

Pageant returns for 25th festival

With snow still covering the ground and temperatures hovering near zero, it's hard to believe Strawberry Festival 2009 is less than 18 weeks away.

But not for committee chairperson Sue Sherban, an energetic executive and a host of enthusiastic volunteers who, days after last year's festivities concluded, were already envisioning events 12 months in advance.

The big show that, weather permitting, will welcome more than 30,000 people, begins June 30 and concludes July 5.

While the committee endeavours to add new attractions to its itinerary and, at the same time, retain events long proven popular, there's an eagerness to paint the town red on this, the festival's 25th anniversary.

To do this, something old, yet innovative has been introduced.

A festival pageant is set for May 30 in The Great Hall of Christ Church Anglican in Stouffville.

An information evening is scheduled for May 2 with registrations accepted until May 9.

Entrants, 16 to 21 years, must reside within the boundaries of Whitchurch-Stouffville. The queen and her court will be expected to participate in festival promotional activities from May 30 through July 5, plus additional commitments including the Kin-sponsored Santa Claus Parade.

The contact email address is strawberrypageant25th@yahoo.ca.

Aspiring princesses are asked to leave phone numbers where they can be reached.

There's also a Facebook page.

Two members of the organizing committee are former pageant queens, Christine (Hodgins) Berry and Jeni (Montgomery) Hoover. Other committee members include Mrs. Sherban, Bruce and Bunny Burton, Gerri Seeley and Barbara Sharp.

The emcee will be Stouffville's Rick Lightfoot.

According to records dating back to 1982, Kim Ledger, of Bristol Pond's Estates near Goodwood, was our town's first festival queen. Kim, a graduate of Stouffville District Secondary School, was then a second year student attending Queen's University in Kingston. There were 10 entrants.

Michelle Morley, Stouffville's 1977 centennial queen, participated in the ceremony. The committee included the Bur-



Roaming Around
with Jim Thomas

tons assisted by Ged and Betty Stonehouse. The late Eddie Luther was the show's emcee.

In 1983, Karen Nugent, only 14 at the time and a Grade 10 student at SDSS, carried off the crown. The Burtons were again chief organizers assisted by Elva Newmarch, Susan Myers, Gwen Ledger and Betty Stonehouse.

Kris Gersovnik, 16, was Stouffville's festival queen in 1984, followed by Chris Hodgins in 1985.

Jacque Chong was the judges' choice in 1986 with Tamara Ewen a runner-up.

In 1987, Christine Dube was the pageant's pick. Her attendants were Debra Surman and Shelley Whitaker.

There were 10 entrants in the 1988 competition with Melinda Lehman winning top prize.

In 1989, the festival was graciously represented by Nicole Knight. Carrie Swain and Christy Robertson completed her court. Tracy Emery occupied the festival throne in 1990, flanked by Lisa Tucker and Nicole Ellis.

Jeni Montgomery was doubly honoured in 1991. Her festival tiara was further enhanced by an ambassador's banner from Markham Fair. A year later, she was selected Miss Congeniality at the CNE. Jeni performed a similar festival role in 1992, succeeded by Julia Johnstone in '93.

The committee is hopeful former festival queen participants will return and show their support.

"We want them to feel a part," Jeni said. "We hope they'll all attend and bring their children, too."

Entries in the May 30 pageant will be expected to deliver a prepared speech and exhibit a talent. Apparel will include a sports outfit and formal wear.

The Strawberry Festival is a special event in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Recognizing a 25th anniversary makes it extra special. Honouring festival queens past and present will add icing to the Canada Day cake.

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

BREADED PORK CUTLETS

We make these with slices of Pork Sirloin, we flatten them a bit to make them even (and thinner), and then bread them with crumb which has been seasoned with French Herbs (Herbe de Provence). Fry them lightly; it won't take long before they are done. One cutlet usually is sufficient for a serving. Regular \$1.99 each

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK

HALIBUT FILLETS

Firstly, the fresh are not available yet, so these have been previously frozen. They are centre-cuts just like we do in season. Since they have been frozen, I think that the best cooking method to use is to oven-bake them or steam it in your micro.

\$14.95 LB THIS WEEK

CAJUN SAUSAGES

We use Paul Prudholme's seasoning as well as a few of our own to make these. They have a full, round flavour, enough heat to notice, and a flavour long enough to cut these and use them in other dishes. It's one of my favourite sausages. Regular \$3.99lb

25% OFF THIS WEEK

MINESTRONE SOUP

A long time ago, I wrote what I thought was a great ad for this soup and whenever we'd feature it, I'd use that ad because I didn't think I could improve on it. Things change and I started to get pushback on it from the staff who called it 'Boring'. So for my second try at describing this soup, I'm going to tell you to just read the ingredient list on the back. It's makes great reading and it's far from 'boring'. Reg. \$6.99

