

85th edition of Fall Fair is a family affair

By FRANCES NIBLOCK
The New Tanner

The rich traditions of rural Ontario life – fine livestock, skillful home crafts and friendly competition – will mix easily with a new emphasis on young families at the 85th edition of the Acton Fall Fair which runs September 18, 19 and 20.

"The midway operator is bringing in more kiddie rides and we'll have the petting zoo back again because there's been a bit of a baby boom and we have a lot more young kids coming to the fair," explained Acton Agricultural Society president Ron White in an interview on

Sunday.

White said the Society tries to avoid over-commercializing the fair while still offering events to compete with neighbouring fairs.

"It's still a small town fair and it's billed as 'One of the Best Little Fairs in Ontario. We've always tried to keep it as much agricultural as we can. A lot of fairs have stopped having cattle shows and just have demonstrations, but to me when you walk through the fair grounds, having the cattle at the back (of the fair grounds) there is part of the atmosphere of the fair," White said.

Fair favourites

White, who takes a week-and-a-half off work to volunteer at the fair, said his favourite part of the weekend is the poultry barn where he began showing birds more than 20 years ago.

"Eventually after a few years of showing birds I was asked to help with the fair and I've worked in the poultry barn ever since so I always spend a lot of time there. I also never miss the tractor pulls," White said, adding that the fair is a real social event, much like fairs were before the turn of the century.

"I think a lot of people

who come every year to the fair use it as kind of a reunion thing to catch up with people they haven't seen in a while. Everyone seems to come back to Acton for the fair – I know I usually see people I went to school with 10 or 15 years ago and it's a great chance to stay in touch," White said.

Along with the perennial favourites like the tractor pull, the livestock shows, home crafts exhibits and Education Day – this year's features three performances of a lumberjack show including log sawing and pole climbing, a sheepdog herding demonstration, crazy canoe races and the parade.

Preparations underway

In the coming weeks a dedicated band of volunteers will begin turning Prospect Park into a fair grounds with miles of snow fencing, display cases and bleachers. They will measure out the show rings, mark off the midway area and prepare the old arena for the home craft exhibits and special events. In the days before the fair animal and poultry owners will begin moving their stock onto the grounds to be ready for Education Day on Friday when thousands of Halton school children visit the fair.

This may be the last year that the Society uses the old arena for its Homecraft exhibits and special events be-

cause the Town plans to demolish the building after this fall's fair unless a local group's attempts to save the building are successful. White said they know the demolition is possible but are trying to concentrate on making this year's fair a success.

"We're just happy to have it (the arena) for this year and will just kind of worry about it after this year's fair."

At least 13,000 people, half of them from outside of Halton Hills, attend the fair each year. The fair has an annual budget of \$100,000 and steady profits have allowed the Society to build an \$80,000 nest egg. Revenues come mainly from gate attendance, entry and exhibitor fees, concession space rentals, gifts, donations and sponsorships.

Fall Fair facts

Agricultural societies have existed on Ontario since the early 1800s with a mandate to improving agriculture. This included importing superior livestock, sharing new crops seeds, farming methods and equipment, buying agricultural books and holding shows and exhibits which developed into the fall fairs that we know and love.

Prizes were awarded the best livestock and also for the things like the best cheese, flannel, maple sugar and the best two acres of wheat, oats and peas. Over the years some fairs featured horse racing, freak shows, parades, entertainment, crop exhibits and baby and beauty competitions.

While the objective of the agricultural societies was to improve agriculture, organizers quickly saw that there was money to be made by attracting the general public to the fairs. Increased revenue allowed them build permanent facilities for the fairs and to offer more prize money.

The Halton County Agricultural Society formed in 1853 and held its first show in Milton. The Esquesing Society held its meetings and fair in Stewarttown. About 1875 the fair was moved from Stewarttown to Georgetown with the first show being held in the present fair grounds in 1889. The event was then a township fair and was held in alternate years in Acton and Georgetown. The last joint fair was held in Acton in 1908.

