

Bill Rea loved Buzzfest at Terra Cotta Country Shop

Written By CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD

'This is our 22nd year in the country shop,' Judy Vella was happy to announce. 'And the sixth year for Buzzfest.'

Buzzfest is on this weekend Saturday 22 to Sunday 23, at the Terra Cotta Country Shop from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm both days.

Co-owner with her husband, Bob McCloskey, a nature photographer, Ms Vella told us a story of the connection between Bill Rea, late editor of the Caledon Citizen for 30 years, and Buzzfest.

'The first year,' she began, 'we held Buzzfest on the first weekend of October and it rained and was cloudy and miserable all weekend.' With distance, it had become a humorous memory. 'It took a lot of heart for everyone to stay. We got through it under umbrellas and fog horns.'

'At the end, we thought it was finished but Bill came to us and said, 'This has the making of a great annual celebration.' So, the next year, we backed it up a weekend to the last weekend in September and it was blazing hot all weekend.

'Last year, Bill was here, teasing us about that second weekend and it was hot again then,' she said, speaking over the telephone, a smile in her voice at the memory. 'He was really good to us and we sent our condolences to his family when he died. We really miss him.'

This little shop right in the village of Terra Cotta, is a retail establishment of fashion and accessories, food and their in house bakery. And ice cream.

As if ice cream was a pivotal point in the shop, Ms Vella declares absolutely, 'No one is cranky eating ice cream.'

'We have only ever been open on the weekends,' she informed us, 'from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. We'll stay open until Christmas.'

Naturally, Ms Vella was all a-buzz about Buzzfest. There some 23 vendors at the festival and she is delighted to say, 'Gosh, a lot of people have stayed on - this is really, really fun. There are three different musical groups. Two of the loveliest guys, Mat and Andrew Oliveira, are playing on Saturday; they're from the Caledon band, Highway 50.

'Sunday, from Toronto, a group that are all doctors get together and they love to play festivals. So, they're coming from noon to 1:00 pm.

'Then, at 2:30 pm, on Sunday, Alison Jutzi and Rob Mitchell are playing. Rob Mitchell is a music teacher at Herb Campbell Public School [for the band there].'

Understandably excited about the upcoming weekend, Ms Vella was eager to tell us all about the vendors, of which there seems a fair variety. They are mainly artisans of goods and consumables.

For her first ever show, Paige Galea is presenting her special take on jewellery and home decor, with highly decorated and custom made reproduction skulls of deer or other animals, not people. Quite beautifully made and almost certain to put her on the map for originality.

'She is so excited,' Ms Vella remarked about this young artist.

Radouan Abou-Faysal, a 'proud Canadian' is bringing her home made zaatar, a 'Lebanese specialty to be combined with olive oil and eaten with bread.' Delicious.

Golden Rescue will be on hand too, the not-for-profit organization, dedicated to rescuing and re-housing displaced Golden Retrievers.

These are few of the many and they are all listed on the shop's website.

'There's so much going on in the fall,' commented Ms Vella, 'and people like to drive around the country and go from thing to thing.'

A small lunch menu is on offer by local caterer, Naina's Big Eats, with a pulled pork sandwich or eggplant parmigiana, with the 'best corn chowder I ever tasted,' Ms Vella assured us.

'We have hired a wonderful university student coming from Pakistan who first started with us when she was in high school. She does beautiful henna [temporary] tattoos. So, we pay her and it helps with her living while she's going to university. Then, we have a few high school art students volunteers doing face painting. Over 15 high school students also come and volunteer to get some of their hours. We ply them with food and ice cream.

'It's so lovely to see the local villages come together like this.'

The Terra Cotta Country Shop began all those 22 years ago, with ice cream and as a branch of the Ten Thousand Villages.

Said Ms Vella, 'We thought we would just open on weekends from spring to Christmas.'

That was the plan and that is what they have done. Meanwhile, they became an integral part of the whole. The Buzzfest is proof of that.

The Buzzfest is at the Terra Cotta Country Shop is at 119 King Street, Terra Cotta.

?It mostly takes place at the back,? Ms Vella, ?On the banks of the Credit River is where all the fun is.?

Saturday September 22 and Sunday, 23 from 11:00 am until 5:00pm.

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