25% OFF THIS WEEK



CHICK PEA SALAD

I am usually allergic in a gastronomic sense to chickpeas, lentils and the like, but not these. When I saw them in the display case at first, I'd usually skirt around them, looking for my old faves, till one day I thought 'I own this place and I better know what we're selling', so I had these for lunch. To my amazement, I found them VERY delicious, so much so, they have become one of my 'new faves'. Reg. \$1.49/100g

1/2 OFF THIS WEEK

RED & GREEN GRAPES

We'll be doing a feature on really nice Red and Green GRAPES this week. A tour through the Produce Terminal will yield about 15 to 20 lots of grapes, some a different size, some sweet, some old, some fresh, some sour, some cheaper in order to clear because a new load is on the way.....and these! We generally buy grapes from either of 3 different importers who can be counted upon to be fussier than most in choosing the farmers, co-ops and exporters that they deal with. We look for grapes of a good size, with stems that are still green rather than withered, and some sweetness to the taste. We've got all three happening this week, and even sweeter is the price!

\$1.99 LB THIS WEEK

WHAT'S HAPPENING OUTSIDE ?

Our flower guy, Greg, will be up to his ears in daffodils and the like as he takes his FLOWER POWER presentation to the QUEENSBIDGE MILL on Wednesday, March 11th at 2pm. He'll be dealing with a Spring Tune-up of your Urns and out-front containers, as well as some practical tips on creating simple seasonal arrangements to refresh your surroundingsand your spirits. Upcoming at a later date will be a presentation on Container Gardening and an 'afternoon tea' with him demonstrating the Art of Flower Arranging. This all happens at the Queensbridge Mill; what's happening at our place is the trickle (at first) of new pots, urns and planters and accents arriving in advance of the Pansies, which should be here at the end of March. I am waiting patiently for the onset of Spring. I think that I speak for many when I say that the uplift of spirits will be more welcome than ever this year.

WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

Our steak pies will be our frozen entrée feature for this week. These are made with steak which we flour and brown, then slow-roast with onions, mushrooms, red wine and spices, then cover it all with a pastry lid. What you need to do is uncover the container and bake it for 45-50 minutes and voila — a warm steak pie and an aroma that in itself will make you hungry. Serves 3-4 Reg. \$16.95

25% OFF THIS WEEK

SALMON CAKES!

I am assured by Doreen and Grethe that these are 'made with love'. They use fresh Atlantic Salmon which they poach and fully debone, some sauteed sweet onions, freshly mashed potatoes, some dill and an adequate amount of black pepper.....this being a swipe at my penchant for pepper. They are then formed, breaded in crumb and fried golden. When you get them home, they can be oven-warmed or micro'd. As I'm writing this I feel the love already...and you don't even need a starch because the potato is included, all you would need is a few beauty beans or broccoli. One of these is an adequate portion.

\$2.99 EACH THIS WEEK

WE WANT TO BLOW OUR HORN A BIT.....

I belong to a trade association called THE ONTARIO INDEPENDENT MEAT PROCESSORS. Every second year they put on a trade show and convention for all the members, and around that they stage a product competition amongst the members for the honour of 'being the best'. There are a number of categories in which to enter; we chose to enter our Prime Rib Sausages, our Maple Sugar Hams, our Bacon, our Smoked Pork Chops and our Prime Rib Stew. Judging is done by a fairly large panel of Food Writers and Celebrity Cooks from across Ontario. We were the GOLD Winners with our

Maple Sugar Ham AND our Prime Rib Stew, but we were the PLATINUM Winner with our Prime Rib Sausages. Although my first reaction was extreme disappointment that we didn't win with our Bacon, we are all grateful for the honours that we received. It is so much easier to go to the phone and order products for your store rather than taking the route that we do, but the vindication of our thinking is in the pride we feel when we receive honours such as this.

WHAT'S BAKING! THIS WEEK

Our bakery theme this week will be cheese.....lots of it. We'll be making.....

NEW YORK CHEESECAKES.....these have a hand-formed shortbread crust on the bottom; only this time, they are double the height, the cheese filling is au naturel and they are finished with an upper strata of sour cream. 6" size, reg.....\$20.95 each

CREAM CHEESE BROWNIES.....The first rule here is that they must be at room temperature or better to enjoy. They begin with a dark chocolate Brownie base, then with a cheesecake layer on top, and then drizzled with chocolate, just to be sure. They are cut in a 3" by 3" size; you'll probably get away without needing to share. Reg.....\$2.99 each

CHEESE SCONES.....we use grated Swiss, Extra, extra-old Cheddar, some grated Parmesan and a touch of Black Pepper, as well as the scone dough of course. Reg.....\$1.69 each

LEMON-CHEESE DANISH.....we make a yeast-raised dough (and raise it in our new proofer), a layer of our lemon curd, then a cheese filling, and lastly, glazed. Reg.....\$2.99 each

PUFFY CHEESE STICKS.....these are our puff pastry twists with lots of old Cheddar twisted-in. Reg.....\$1.99 each

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

SPECIALS IN EFFECT UNTIL CLOSING SUNDAY MARCH 1ST

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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905-940-1770

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