

Tough act to follow at fair

Favourable weather plus a quality show equals an excellent balance sheet.

This was evidenced by a positive financial report presented when the Markham and East York Agricultural Society, (Markham Fair), held its annual meeting before an upbeat audience last week. The 2012 fair showed a net profit of \$294,604. Net earnings from site rentals totaled \$508,191.

"Fabulous" was the expression used by finance chairperson Leanne Gordon to describe the year.

Attendance, she reported, was up significantly with 9,317 trekking through the turnstiles on Thursday; 19,451 on Friday; 27,720 on Saturday and 13,870 on Sunday for a total of 70,385, the highest since 2008.

Revenue from ticket sales totaled almost \$473,000.

The increased gate impacted all areas of the fair, Ms Gordon said, particularly the midway that took in \$72,848, nearly double that of 2011.

With respect to income, the finance chairperson praised the efforts of the Agri-food tent committee who, through painstaking work, secured \$16,500 in grants, sufficient to fully fund its operation. She also complimented the City of Markham for a grant of \$25,000 that was used to establish a public tea room celebrating Queen Elizabeth's diamond jubilee.

On the rental side, Ms Gordon applauded general manager John Peco for his ability to market those positive attributes the fair can offer the community plus a skill in enticing tenants' return. Later, Mr. Peco introduced Alana Tufford, the fair's new administrative and marketing assistant.

Ms Gordon alluded to the necessity of "moving the fair forward" through implementation of an established strategic plan.

"As we approach our budgeting period, let each committee submit improvement packages they'd like in place for 2013," she said. Already, she said, several projects had been completed in 2012 through the planting of trees and flowers. "These small changes made a large impact on the look of the fair and were well received," she stated.

Rogers Gardham, fair president in 1977 when the McCowan Road site first opened, praised "the great group of people who've made this organization so efficient".

"It's difficult to improve on perfection," he said, "but Markham Fair has a fantastic future."

Lesley English, assuming the presidency from fellow Stouffville resident Phil Redshaw, said she was "incredibly honoured and proud". Also a little frightened, she added, "because there's much work still to do". She explained that because some buildings now show signs of aging, major revitalization projects are necessary.

"So roll up your sleeves," she said "and accompany me on an exciting journey."

Bill and Lesley English moved to Stouffville 13 years ago. A daughter, Liz is a first-year student enrolled at Wilfrid Laurier University. A son, Jack, is a Grade 11 student at Stouffville District Secondary School.

Lesley is vice-president of operations at OCR Canada in Markham.

Others on the fair executive include: Kelly Winnitoy, 1st vice-president; Bryant Hulshof, 2nd vice-president; Todd Little, 3rd vice-president; Leanne Gordon, finance chair and John Peco, secretary-treasurer. Fair dates for 2013 are Oct. 3, 4, 5 and 6.



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

EVAN'S CROWD PLEASING CHILI!

The Big Game requires Chili in order to be fully enjoyed, and we've got what you'll need. My recipe calls for some of our Italian sausage and ground beef, both of which we will have a feature price on. For the ground beef, we are using old-fashioned ground chuck - somewhere between lean and medium (closer to lean). My recipe will be available for you, as well as some beauty 'Crock Pots' that Karen and Linda have rounded up - and we'll have fully prepared Chili available, too, feature priced as well!

NEAL BROTHERS NACHOS!

You'll need these chips to make Karen's Blooming Rose Nachos - and you'll need the salsa, the refried beans and the large, hydroponic tomatoes - and the recipe will be available, too!

25% OFF THIS WEEK

COPPERPOT NUTS TO YOU!

We'll have a feature on our Beer Can Nuts, which you'll need for the big game!

W SPLIT WINGS

The wings that you'll get in our store are in sections already - just like a restaurant serves them - but ours are air-chilled - which has a flavour advantage, even after you do your thing. Mike's recipe for these will be available, and we'll have a feature on the wings and the Budweiser Wing Sauce that you'll need to make these.

25% OFF THIS WEEK

WHAT'S THE BUZZZZZZZ! THIS WEEK?

You all know that it's the Bowl that will be played this Sunday in New Orleans. The newspaper can't allow us (for legal reasons) to mention the Bowl by name, so it's actually called 'The Big Game' here. It's a sponsorship issue and we don't own the 'rights'. Sorry! Anyway, the Queensbridge ladies, Karen and Linda et al, will be on hand Thursday, Friday and Saturday, helping out with some of the Big Game cooking demos, featuring the Blooming Rose Nachos and my Chili. The deli is in the spirit, as are the bakery and the meat area, in fact, we pretty much all are. So if it's time to celebrate, our store is a good place to start.

Also, be sure to get your Shrove Tuesday ticket. We'll be having three Pancake Tuesday meals upstairs, cooked and served by us (including me) and it should be a lot of fun ... that's on February 12th.

