



Well, it's all over but the shouting for another year and what a fair it was.

The Acton Fall Fair is always the best fair in the entire province and I'm not a bit prejudiced. Saturday was a tremendous day and I enjoyed every bit of it. It's just a shame the weather couldn't have continued for one more day. Sunday was a wet flop with cattle and horse shows cancelled, a disappointment to organizers and contestants.

It's horrible to work for weeks on a show with all the accompanying worry, tension and frustration, only to see the culmination of your efforts drowned out. And the only reason shows are cancelled is the safety of horses and riders. Jumping and cantering on greasy wet grass is suicidal. Organizers hate to see a no-show but sometimes it's the only way to go.

Contestants usually dislike cancellations, too. One young girl of our acquaintance has worked for months on the filly she was showing at halter. This was, I believe, the first time she had showed and her excitement was at fever pitch.

When I was leaving the fairgrounds at one o'clock Sunday, I met a huge swing-hitch stock truck packed with western horses negotiating the turn at Knox and Main. I'm glad I wasn't around to hear his comments on the weather.

Kids and ponies always win. However, on to more cheerful topics and Saturday was certainly that.

There's nothing I like better than to flit from ring to ring taking out-of-focus pictures of horses. It's a grand chance to see the action up close, get in on the good stuff, and kibitz with old friends.

One of the happiest hours of Saturday was spent in the gymkhana ring with Julian Reed, swapping horse stories and watching the wee mites making mommy proud while he waited to present ribbons and I waited to photograph him doing it.

There was also a professional photographer, free lancing. He kept coming up to me with comments about the readings of his fancy camera, discussions of the paper he printed on and incomprehensible patter concerning his lenses and accessories. I was flattered to be included in this cosy clubness and tried hard to look intelligent as I hid my lowly Kowa, sans accessories, under my coat. I have trouble remembering to check for sun position before I shoot!

The kids are the best part of any show, especially the little ones. The wee daughter of a friend had us in stitches flapping her legs like wings at every canter stride in order to keep her plump pony going at speed.

The children in the hunter pony classes Saturday morning were all the epitome of professionalism. Over thirty were entered in most classes and handled themselves like experts. The only bad moments came from the midway and the positioning of one of the major rides. The noisy yellow and orange creation started warring about 11 o'clock right in the visual path of ponies entering the ring for their first jump. It's only natural that most ponies reacted badly to this unflappable monster. One young lady, an excellent rider who had been doing very well up until this point, was very tearful over her pony's complete refusal to go past the horror. Eventually, some classes later, she got the pony round the ring, but the day was ruined for her.

Why wasn't the English show ring left at the end of the park near the western ring as it was two years ago? That seemed to me an admirable arrangement with both rings side by side, one announcer handling both rings, spectators able to see both and all horse trailers kept to the very back by the lake. What was wrong with that?

Belgians beat all. Erica fell madly in love with the Carlsberg Team of Belgians and had to be dragged bodily away from them. She is now beginning to understand her parents' lifelong obsession with the big beasts.

I always go a bit gooey when I see that team, so many of them are related to our 2700 pound Belgian stud and his world famous sire. They have that du Marais stamp and I find myself looking into the eyes of our own boy so often. To the uninitiated, it must seem weird to be able to pick a certain family out of a whole mess of chestnut horses looking identical but it's like a ewe picking her own lamb out of a herd.

There were two six-horse hitchers at the track horse show, one Belgian and one commercial Clydesdale-cross. It made you hold your breath to see them turn those beasts on the narrow track. One false move, and they'd all go plop in the lake.

I'm sorry it's over and I can't wait for next year's fair.



BOBBIE WARREN and his partner Pepper were a team for the best-dressed pet and master at the pet show at the weekend fair. The two took first place in the category.

Pet show on despite Sunday cancellations

The pet show Sunday afternoon was cancelled at 11 a.m. along with all the other outdoor events.

But while the horses and cattle which had arrived all went home, the pets started to arrive.

Youngsters showed up with dogs, cats, hamster and guinea pig, all ready to sign up.

Rather than disappoint them, the contest was hastily rearranged. It's location changed to the beer tent.

Here a delightful time was spent in judging the demanding categories, admiring each other's pets and comparing notes on creature cleverness.

Fred Dewsbury was in charge of this committee. Organizers were sorry that



KAREN DEWSBURY poses with her prize winning pet Sid. Karen led the dog around the ring Sunday afternoon at the Fair pet show. Rain cancelled many of Sunday's activities, but the pet show went on.

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Money worries face fair board

Despite the outstanding success of Friday and Saturday programs at the fair, finances seriously concern president Brent Marshall and his board of directors this week. Sunday's rain had two special aspects that concern them very much.

This is Acton's first year as a Class B fair, and the high average of prize money paid out in certain classes must be maintained. However, some of this money was unawarded, due to Sunday's poor weather. "We have to carry on the standards," Our average prize money

has to be as high as we can get it, because our grant will be frozen." As well, this year's board started out with a deficit.

We were getting close to breaking even when the rain came, Mr. Marshall said. Last year's deficit was a surprising \$7,400.

It also ruined on the Sunday show last year. The programs went on, but attendance was away down.

There is no insurance coverage for Sunday. To collect a fair has to be completely rained out as Georgetown's was last year. Our fair grounds will allow much more rainfall than some, Mr. Marshall explained. If the rain had stopped by 10:30 we could have continued.

Changes had been made to ensure that this year's fair would make money.

The admission charge at the gate was raised from \$2 to \$2.50 for adults. Children all got in free on Saturday. Mr. Marshall says nowhere else

can people find such an array of great entertainment for the price. "We have more going on in three days than any other fair in the area," he says proudly. "In every corner there is something going on."

There is no longer any room to expand any area, such as the midway.

The total financial picture won't be known until perhaps October. Secretary-treasurer John Rowe says "this part of my work is just beginning."

We had excellent cooperation from the town, parks and recreation people, hydro, fire department and the Legion, the president said. "The fair is a community event... this is what it's

all about! President Marshall heaped praise on the new fair board members, who turned out to be such an asset, and the older members "who form the backbone of the whole thing." Brian Evans is first vice-president, Bill Yundt second vice-president and John Rowe the secretary-treasurer.

On the board of directors are Murray Wallace, Rae Swackhamer, Stephen Lister, Keith Aitken, Paul Thompson, Ted Brown Jr., Cathy Lasby, Brian Hammond, Robert Murray, Bert Robertson, Garry McEachern, Earl Steekley, Bill Lasby, Mrs. A. Hall and Mrs. I. Swackhamer.

More

Lists of prize winners at the fair will be published in next week's Free Press, with more pictures and stories.

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FOUR KITTENS entered in the pet show were tucked inside sweaters and jackets for warmth Sunday. Pictured with their meowing entries are Gillian Balkind with Patches, Jeff Balkind with Sleepyhead, Nadine Balkind with an unnamed one and Bob Andrews with Tigger.

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