

Just like 70 years ago, everything stops for fair

When but a lad, growing up on the farm, everything stopped for the Markham Fair.

No matter the labour urgency, tomatoes to be picked, corn to be cut or grain to be threshed, all work had to wait.

The fair came first.

Mind you, it was never an all day affair. Dad was never that generous. But come noon, we'd drop whatever we were doing and head for the big show, then on the southeast corner of highways 7 and 48.

Because my younger brother and I were wee ones, we couldn't attend alone. My mother, being extremely protective, saw to that.

She feared we would become lost and never find our way back to a pre-arranged meeting place.

However, my older brother and sister, then in high school, were free to do as they pleased.

But it was still a family event. We'd leave together and return together, always with an 11-quart basket of grapes tucked in the back of the buggy. That was our only reward, except for maybe a 10-cent cone if the weather was warm.

Teen years brought new freedoms. I was then on my own, so advanced in maturity I worked the gates, taking money from motorists in exchange for tickets.

Boy was I proud. Not only was there pay for this service but free admission, as well.

Then there was the parade, magnificent in the eyes of all beholders.

The procession, made up mainly of public school children, was regularly led by Frank 'Dude' Sanderson, resplendent in a hand-me-down suit with a giant blue badge pinned to his lapel.

This was Dude's day and no one could minimize the pride of his moment.

Later, as a member of York County Jr. Farmers, I became an exhibitor, growing an acre of Vickland oats for fair competition.

Unfortunately, instead of hand-selected seed, I mistakenly entered gleanings. The submission placed last.

To make matters worse, my standing was announced over the fair's speakers.

What an embarrassment. Years have passed since this experience, so many years, I trust no one remembers. But I do. It was an occasion I'd like to forget.

However, time heals. The scars of that fateful afternoon have all but disappeared, replaced by memories of what once was and still is the biggest and best exhibition of its kind in Canada.

I've been fortunate. While never a director or even a committee member, I've been involved. On three



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

occasions, I served as a pet show judge. I even helped select two fair princesses.

One year, I displayed my inept culinary skills by entering a men's cake baking contest.

Much like the bag of grain gleanings, it also failed to impress.

While the fair itself is a must-see experience, it's the camaraderie within that makes the show exceptional.

Would you believe more than 700 volunteers? All with a common purpose in mind, to keep agriculture in the forefront of ever-encroaching development and still provide superior entertainment for non tillers of the soil. It's a balancing act that's difficult to achieve. But Markham Fair does it well.

Yes, for me, everything stops for the fair. It did 70 years ago and it will again today.

So what will I see?

High on my priority list are the following:

- Today, the winged wheels motorcycle demonstration, old Macdonald's barn and the demolition derby, topped off by bacon on a bun at the Stouffville Lions booth and a slice of pumpkin pie, courtesy of the Markham Lions Club.

- Tomorrow, I'll divide my time between the tractor pull, teen talent contest, pet show and Johnny Cash tribute.

- The heavy horse show will, for me, be a main attraction Saturday, along with the fiddler's contest, monster truck crush and fireworks.

- If Sunday's sermon doesn't last too long, I'll attend the school children's awards, student spelling bee and MX big bike show. A fourth bacon-on-a-bun and piece of pumpkin pie will be good.

- Before the buildings close, I'll view entries by the 18-and-younger set, the school displays, art, photography, antiques, quilts, vegetables and flowers.

- Last, but not least, I'll visit the domestic science building, hoping maybe someone in authority will see me salivating over a Merna Burkholder lemon sponge special and secretly offer me a slice.

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

OUR CORNED BEEF

Corned beef? It must be autumn. There's no better time to enjoy this cool-weather dish than now. We make our corned beef here — using only centre-cut brisket points. We trim them lean and cure them in a savoury brine with an edge of nutmeg and allspice. It's a slice of old-fashioned heaven — but that's not all. Not only have we reduced our price this week, we'll give you the recipe for corned beef in cabbage — and we'll give you the cabbage free!

(Minimum 2-lb. piece)

Reg. \$5.99/lb.

4.99
Lb.

WHAT'S COOKIN'! AT THE DELI

We'll be making our Calamari this week. These rings come from New Zealand. They're dusted with a combo of flour, paprika, sea salt and cayenne. They are then deep fried and sprinkled with parsley and fresh lemon juice.

Next, we'll be making bowls of our Singapore noodles. We use Vermicelli with diced sweet peppers, Spring (actually Fall) onions and spicy curry sauce. They have a bit of heat but they're hard to stop eating once you start.

And, we'll be making our penne prosciutto salad with diced and roasted butternut squash, green beans, sautéed prosciutto, cherry grape tomatoes and herbs which are all dressed up in an extra virgin olive oil and garlic dressing.

Lastly, we have some extra-large sea scallops, which will be panko breaded and fried till they are golden, served with fresh made tartar sauce.

