. Their fortunes were secure.

Mine too, or so I thought. But my choice, a brown-eyed Grade 11 student, had other ideas. At the last minute, she selected the luxury of a chrome-laden Oldsmobile rather than the crossbar of a hand-me-down bicycle. So I pedalled to the dance alone.

However, in the end, I had the last laugh. Sort of. The teacher organizer, out of pity, selected me to carry the queen's crown. But with that, my act ended. For, on reaching the throne, a Romeo stepped out of the crowd and danced this make-believe lady love off into the dark.

My bubble had burst. I rode home the way I arrived — alone.

Spring proms, while special back then, were, for the most part, very basic. At least for guys. Sure, we dressed up, but only what one might wear to church or Sunday school. No fancy formals. Girls, however, went all out, assuming the imagery of dancing Barbie dolls.

The admission price, if I remember rightly, was \$2 per person or \$3 a couple. Transportation posed no problem since most borrowed their dad's car. Fuel was cheap too, bargain basement petrol pumped from tractor barrels.

But that was 60 years ago. How different today. Like tomorrow night, when senior students of Stouffville District Secondary School climb the social summit and survey the grandeur beyond.

The location's no ordinary gymnasium, but a ballroom. Cars aren't Fords, Chevs and Plymouths, but limos. Couple admission isn't \$3, but \$150.

How different today. While fashions change, enthusiasm remains.

"We're all very excited," admits Sarah Parry, "it's the social highlight of the year." She calls it "a Grade 12 night," with Grade 11's admitted if they're part of a date. The same rule applies to students who don't attend the school.

With respect to cost, the \$150 is sometimes split between the boy and girl or the boy may wish to cover it all, Sarah says.

Similarly, limo fees are usually divided among passengers, as many as 10 in a



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

car, she explains.

Twin sisters Allison and Alanna Lloyd are members of the prom committee. Allison expects 250 students to attend the dinner and dance beginning at 6 p.m. and concluding at 11:30 p.m. Male formal wear is usually rented, Allison says, but girls like to buy their dresses, some costing as much as \$200.

Why not reduce expenses and hold the prom in the school? I asked.

"We want to get away," Allison explains, "we want something larger and fancier."

A prom king and queen will be selected and crowned as part of the evening's event.

On one issue, Sarah, Allison and the school stand firm. Alcohol is out.

"Anyone suspected of drinking won't be allowed in," Allison notes, "and anyone caught drinking inside will be evicted."

Sarah expects several staff members to attend for two reasons: To enjoy themselves and serve as chaperones.

Undoubtedly, the biggest swing in a half-century of prom dating is the shift from ordinary cars to stretch limos.

Here at Stouffville and elsewhere around York Region, Markham First Choice Limousines has a fleet of six Lincolns ready and waiting.

The cost of escorting 10 prom-goers to Woodbridge and return is \$375.

"Some firms use older cars. These vehicles cost less," a spokesperson said. Trips can also cost more, much more, he said, depending on distances travelled. It's common for expenses to be divided among users of the service, he said.

The way it works, one person assumes responsibility for bookings. Arrangements are then made for pick-ups and deliveries, before the prom begins and after it's over, so no one's kept waiting.

Whatever the agreement, it sure beats transporting your darling date on the crossbar of a hand-me-down bike.

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

MAPLE SUGAR HAM

Appearing at the deli this week will be our now famous maple sugar ham. What makes it famous? It's the texture and flavour that only the homemade way can deliver. Mechanized ham production as the big boys practice can't do this. In the case of ham, small is good — actually, really good!

Reg. \$2.29/100g

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK

WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

We'll be making a whole bunch of our beef Bourguignon for our freezer section this week. This is another of those old fashioned dishes that's pretty time consuming to make in the traditional way. Our customers are a bit luckier than most though, you'll just need to open the freezer door and — presto — homemade goodness right now!

Reg. \$16.95 Serves 3-4

25% OFF THIS WEEK

THIS WEEK! BAKING WHAT'S

It's upside-down week in our bakery this week. You could be forgiven if you had visited our busy little bakery (and seen it in action) and thought that it's always upside-down — and that these cakes are just a logical consequence of our operation — but not so! Upside-down cakes are a traditional dessert that I and my brothers (and sisters) looked forward to with great anticipation when I was a kid (not long ago, really). The one my mom made was the pineapple version and we loved it. It was only many years later that I found out that there was more to life than pineapple — like sour cherry, and wild blueberry — and even peach. So, if a slice of the past sounds delicious to you, visit our little upside-down bakery today.

Regular \$17.95

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK

CEASAR PASTA

Our deli ladies have made copious amounts of this beautiful salad. We use penne to start and round it out with fresh basil, grape cherry tomatoes, fresh green onions, parsley and 'spices'. It's a refreshing salad for a nice hot day!

Reg. \$1.69/100g

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK



S CALIFORNIA STRAWBERRIES

These are plentiful just now — which means that we can get the pick of the crop. The locals will be along before long if the weather holds — which it will I'm sure. These will be in quarts, so you'll need a big bowl!

From California

1.99 OVERFILLED QUART

CURRIED APPLE & SQUASH SOUP

This is a great, hearty soup which is just overflowing with flavour. This, as well as all of our frozen soups and entrees, is slow-cooked just like at home and, if you look at the ingredient list, there's nothing in it that you wouldn't use at home.

Great soup! Reg. \$5.49

25% OFF THIS WEEK

TEXAN SAUSAGES

These are a great sausage which is full of great flavour. A bit sparky heat-wise and a little larger than usual, (as most things in Texas are) so that you won't have leftover bun space.

Made daily Reg. \$3.99 lb.

25% OFF THIS WEEK

WHAT'S HAPPENIN' OUTSIDE!

We've received yet another shipment of Hibiscus, both big and small in many splendid colours. Although the flowers alone would be ample reason to be buying these, the sun-loving nature of these is great. Full sun all day = Hibiscus!

If you have an amazingly large sunroom, we have an amazingly large Bouganvillia for you — just one. It's big!

Canna Lillies will be available in good supply, as well as Chocolate Vine hanging baskets and yet more Geranium hangers (very last shipment).

Lupins are still available (also the last week) and we've got a good supply of sun-loving Kalanchoes in patio pots, hangers and window boxes too!

And lastly we'll have a good supply of \$25.00 mixed hanging baskets as well.

BONELESS SIRLOIN

These steaks are either Grade AAA or 'Canada Prime'. Sirloin is not the most tender cut, but it certainly has a following — especially for the flavour. There's not an endless supply, so when they're gone, they're gone!

Reg. \$7.99

5.95 LB



SPECIALS IN EFFECT UNTIL CLOSING SUNDAY JUNE 12TH

Hours:

Mon. 11:00-7:00 ~ Tues. Thurs. 9:00-7:00 ~ Fri. 9:00-8:00

Sat. 9:00-6:00 ~ Sun. 10:00-5:00

548 Carlton Road, Unionville

940-1770