

BETTER HEALTH CARE



Strawberry Festival Countdown

By Laura Roessler

When I open the Strawberry Festival web page every morning, the first item that catches my eye is the Countdown Clock.

The clock represents the number of days, hours and minutes until the community participates in one of the largest festivals in York Region. To the committee it is a reminder of how long it will be until we host 20,000 plus guests from Stouffville and as far away as Pennsylvania.

It also represents the amount of time the committee has left to continue booking acts, organizing the logistics, arranging all legal permits, receiving applications and placing vendors. The list of things to do seems infinite. But the reward makes it all worthwhile, as the 20 committee members get to stand on Main St., enjoy the crowds and take pride in their accomplishments. We call the festival our baby as it takes us nine months to pull it all together.

Our website offers a continuously updated schedule of events; details on how to apply to become a crafter or food vendor; a festival map; photo gallery and, most important, a list of the sponsors who make it all possible.

This year we will again offer a family movie in the baseball diamond, a larger inflatable playground, a putting green and 'moonwalk' for younger festival goers. There will be six free family swims and we will repeat our Music Jam Session on Sunday. The 2012 session was such a success we have allocated more time for everyone wishing to participate. Remember that all children's activities are free.

We are busy booking the comedians for Friday's Giggles Night. The What About Bob band will be in full swing on Saturday evening. And Canada Day would not be complete without the Blackboard Blues Band returning to help us celebrate the greatest country in the world, not to mention free Canada Day Cake for everyone, followed by fireworks at dusk.

To keep up to date with the latest information, visit www.strawberryfestival.ca or look us up at www.facebook.com/StouffvilleStrawberryFestival. You can also leave us a message at 905-642-3779, email info@strawberryfestival.ca or send us a Tweet to share your ideas on festival events.

Most important of all, mark your calendars for our Canada Day Weekend celebration beginning the evening of June 28 through to July 1 2013. Hope to see you there.

Laura Roessler is a member of the Strawberry Festival Committee

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Baker Made The World's Best Apple Fritter

Ralph DiMarco had a passion for life and laughter

By Bruce Stapley
Stouffville Free Press

For the better part of a quarter century Stouffville residents and truckers driving through the east end of Stouffville always knew where to go for friendly conversation, a joke and the world's best apple fritter.

Those were the trademarks of Ralph DiMarco who, along with his wife Rosa, ran the popular T & R Donuts shop that operated at Tenth Line and Main St. from 1983 until their retirement in 2007.

Ralph died of a massive heart attack at home on January 31. He was 71. His sudden passing was a shock to everyone who knew and loved him, especially Rosa. "There was no sign whatsoever," she said.

For Ralph, the long days in the bakery that saw him go in to fire up the ovens at midnight and stay until noon six days a week were always a labour of love. He enjoyed every minute he spent baking and discussing life with the thousands of customers who would come calling for coffee, baked goodies and conversation.

"If I had it to do all over again, I wouldn't change a thing," he said in a Free Press interview upon his retirement. "I only missed two days and that was because of a power blackout."

During the final years at the bakery, Ralph and Rosa would close the doors for a

month after Christmas and head to Mexico or the Caribbean for a well deserved rest. Upon their retirement they returned to the Caribbean, and visited their native Italy for two months in 2008.

Ralph was known by all for his passion for life, his integrity and his love of people. "He was always cheerful, and always honest," said Rosa, to whom he had been married for 48 years. "He saw the best in everybody, and he always had a joke to tell."

Ralph worked as a baker for a Toronto grocery store before opening up his own business in Stouffville five years after the couple moved here in 1978. His renowned apple fritters were inspired by a recipe he got from a fellow employee at the grocery store bakery.

For Ralph, the bakery was a place to meet with people and enjoy life. "The people who come into the shop are friends, not customers," he said when he retired. "I always had a good day with the people who came in, talking, laughing and telling jokes. Life is beautiful if you have a sense

of humour."

Rosa said the decision to close the bakery wasn't easy for her husband. "Retirement was hard for Ralph. He had to give up what he loved."

Ralph leaves behind his wife Rosa, sons Ross and Tony, his daughter in law Mary, and granddaughters Emily, Alex and Jessica, along with brothers Jack and Benito, and his sister Maione and her husband Alfredo.

farmer Jack's

GARDENS

LANDSCAPE
SUPPLIES

STOUFFVILLE SENIOR OF THE MONTH

ALICE VAGUE

AGE: Alice and her twin sister Mary will both turn 80 later this year.

NUMBER OF YEARS IN STOUFFVILLE: Alice was born in Alberly, Ontario, and lived in Milliken and Unionville before moving to the Glad Acres Farm owned by the family of her husband Stewart in Ringwood. She has lived in the Stouffville area 53 years.

CAREER: Alice worked for 4 years with a printing company as a teenager before she married Stewart in 1952. She helped with the family farm, raising chickens, cats, rabbits and ducks, and planting and harvesting veggies. She continued to run the farm for 20 years after her husband died in 1991.

HOBBIES: "The things I've done!" says Alice. She was a night school junky, taking such diverse courses as taxidermy, cake decorating and wood working. She still has some of the furniture she has made. She was 'adopted' by the Stouffville Spirit as their chief muffin maker and supporter!

FAMILY: Along with her twin sister, Alice has a younger sister Florence. She and Stewart had four daughters - Carol, Marilyn, Linda and Diane. She has 9 grand kids and 3 great grand kids.

PET PEEVE: People who say "There's nothing to do!"

LIFE HI-LITES: "After my husband died I bought a pickup truck and a camper and took off on my own and travelled throughout Western Canada in 1995-6." She's more than happy to relate her adventures experienced during her odyssey!

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?

"I say so many times, 'Oh what I would do if I won the lottery!' First I'd look after my kids and then I would give it to the Legion, the Lions and all those groups that look after other people in our community."

IF YOU KNOW A SENIOR THAT IS WORTHY OF SENIOR OF THE MONTH
GIVE US AN E-MAIL AT FARMERJACKS@ROGERS.COM

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