



Rylea Wilson, 5, has a fair moment to remember, riding the swings at the Acton Fall Fair Saturday afternoon. The 93rd event was labeled a resounding success with record receipts.



Britany Rykaszewski, 2nd runner-up, Miss Acton Fall Fair Sarah O'Hearn and 1st runner-up Cheri Holmes get ready to ride in the parade at the Acton Fall Fair Saturday afternoon. Sarah won the crown at a pageant to kick off the Fair events, Friday night.



It was a family affair at the Fall Fair with Hannah Hewson, 8, and her mom Barb Brown trying their hand at playing the games— taking aim here at the dart game.



Tommy Neal, 2, from Acton on the Peter & Paul ride Saturday afternoon.

Photos by
Sabrina Brynes



Nothing tastes better than Fall Fair food as Jenna Chillman, 3, from Acton discovered while enjoying an ice cream cone.



The all-ages Acton Citizens' Band marched in the parade at the Acton Fall Fair Saturday afternoon.

Fall Fair attendees say it retains title as 'best little fair in Ontario'

BRENNA MOORE
Special to The IFP

There may have been a lack of sunshine for the 93rd Acton Fall Fair this past weekend, but the crowds were big and that's what organizers were hoping for.

"We hoped for good weather and a good crowd," said Dale Hewitt, president of the Acton Agricultural Society (AAS). "We couldn't control the weather, but there was a great turnout."

Hewitt said this was the second-best year for gate admission the fair has seen on a Friday night. Organizers were also pleased with the attendance for the rest of the weekend.

Saturday's annual parade drew huge numbers of spectators into Prospect Park Fairgrounds.

"(On Saturday) the crowd followed the parade into the fairgrounds," said Hewitt. "It's usually a huge event to boost the day."

"The parade may not have the pizzazz of the Santa Claus Parade in Toronto, but you see people you know on the floats and can see the work they've done. And that's something the crowd really enjoys," said Councillor Mike O'Leary, a member of the AAS fundraising team and charter member of the Knights of Columbus.

The crowds continue to come back year after year for the traditions of an old-fashioned country fair.

"Many people have told me that this is like an old-time fair. It's still an agricultural fair. I think it retains a small town flavour," said O'Leary.

Visitors from outside the region also come to discover why Acton's fair is "one of the best little fairs in Ontario."

"This is our first time coming to this fair," said Ernie Campbell of Mississauga. "I like country fairs because I grew up in the country. This is a good one. I like coming back to see the horses and the cattle."

"I grew up in Acton so it's a tradition

to come to the fair," said Kelly Hurst, who moved from Acton to Cambridge four years ago. "We bring the kids back year after year."

"We've been showing cattle here since I was eight," said Ciaran McIlwraith, of Puslinch. "This is a fabulous show with a wonderful atmosphere."

With 16 rides, tons of games and a fleet of vendors and concessions, the midway was a big feature, but only one of the highlights the fair had to offer.

"There are lots of rides, which I really like," said Kent Tatton, 6. "I really like all the animals. It's a lot of fun because I don't see animals like this all the time."

Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. was Education Day. This was an opportunity for school children and seniors to come out before the crowds and get close with the animals and learn about farming.

"Education Day gives young kids the chance to see and appreciate the agricultural roots of the town," said O'Leary. "There are kids who have moved from the city and who may have never even seen a live chicken."

The Poultry Barn and Ken Jen Petting Zoo are regular features that kids truly enjoy. "I ask the kids as they leave the park what they like and over half say the animals and the petting zoo," he said.

Ken Jen Petting Zoo has been coming to the Acton Fair for years and is an attraction the draws a big group.

"The racket (in the tent) tells you they are having a great time," said Jen LaSalle of Ken Jen Petting Zoo. "For all the years we've been coming here, we keep packing them in the tent."

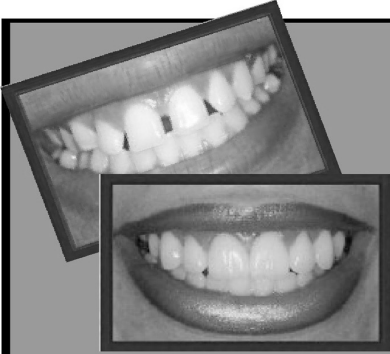
The AAS is looking forward to next year's fair and to use its new building which will be built as a replacement for the old Acton arena.

"The building will be about a 26,000 square-foot multi-use facility," said Hewitt. "We really look forward to having use of this building, and to finally move some of our biggest events from under the tents."

Large sponsors for the new building have come from within the Acton community. David Chapman and family and Purity Life Health Products have donated a total of \$100,000— \$80,000 of which has come within the last few weeks.


"The Chapman family and their business has made a very generous donation," said O'Leary. "The total is absolutely great for the little town of Acton."

With increasing crowds coming through the gates each year, the Acton Agricultural Society is always looking for new members and volunteers. If interested, check out www.actonfair.ca for application sheets or contact Dale Hewitt at 519-853-8984.



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