

'AHEAD' OF THE BIG DAY



STAFF PHOTO/SUSIE KOCKERSCHIEDT

Community Home Assistance to Seniors volunteers Sandy Howson of Stouffville and Rick Zakowski of Sutton are well-attired for CHATS' multicultural Canada Day event at the Mansion in Aurora Wednesday. There will be more national birthday celebrations in Stouffville Memorial Park tomorrow during this weekend's Strawberry Festival, including free cake and fireworks. For more information, go to strawberryfestival.ca



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Heavy fines if you set off fireworks illegally

TOP SELLERS

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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► **The Menace:** 20 seconds featuring 24 tails leading to booming bursts and enormous crackling flowers.

► **Diablo:** 32 seconds of chaotic colour with 56 crackling and strobing bursts.

► **Parachute Battalion:** Use it in the daytime to launch 36 Canadian-flag parachuted army men toys that fall to the ground.

► **Bahama Mama:** Takes 41 seconds to produce 19 shots of silver tails that turn into coloured palms and kamuros.

► **Molten Fury:** 16 bursts exploding into gold and red willows, followed by crackling stars.

► **Fountains:** Ground-huggers that spew fountains of light.

► **Classic sparkler:** The stick that twinkles when it's lit still delights young and old alike.

— source: Rocket Fireworks Canada and Twilight Fireworks Inc. Newmarket

SAFETY FIRST

► Purchase fireworks from a reliable source;

► Never experiment with making your own fireworks;

► Read and follow directions;

► Only use fireworks outdoors;

► Light one at a time;

► Adult supervision is a must;

► Don't point fireworks at others;

► Never light fireworks in metal or glass containers;

► Wear eye protection; and

► Dispose of fireworks properly.

If you want to set off fireworks from your back yard this weekend, you better have written permission from council.

Family fireworks are allowed to be set off within Whitchurch-Stouffville, but only on the Canada Day and Victoria Day weekends, according to the town's bylaw.

Other stipulations include the location of the fireworks has to be free of overhead obstacles, have a minimum size of 100 feet by 100 feet and be at least 10 metres from the nearest building.

If convicted of failing to adhere to the bylaw, you can face a fine of up to \$5,000.

The same goes for Aurora and King. In Newmarket, the maximum fine is \$2,000. In East Gwillimbury, violators who are caught are instructed to appear in court, with the fine to be determined there.

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Adriano Salvati operates the Twilight Fireworks Inc. trailer in Newmarket.

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He deals with many people who are new to fireworks, he said as he put his products on display.

"Fireworks can be fun for everyone if you use them properly," he said.

Customers, especially new ones, often have questions about use and safety.

He tells each to ensure they have a bucket of water nearby and a five-gallon pail with about a foot of sand in the bottom in which to set the fireworks before lighting. This will protect you and your property if the firework falls over, as it will remain in the pail.

It is best to have observers about 10 to 15 feet away from the firework and be mindful of the wind, as it could carry burning embers into a neighbour's yard or onto someone's roof.

Another popular question is where and how to light the firework. The wick is located in a different place on each, but all should be lit using a punk — a long wooden stick with a handle that burns slowly, allowing users to keep a safe distance.

"Fireworks are made by humans and sometimes they make mistakes, but always wait before going up to what you think might be a dud," Mr. Salvati cautioned.

Last but not least, always check with your municipality to ensure you are following the bylaws, because they are different in every town.

Fireworks classified as display are the ones you see at large public events and require permits issued by the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and the fire chief.

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