

First Berry Fest

LaSalle - The whole community of LaSalle is coming together in organizing its first annual Strawberry Festival, planned for May 28 and 29.

LaSalle wanted a unique celebration to attract people to the community, something that would not conflict with other area celebrations, said festival chairman Marg Gignac.

"What started out as a small celebration has snowballed and blossomed into a full festival," she said. "The whole community has contributed to what has become a team effort."

Gignac estimates 50 community members are involved in organizing the event

The community decided on a "Strawberry" Festival because it occurs when strawberries are available and because LaSalle has many strawberry growers.

A strawberry-eating contest will be one of many activities planned for the two-day festival. Overseer of this event will probably be the festival mascot, Mr. Strawberry, who will receive a helping hand from his First Mate, a role to be played by a local child.

Gignac said the Business Improvement Area of

LaSalle has been busy lately improving the town on a nautical theme, after the main street referred to as "The Nautical Mile."

Many festival events will perpetuate this theme. Boats will be moved to the location of the festival where about 100 mariners are expected to participate in a blessing-of-the-fleet ceremony, Gignac said. There will also be a marine display and boat show.

In another contest, local citizens will compete for the decorated spile. A spile is a part of dock, and Gignac said LaSalle residents use them to decorate their lawns.

Sunday has been christened *Take a Kid Fishing Day* anyone interested can register now.

Gignac was worried co-ordinators would have trouble finding sufficient entertainment for the weekend, but was pleasantly surprised.

"We were looking for local entertainment and we came up with a full slate," she said.

The knights of Columbus will hold a Steak Dinner and Casino night. Sandwich Secondary School is putting on a live arts show entitled Delilah and Sam.

Theatre Alive, With Brian Raisbeck, will be putting on a sneak preview of King Henry's Feast, and a local restaurant, The Sunnyside, will host a medieval dinner. Two teenage bands will play and disc jockey services have been donated.

Other festival activities will include a pancake breakfast sponsored by local seniors, a fun run, a street rods display, and a parade sponsored by the LaSalle Youth Centre.

Gignac said spaces are still available should anyone want to join approximately 70 booths to be set up in the park. She said people have registered booths from as far away as Rodney.

Shuttle services will be available to take festival-goers from the parking areas to the park. Gignac said they don't want cars in the area of celebrations.