WE'VE GONE FISHING

We've got some Snow Bass for a feature this week. It comes from the warmer Pacific Coast, either Mexico or Peru, it's mild and sweet, similar to Sea Bass, but with a more delicate texture. As usual, we'll have a recipe or two for you to try your hand at. An adventure in fish, to be sure.

12.95
LB



SAGE & ONION SAUSAGES

We'll be featuring our old-fashioned Sage & Onion Sausages. This is an English recipe going back a long way. That they're still with us is a testament to how good they are. They're mild and have no garlic, if that's important to you. These can either be oven-roasted or grilled to perfection.

Reg. \$3.99/lb.

25%
OFF THIS WEEK

VEGETARIAN VEGETABLE SOUP

We're featuring this soup for this particular week for its thinning qualities, given the probability of you not being able to resist at our bakery counter. It's not too often that something this good for you also tastes as good as this does.

Reg. \$5.99

25%
OFF THIS WEEK

WHAT'S HAPPENIN OUTSIDE!

We have just received another couple shipments of outdoor Fall flowers. There are a lot of medium-size hardy mums in various colours and varying stages of bloom, and yet another lot of the ever popular 4" mums to make your own urns and to replace any garden casualties. A few more pepper plants have come, some yellow, some orange, some of the smaller size heather which is cute enough to make a Scottish girl homesick, and the first of the season cyclamen in both 4" and 6" sizes. Properly cared for, these will last more than a couple of seasons at home. And lastly, there are some very cute 4" cabbages to fill out your planters.

TREE-RANGE TURKEY

We've sold these amazing turkeys now for the last 20 years. Although the farm has changed hands from father to son, it's the same growing and processing technique that has produced what we — and others — feel are the best turkeys available.

What makes them so good?

It's simple, really. Firstly, they eat lots of grain and corn — as much or as little as they want because they run loose. Add to this a gentler de-feathering process, which leaves more of the natural flavour (and the odd feather) with the turkey, and you'll have a bird which will exceed your expectations without the aid of the artificial enhancement that Butterballs and pre-basted turkeys receive. Ours are moist (naturally), tender and full of flavour — and they cook a bit quicker as well. Although we have pretty much any size above 14 lbs. available, I would be picking one from 16 to 20 lbs. — they seem to have the best meat — and lots of it.

Ready to roast!

— Also, should you wish parts of turkey, including breasts which are boneless (either plain or stuffed), they'll be available.

2.79
lb.

GRETHE'S CHEESEBALLS!

In honour of the upcoming Thanksgiving celebration, Grethe has rolled up her Danish sleeves and started rolling out her amazing cheeseballs; you know the ones — yummy! Don't miss these.

WHAT'S BAKING! THIS WEEK

The bakery will be making a whole bunch of our CRANBERRY BUTTER TARTS — the ones that are drizzled with white chocolate

Reg. \$5.95 /6-pack

THE FEATURE SCONE, this week will be our Cranberry, which is accented with orange zest.

Reg. \$1.59 Each

— and, we'll be making our

BLUEBERRY FRANGIPANIS, which have a shortbread crust, an almond cream filling and copious amounts of wild blueberries

Reg. \$9.95 Each

All these items will be featured at **25%** OFF THIS WEEK

WATCH FOR NEXT WEEKS AD ON SATURDAY OF THIS WEEK INSTEAD OF THURSDAY. SEPT. 29/07

WHAT'S FOR DINNER

From our frozen entree section, we'll have our chicken breasts in any of three sauces: orange, porcini mushroom or lemon. We begin with our air-chilled breasts which we poach, slice and then drizzle with sauce. All you need to do is thaw them, warm them and serve.

Serves 2 to 3
Reg. \$18.95 ea

25%
OFF THIS WEEK

WHAT'S BAKING! NEXT WEEK

As with most holidays, we must abbreviate our usual repertoire of goodies in order to concentrate on the items of the moment, and they will be.....

Scones of mixed berry, Cheese and caramel apple; tarts of pumpkin, caramel apple and cranberry; brulees of Grand Marnier, vanilla bean and white chocolate cranberry; pies of pecan, cranberry-pecan, pumpkin, cranberry-apple streusel, deep-dish apple (fuller than before) cherry, raspberry and strawberry-rhubarb, mousse cakes of chocolate-raspberry, black and white and white chocolate, layer cakes of chocolate (both frosted and glazed) white, and carrot (really tall), mixed berry jelly rolls; cheese cakes in apple, caramel, lemon, pumpkin and brandied cranberry; custard cakes in cranberry-apple and spiced apple; pumpkin coffee cakes as well as brandied-apple coffee cakes. Loaves will be banana of course, plus cranberry orange (a big fave with me) and pumpkin, a big fave with my kids. Special cookies will include cranberry-orange shortbread and caramel-pecan as well as copious amounts of our painted cookies in a multitude of seasonal creations. You can order any (or all) of these at 905-940-0655 or 940-1770



SPECIALS IN EFFECT UNTIL CLOSING SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 30TH

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

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940-1770

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