



Shauna Pellow, 12, of Emeryville, digs into a helping of strawberries and ice cream at the 13th annual LaSalle Strawberry Festival. The Pellow family picked the strawberry festival over the Windsor riverfront for their weekend outing. "The strawberries are awesome," Shauna said.

Star Photo: Bob Stewart

Berry, Berry Good

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As tear gas and confrontations raged at the OAS conference a few kilometers up the road, LaSalle's Gil Maure Park was an oasis of good cheer at the 13th annual Strawberry Festival.

The only violence being committed this weekend was the apparent pop music butchery perpetrated by a Ricky Martin impersonator.

"He wasn't very good," said 13-year old Shauna Pellow, of Emeryville, through a mouthful of strawberries and ice cream. "But the strawberries are awesome."

When told about reports of violence in downtown Windsor, Shauna's mother, Kelly Pellow, said the family chose the Strawberry Festival to stay away from potentially dangerous situations.

"I knew something was going to happen," she said. "There's no way I'd go downtown."

Festival committee treasurer and concession booth chairwoman Debbie Boose said that although this

year's crowds were large, she didn't think there was much of a difference from last year's estimated 45,000 people over three days.

Admission, as always, was free. Organizers rely on percentages of profits from the 110 concessionaires and carnival operators Roberson Amusements, numerous 50/50 draws and \$4,000 from town council.

"We're a very self-sufficient festival," said boose.

Self-sufficient in every way except the focus of the festival - the strawberries. They aren't local.

Boose said it would cost too much to pick, clean, and package local berries and would be too taxing on local crops and farmers.

Instead, a 40-foot truck with 560 flats of California strawberries - two or three times larger than their local counterparts - is brought in.

Volunteers from the LaSalle fire department dole out the dishes of sliced strawberries and vanilla ice cream - a deal at \$2.50. By 5:15 p.m.

Sunday the strawberries and ice cream tent was closing down. All berries had been eaten.