

Mechanic's handiwork nears perfection

When it comes to mechanics, I rate an F. The F stands for failure.

Yes, personal skills related to tools such as wrenches, hammers, saws and screwdrivers are pitiable, even pathetic.

For example, should a tire go flat, I call a tow truck. Should a tap spring a leak, I call a plumber. Should a basement fuse blow, I call an electrician. Should a clothesline collapse, I call my wife.

I even needed a neighbor's help to install aluminum squirrel repellants on my bird feeders.

My abilities, associated with repairs, are intolerably bad.

The same goes for items to be assembled. I'm beat before I start.

Imagine then, an interview with someone so accomplished in work with wood and metal, he can construct things ranging from miniature steam engines to grandiose grandfather clocks.

Such was the challenge Friday, when I visited the home of Elmer Farthing, long-time Stouffville resident and master mechanic.

Mr. Farthing, 81, was born on the Markham-Pickering Townline, north of Green River, the son of Arthur and Marion Farthing.

At age five, his parents moved to Stouffville. He attended what is now Summitview Public School.

For more than 30 years, his father worked at Schell Lumber Ltd., on Edward Street, only a short distance from where the Farthing family lived. Elmer later resided on Charles Street, then, in 1950, moved to Rupert Avenue.

He and wife, Doris, marked their 61st wedding anniversary Aug. 2. They have a son, Bill, in Uxbridge, a daughter, Lois, at Musselman's Lake, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Mr. Farthing says as long as he can remember, he has enjoyed working with machinery. This interest, plus his father's association with wood, led to a life-long career.

"There's a connection between the two," he says.

It was only natural that, at 15, he joined the staff of Barkey Bros., machine shop operators north of Main Street.

Isaac Barkey saw in his young floor-sweeper, a skill that would eventually make him a shop foreman, a position he held for 23 years.

An additional step up the success ladder was assured the day he first sounded the firm's noon-hour whistle, a signal heard round the town.

Mr. Farthing remained with Barkey Bros., later Stouffville



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

Machine and Tool, for 45 years, retiring in 1987.

However, retirement wasn't the end of an ambition.

Mr. Farthing would soon build his own shop, a sizeable structure containing two lathes, a drill press, air compressor, grinder and hacksaw.

That was the production side. Nearby, on the performance side, he hand-built two steam engines, two gas engines, a drag saw, sawmill and planer.

What made these machines so amazing was the fact none was built from a model or a plan, but out of the builder's head.

"I'm continually changing things," he says. "I'm never quite finished."

"If I was ever done, there'd be nothing else for me to do."

Each engine is beautifully hand-painted and runs like a top.

In the winter, he moves the entire operation into the basement of his home and transforms the performance side of the shop into a garage to accommodate the car.

While lathes, saws and engines typify Elmer Farthing the machinist, his skill doesn't begin and end in a back yard shop. There's more.

Against a wall of the recreation room stands a grandfather's clock, the equal of which you will never see.

It's made entirely of wood, including the gears. Even the bob, suspended from a wood stem, is white pine.

This magnificent time-piece took two winters to complete. To keep it ticking, double weights are pulled up once a week.

Everything's made-to-measure.

Mr. Farthing has also crafted more than 25 wall clocks, most of which he's given away.

Also unique is a TV table, built from the remains of the former Canadian National Railway station.

Elmer Farthing: machinist turned hobbyist; conventionalist turned perfectionist.

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

PORK BACK RIBS

We'll have our back ribs on sale this week at the meat counter — and hopefully we'll have enough. I say this because we've run out of the meat feature a bit early the last couple of weeks.

What makes our back ribs so good? First, we buy nicely marbled pork — that streakiness makes them more tender and juicy. Secondly, we don't have that insipid little tail hanging from the one end (you would pay full price for it if you shopped elsewhere). Thirdly, our pork is not 'seasoned', which means that it's not cut from pork loins which have been injected with water and phosphate to make them juicier (just imagine the thinking behind that); and lastly, our price is very competitive because we cut our own pork.

So think ribs this week — perhaps with our Montgomery Inn Sauce — or any other.

We have lots to choose from!

They'll be good!

Reg. \$8.95 lb

25% OFF THIS WEEK

OUT FOR AN EVENING STROLL?

The Lions' food booth is now open Monday to Thursday at Crosby Park in the evenings. If you've got time on your hands and the Jays aren't in town, come and see a good ball game and grab a bite of V.G. fare. The profits go to help others.

