

Ladies showed they could organize baking, handicrafts, flowers et al . . .

Twenty years ago the ladies involved in the fall fair got tired of having the men shove their exhibits around. They formed their own board and organized not only baking, handicrafts and flower exhibits but a baby show and parade.

Mrs. Clifford Storey remembers when that happened and how the

ladies raised money for their permanent show cases, some of the finest in the province.

She fondly remarks that Bert Davidson "was always good to the ladies" and built the show cases for them.

From a time when "men had all the say" to emancipation, the home-craft section has grown

out of several locations. Larger and larger facilities are utilized and, like Topsy, it grows on.

Baking is much the same with ladies vying for points in excellence, says Mrs. Storey. She ought to know—her name has been a baking byword for many a year at the fair. Last year she won the most baking

points and has long been a steady exhibitor.

But the largest growth is in the handwork and arts and crafts division. According to Mrs. Storey, years ago when displays were in a tent, the visitor saw mainly quilts, baby layettes and pillow cases. Now you are likely to be visually

surprised by wall upon wall covered with artwork, macrame, embroidery, crewel, plant hangers, leatherwork and all sorts of items made from 'junk'.

It became necessary to add a separate arts and crafts section recently and entries keep pouring in.

Mrs. Lloyd McEnergy has always worked with the flower and plant displays and says "once fair work gets in your blood you can't you really enjoy it."

She's been involved with the Ladies Board

since inception and remembers some of the exhibitors whose names have cropped up over the years—the originals like Eleanor Thompson, Elva Pearen and Mrs. Calvin Aitken, Mrs. Norm Robinson, Mrs. George Young—and some new ones such as Mrs. Earl Steckley.

Mrs. McEnergy tells of the time the Ladies Board undertook to find floats and sponsors for the parade which was foundering after the school refused to sponsor a children's parade any more.

As Nino Braida remarks, "the ladies take up the gap so often when we fall down".

The homecraft and crop exhibits have been shoved around a lot depending on growth, since the fall fair started. Originally held in the old curling club, the exhibits were housed in rented tents when the club was pulled down. Now in the new arena, exhibits have been upstairs and down and are now straining the walls no matter where they're put.

What nice problems for a fall fair board to have.

Social features important part

No fall fair would be complete without social activities.

Russell Murray, past president of the fair and long time social director, remembers that there has "always been a show" at the fair.

The Miss Acton Fair contest was started in 1963 and one of the first contests of its kind. When the CNE started its sweetheart contest a few years ago, a contest between fall fair queens, it was to the Acton Board they came for advice.

Friday night of the fair has had some sort of entertainment for as long as Russell can remember. When the arena was dirt floored, he said, the horse people used to hold their jumping competitions there on a Friday night.

A fiddlers' contest has long been a part of the fair, starting with a few fiddlers on a flatbed truck of Tyler's eight years ago on a Sunday afternoon. Now it's another major attraction held in the arena on Friday evening.

The Saturday night dance has long been a money maker for the fair attracting as many as 600 lively hoofers in the arena.

When the Ladies Division of exhibits outgrew the upper portion of the arena, they took over half the arena floor.

When the show lasted only two days, exhibits were removed by Saturday afternoon in time for the dance. However, when the fair extended itself to three days, including Sunday, the directors set about carefully removing all exhibits from the arena on Saturday night for the dance and replacing them Sunday morning.

This went on for two weary years until, Russ says, "we found something better".



Fiddling for a trophy.

Dairy show is becoming bigger, better each year

Although Dairy classes were rained out last year at Acton Fall Fair, organizers hope for the largest dairy cattle show ever in 1979. It was disappointing because it was Acton's first Class B fair.

Ken Murray, past president of the fair and dairy director, says the show last year would have been exceptionally large but hopes for even more entries this year. It'll really be the dairy classes first try at belonging to a Class B fair.

The cattle entries have increased four or five times what they were six years ago, Murray says. Classes are attracting top cattle from great distances with recognized judges in every breed.

Some of the older faithful exhibitors

include the Nurse family from Georgetown, Rock-Ella Jerseys from Hornby, the Smith Griffins from Acton and Brownridge's from Milton, Murray remembers.

No story about the fair dairy show would be complete without discussion of the junior show reputed to be one of the finest in the province. A hundred youngsters enter their calves in a choice of classes gaining experience, education and, they hope, ribbons.

Cathy Lasby, managing editor of Shorthorn News, says it's one of the finest junior shows she's seen coast to coast.

Directors agree, the future of agriculture and the fall fair lies with its young people and Acton plans to accommodate them.

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Wishing the Acton Fall Fair the best of luck!



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