And further, many of you have asked if we will be continuing with some of the gluten-free products that we prepared last week. The answer is yes, we will, and many will be available in the frozen section beginning shortly.

FLORIDA GRAPEFRUITS

I encountered a little bit of kvetching at home a few mornings back, because our grapefruits weren't the same large size that we normally have. All is well now, as size 32's (extra-large) are back in the fruit bowl at home - and at the store, too! We buy this size whenever we can because it's so much easier to spoon the fruit out and not miss anything. These are heavy with juice as well, so you'll need to clean your glasses after each breakfast!

99¢ THIS WEEK

HAAS AVOCADOS

We'll have a good amount of these available in size 12s - which is the largest of the Haas variety. You'll need these for your guacamole and it's best to get them early on so they'll be ready for the big day. From California.

99¢ THIS WEEK

WHAT'S COOKING AT THE DELI

The first course will be soup, as usual, and in this case it's Cream of Leek and Potato. We use chicken stock, leeks, Yukon gold potatoes, sweet onions, celery, cream and 'spices'. It's a beauty soup! Reg. \$7.95/container

25% off this week

— AND —
We'll be making our Red Potato and Egg Salad, which just happens to be our best-seller. Much has been written about this salad in the past, and nothing has changed since. This is Doreen's recipe and we've made it daily for years. We'll pre-pack some of this for you, to speed up service. When I think of pre-packed salads, I think of those that are available in supermarkets, which are made elsewhere, and shipped there with a 'best before' date of 4 to 5 weeks. It always makes me wonder what's in it? Ours!... Just the real stuff. You'll love it. Reg. \$1.39/100g.

1/2 price this week

— AND —
For the main course, we'll be making copious amounts of my Chili. We'll be packing it in 4x5 foils. Reg. \$7.95 each.

25% off this week

If you need larger quantities, we'll accommodate that as well, and the same 25% off deal applies.

— AND FURTHER —
our prepared counter will be replete with our Wings, which are ready-to-go, Blue Cheese Dip, Guacamole and our old-fashioned Baked Beans.

CHEESE PLEASE

Our cheese special will be our Irish Whiskey Cheddar. I sampled a chunk of this yesterday and found I needed to finish the whole piece! It's not an extra-old cheddar - and you do get the discernible whiskey flavour - quite good! Reg. \$5.49/100g.

1/3 OFF THIS WEEK

SOUP'S ON

Our frozen soup feature for this week is our Roasted Red Pepper and Tomato. We often serve this at lunchtime in our cafe and when we do, I invariably order it. It's got such a subtle hand in seasoning, that allows the flavours to shine, and it just feels good going down on days like this.

Reg. \$7.95/container. **25% OFF THIS WEEK**

WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

On Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Grethe and her girls will be serving up a Big Game Sandwich of genuine Montréal Smoked meat piled high on a kaiser or rye with mustard and a dill pickle - you don't want to get to Game Day on an empty stomach, that's for sure. **\$6.99 each** Man size!

WHAT'S BAKING FOR THE BIG GAME?

OUR FAMOUS FOOTBALL CAKE - No 'Big Game' party will be complete without this! Chocolate cake with chocolate frosting (and a bit of ganache between the layers), shaped like a football, complete with stitching and the teams' logos. Perfect centrepiece for your table! **\$24.95 ea.**

THE XLVII "BIG GAME" CUPCAKES - Our white and chocolate cupcakes with a football sugarcookie on green icing astroturf! **\$2.99 ea.**

Since the big game is being played in New Orleans, we'll be featuring some 'southern-style' desserts.

PECAN PIE - This week we are making our pecan pie with an addition of Jack Daniels and dark chocolate. **\$14.95.**

BANANA PRALINE PIE with CHANTILLY CREAM - We start with our flaky piecrust and fill it with custard, caramel, pralines and bananas, sauteed in brown sugar and bourbon. Then we proceed to pipe chantilly cream on top, and a caramel drizzle ... decadent! **\$14.95.**

MINI CHEESECAKES - An assortment of mini cheesecakes made in fancy little paper molds with a graham bottom. Flavors include Bananas Foster with caramelized bananas, Strawberry, Mango, Lemon and Caramel-Pecan. **\$3.49 each.**

CHOCOLATE ECLAIRS - Lately we have been negligent with the making of these old-fashioned favourites, but now they are back by popular demand. Choux pastry cut length-wise and filled with rich pastry cream, dipped in chocolate. **\$2.99 each.**

25% OFF THIS WEEK

All these items ...



SPECIALS IN EFFECT UNTIL CLOSING SUNDAY, FEB. 3rd

Hours: Mon. - Fri. 8:00-8:00
Sat. 8:00-6:00 - Sun. 9:00-6:00

4476 16th Avenue (Just W. of Kennedy)

(905) 940-0655



Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 60 years.