Acton's fair years

- 1913 – The first solely Acton fair was held and billed as being "open to the world." Prize money that year totalled \$800.
- 1915 – Cars were admitted to the Prospect Park fair grounds for the first time.
- 1916 – The first school children's' parade was held.
- 1919 – The first beauty contest was staged.
- 1921 – The first baby show was held. They ran until 1953 and were reintroduced in 1965.
- 1930 – The new cattle ties were built and tie arena was completed.
- 1933 – The first poultry show was held.
- 1956 – Ninety contestants entered the Central Canada Junior Pumpkin championship.
- 1958 – Women formed their own organization and began to play a leading role in the fair.
- 1963 – The 50th anniversary of the fair featured the first Miss Acton contest.
- 1974 – The profitable beer tent opened for first time.
- 1990 – Education Day was first held for Halton school-age children.
- 1993 – Stage shows at the front gate offered more entertainment.

Dan C. Dolliver

ONTARIO LAND SURVEYOR

Legal & Topographic Surveys

54 Mill St. E.
Tel. 853-2502
Fax 853-1504



Remanufactured
BBO TANKS
\$26.96 plus tax

20 lb. Propane
Cylinder Refill
\$10 incl. GST

Tyler Transport Ltd.
379 Queen St. E., Acton 853-1550

BNR TOWING

24 Hour Service

853-5848

NELLIS CONSTRUCTION LIMITED



ROAD BUILDING
EARTH MOVING

R.R. #1 Acton 853-0960

Soft Water Plus
Simply the Best in
Water Softeners

SPECIAL
WATER COOLERS
\$10.00 /MONTH

853-0757

Mitch Lajeunesse

Braida & Henry
BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS

Serving the Community
for 40 Years

67 Mill Street East
Acton
853-1160



SKUNK AND RACCOON
REMOVAL
CALL CHRIS AT
(519) 859-0045

**YOURWAY
MUFFLER
PLUS**



Custom Pipe Bending
Lic. Safety Inspection Stn.

17 Agnes St.
Acton 853-0900

This space
for rent
Call Maggie 853-0051

**Singing Dog
Cycle**

- Motorcycle Repairs
- Parts In Stock



Scott Masales
(905) 702-0888
12488 - 5th Line, Limehouse

Royal Jug City

2 L Pepsi Cola
\$1.39
Ice \$1.60

853-2460

In the Glenlea Plaza

Robinson Motors

546 Guelph St., Norval

Complete Auto Service
Small Engine Repair
Husqvarna Sale & Service

OPEN
WEEKENDS

(905) 702-1825

**CONSTABLE RIDDLE'S
CORNER**

With Village Constable
Bill Riddle



Back to school safety rules

It's back to school time! I know some of you parents (most) are very happy after a summer of the kids driving you crazy. I hope that this will be a year of safety for the boys and girls heading back to school and I would like parents to review all the safety rules with their children.

1. Look ALL ways before you cross the street.
2. WALK, don't run, when you cross the street.
3. Keep away from parked cars.
4. Where there are no sidewalks, walk facing the traffic.
5. Play your games in a safe place, away from traffic.
6. Drive your bicycle safely, away from traffic.
7. Wear your seatbelt at all times while riding in a car.

**PARENTS: PLEASE TEACH YOUR
CHILD THE SAFETY RULES.**

Blue Springs
Flower & Gift Shop

Flowers Say It Best!

853-0800

46 Mill St. E., Acton

Service At Its Best!

**McINTYRE
FUELS LIMITED**

Sales • Service • Rentals • Installations
Furnaces • Oil fired water heaters
Automatic delivery of home heating fuels
Full line of gas, diesel fuels & lubricants

24 Hour Burner Service

44 Young St. Acton

853-0000

20 Years
Andy's
restaurant

Family Dining & Pizzeria
Licensed under L.L.B.O.

Serving The Best To Acton Since 1978

13-15 Mill Street East

853-0300

-THE SMOKE SHOPPE-

56 Mill St. East, Acton Unit A

853-0411

Serving Acton for Over 25 Years

Tobacco, Lotteries, Used Books
(on the United Church parking lot)