SMOKED BLACK COD

We'll be making some of this amazing smoked fish on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. It's a really delicate and richly flavoured fish. Unlike our salmon, the bones are more difficult to remove, so you'll have to work around them — but it's well worth the trouble.

A bit of a twist is that we'll have some of this in the Fresh Counter as well; something that we don't normally do.

It's in season right now, so it's the best time to try this out — and as usual, there will be a pair of recipes available to help out.

What to serve with it? A Chablis or a Fumé Blanc — or best of all, a bottle of Burrowing Owl, which is an outstanding Okanagan Wine available online.

Smoked will be: **5⁹⁹** 100g Fresh: **19⁹⁵** LB THIS WEEK

FRESH BLUEBERRIES

What we've got here are the family-size trays of blueberries from British Columbia which, according to my wife (and Blueberry critic) are "Just like the ones we used to get at Turkey Point", which, if you know Southern Ontario, is just down the road from our corn farmer in Scotland.

These are a 2 lb. size of nice, sweet blues! **4⁹⁹** CONTAINER THIS WEEK

SOUR CAJUN SAUSAGES

We use some of Paul Prudhomme's spice to spark these up. I really enjoy the large amount of flavour with not too much heat.

Real good grilled!

Reg. 3.99 lb.

25% OFF THIS WEEK

GRAPE CHERRY TOMATOES!

These sweet little nuggets of flavour are now not just local, but field grown (as opposed to hydroponic). The flavour is good, the colour(s) are good and the price is right! From Ontario.

1⁹⁹ CONTAINER

OTHER HAPPENIN'S IN PRODUCE!

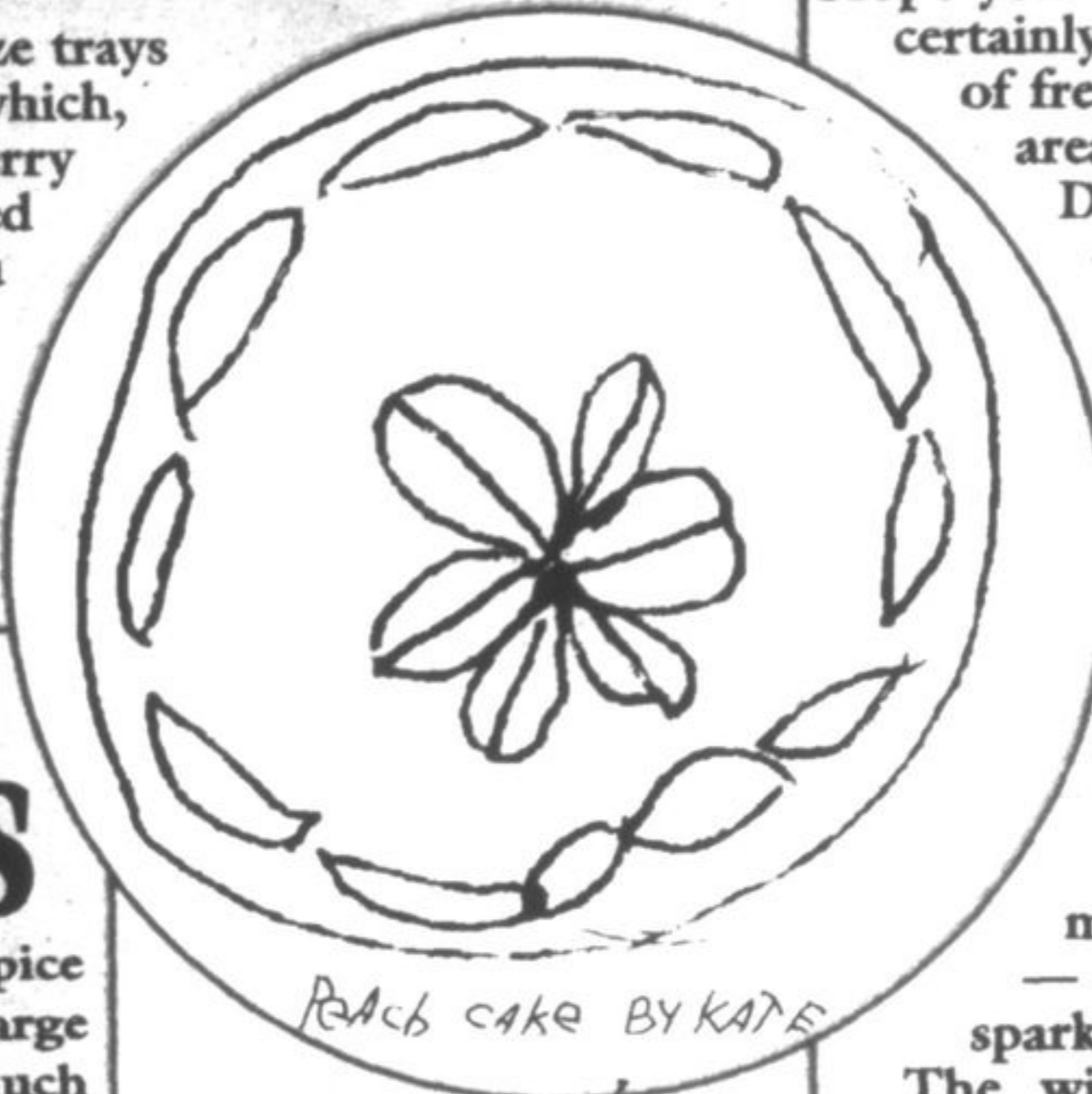
The local blues are good, the corn is amazing, melons are real sweet, peaches and nectarines are in mid-season form, beans are good (French ones too), potatoes are coming along nicely, local tomatoes are progressing as well as lettuce. It's all good! Wild blues are still a bit dear and fresh blackberries are sweet.

