

Recall steam era

UXBRIDGE — Francis Hockley of Sandford was "all steamed up" last weekend, and so was his 1922 George White Steam engine, one of the many exhibits at the ninth annual Steam Threshing Days festival.

About two thousand people attended the two-day event, organized by the Uxbridge-Scott Historical Society, and held at their museum site in Quaker Hill.

A past president of the society, Isobel St. John, said, "We've been getting bigger every year."

She called the show an event for the whole family, including displays of cider-making, country dancing, china-painting, spinning, brook-making, and of course steam engines.

The affair began to give their organization a reason for existence, she said.

"We're collecting items to preserve the past for people," she said, "so we bring them out and demonstrate them."

She praised the co-operation and enthusiasm of the many volunteers who made the event possible.

Bill Woods, chairman of the steam show, was raised in the steam era.

"I was 12 years old when I fired my first engine."

The steam engine played an important part in Canada's history from 1860 to the 1930's, when the gas tractor was introduced.

It requires specialized knowledge to operate these antiquies, he said, or explosions can result.

Mr. Hockley said gasoline-powered tractors made their appearance in the area about 1910, but were still considered less reliable than steam-powered machinery as late as 1920.

He said the steam engine was very efficient, requiring only a little water and wood to fuel it.



Walter King, Seagrave Ontario, is a regular exhibitor at the Uxbridge-Scott Historical Society's Steam Threshing Days heritage festival. It took him two years to build this working scale model of a Waterloo steam engine. Ed Schroeter

The only drawback was that it took an hour for the fire to build up sufficient heat to drive the machine.

Walter King, of Seagrave, made his living threshing during a period unfamiliar with fossil fuels.

He operated his own business from 1935 to 1944, when the woodburning work-horses were slowly, but inevitably replaced.

By 1944 there wasn't a steam drive machine on the road, he said.

Here comes Twirl Canada

MARKHAM — We've all heard of Lotto Canada, and who will ever forget Team Canada ('72); and now, here comes Twirl Canada.

No, it's not the name given to the accounts of tornadoes, hurricanes and other twisters throughout the land; instead, it's the name given to a national group of baton twirlers, who hope to become part of the 1988 Olympics — the competitive part.

And, helping to bring that ancient and skillful practise to the fore in this part of the world,

is Carrie McKittrick, Markham, with her Medley Progressive Dance and Baton Studio, which opens this fall.

Says Carrie, who has been "twirling" for 16 of 21 years, and has performed internationally: "The outlook on baton is more artistic now; there's more dancing and musical interpretation. It's more exciting."

"I hope to teach my style now, instead of performing it."

Carrie's style has been good enough to bring her numerous awards, including: three-time

Metro Toronto champion, Ontario Parade solo champion, Canadian Stunting champion, member of Ontario Due champions, and Ontario, Canadian and World Team twirling champions.

She also placed fourth in the World Strutting Championships (17-20) and fifth in the Canadian Freestyle (pre-Olympic) Championships in Saskatoon this summer.

Carrie studied ballet and jazz for nine years, all of which helped her achieve her own distinctive style. With that

distinctive style. With that behind her, she'll be incorporating innovative dancing and baton techniques in her classes.

By the time 1988 rolls around, she hopes some of her students may even be part of Twirl Canada, matching steps and tosses with teams from 11 other countries in the Olympic games.

The classes, which are for students between five and 21, will begin Sept. 22, at a location yet to be announced.

For more information, call 691-5280.

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Second Section

Local farmland will disappear slowly

By Ed Schroeter
STOUFFVILLE — As the eyes of our community watch the dramatic changes taking place to the south in Markham with disbelief, we recognize there are seeds of change in Stouffville too.

Our community is slowly losing its rural charm, adopting a more urban character. Some would say it's a Jekyll and Hyde transformation.

It begins with the destruction of farmland and ends with urban growth.

While Stouffville's farmland and open space will be spared from destruction longer than other land in York Region, it too will eventually disappear under concrete.

York Region's Planning Administrator, J.C. Mathews, says "Stouffville will be predominantly agricultural for perhaps 25 to 30 years or more."