WHAT'S FOR DINNER!

We're introducing another new item in our selection of frozen entrées. It's called 'Hoisin Beef', and it's made with sirloin slices which have been marinated in hoisin, then browned and slow-cooked with Shiitake mushrooms.

Reg. 17.95 Serves 3-4

25% OFF THIS WEEK



PEACH CAKE BY KATE

... If you feel our next couple of ads are a bit outside the box, it would be because the usual scribe (me) is on holidays and our son THOMAS is the designated scribe.

This could be interesting!

WHAT'S HAPPENIN' OUTSIDE!

The first few fall items are arriving, to be followed by many more! You'll find some neat coconut orchid hangers (Greg is an orchid nut), lots of rudbeckia, the first of many grasses and peppers, some autumn planters and we've (finally) got a great display of urns.

SOMETHING EXCITING! FROM THE BAKERY!

We'll be making a few of our 'bounty bar cakes' this week. They're made with coconut sponge cake, chocolate of course, a chewy moist coconut filling and a buried layer of toasted coconut meringue.

Sounds good to me ...

WHAT'S COOKIN' AT THE DELI ...

Hope you enjoyed your halibut last week, I certainly did. Since we've got a shipment of fresh black cod this week in the fish area, we'll have some cuts to make

Doreen's beautiful fish chowder — something that you don't see too often. It will be available in the full containers (about 1 litre) and the half-size as well.

It's a real treat. Next, we'll be making copious amounts of our barbeque chicken wings for your take-home enjoyment — and on Friday and Saturday we'll have some of our smoked cajun wings as a bonus.

In the salad section, we'll be making our spicy chick-pea couscous — something to

spark-up any meal. The wings and salad will be featured at ...

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK

WHAT'S BAKING? THIS WEEK ...

It's peach week in our bakery this week, and we'll be making ...

PEACH SHORTCAKES - These are triple-deckers of fluffy white cake, fresh peach slices and of course, whipped cream.

We make two sizes, \$16.95 and \$28.95 ea.

PEACH FRANGIPANE SQUARES - These are made in the 8"x5" pans with a shortbread base, a layer of almond frangipane and a layer of fresh-cut peaches, all lovingly baked together until it's sublime. Reg. \$9.95 ea.

GINGER-PEACH CHEESECAKE - These are made in a deep flan pan with a shortbread crust, our amazing cheesecake filling and diced peaches which have been seasoned with candied ginger and cinnamon.

We'll have two sizes \$14.95 and \$22.95 ea.

PEACH CUSTARD CAKES - These are coffee cakes which seem to improve with age, so buy the bigger size so you'll have leftovers (if you eat it all, don't worry, we'll have more). It's got peaches and custard baked in.

Two sizes \$15.95 and \$24.95 ea.

DEEP DISH PEACH PIES - These are the jumbo size full of peaches. They travel well if you're going north, as long as they're kept out of reach. Reg. \$17.95 ea.

All these items

will be featured at ...

25% OFF THIS WEEK

SPECIALS IN EFFECT UNTIL CLOSING SUNDAY AUGUST 10TH

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

www.thevillagegrocer.com