Stouffville, like King Township, is not connected to the York-Durham Sewer System. The towns along the system, Markham, Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Aurora and Newmarket will bear the brunt of the growth in the region.

But he said that regional council can't preserve agricultural land, because the electorate won't support that.

If regional council were to freeze farmland, he said, it probably would be voted from office, and another council would reverse the decision.

Property owners do have the right to develop their land.

"It's a free enterprise system. We can't say, 'No, you can only farm it.'"

The best that can be done, he said, is to slow down the rate at which farmland is developed by encouraging all construction next to existing communities. No new communities will be built in the region.

"We're trying to reach a compromise, that's what we're trying to do. We hope to control the rate at which encroachment onto agricultural lands will occur."

"Eventually those existing communities will melt into one huge community," Mathews said.

The same fate will befall the region as North York, much of which was farmland 30 years ago.

Mathews said regional council hadn't decided on a firm policy on agricultural land use, but they were temporarily following the compromise policy suggested by the planning board.

Regional council probably won't make any decision on the matter until after the November municipal elections. Mathews said some special areas, such as Holland Marsh, will be designated only for agricultural use because the land is not suited for anything but farming.

Other low-lying areas, flood plains, for example, will also be retained as open space.

He said he couldn't predict when all the agricultural land in the area will be used up, because of the complex economic factors involved.

He said the high cost of housing might stimulate the development of apartment

buildings. This would use up less land.

Rising energy costs might discourage the growth of communities in the region, because commuting to jobs in the city might become uneconomical.

What kind of changes will the future bring to Whitchurch-Stouffville? Al Wall, provincial agricultural representative for York Region, predicts the character of local communities will change radically as agricultural activity in the area declines.

"When you shift, you lose farm population, and good base people from the community."

He said dairy families, for example, were always considered to be solid, stable pillars of the community because they had to be home seven days a week to milk the cow.

Today, however, there are few dairy farmers left; perhaps only 25 per cent of original number. Much of the industry moved farther north during the Pickering Airport debacle, when inflated land prices gave farmers a good reason to sell.

"There's not as much activity in the land market now," Wall said, "because a great proportion on the land has been sold."

In the case of the dairy industry, he said, milk production hasn't fallen, just shifted to another part of the

province. We don't seem to be in danger of facing reduced shortages.

But Pat McClelland, the People Or Planes (POP) agricultural expert says local agricultural land is the best of its kind and should be preserved in case it's needed in the future for food production.

The POP group is lobbying the federal and provincial governments to designate 36,000 acres of land in Pickering, part of it in Markham and Stouffville, as agricultural lands "in perpetuity."

She said soil conditions and the length of the growing season mean land farther north is not as productive. It takes more land to produce an equivalent amount of food.

It makes sense to protect farmland close to the cities because transportation and energy costs are escalating. Food costs will rise proportionately if it has to be trucked long distances. In China, for example, every city is self-sufficient.

"We're the only country in the world not protecting farmland close to the cities," McClelland said.

Both Wall and mayor Eldred King, who runs a mixed farming operation, said the local economy will be affected by the flight of agriculture.

Win vocal contest

MARKHAM — Two Stouffville men captured the top spots in the men's division of the Amateur Country and Western Vocal Contest, held at the Markham Fairgrounds, Aug. 23. Bill Wallace, R.R. 3, Stouffville, and Jim Cadioux, Main St., placed first and second respectively. The third place winner was Lorne Greenwood, Thornhill.

In the women's class, the first, second, and third place competitors were Marlene McKinley, Scarborough; Sherri Lynn, Markham; and Catherine Brenner, North Cobalt.

This is the first time the fairgrounds has hosted such an event. One of the organizers, Ken Snowball, said he was pleased with the event's success, and hopes it will be expanded next year.

Other competitors were Brendon Myers, Scarborough; Donna Nichols, Unionville; Terry Young, Unionville;

Dianne Crittenden, Angus and Linda Wall, Markham.

The judges were Fred Crawford, Alma Walker, and Steve Crossgrey. Contestants were marked on their stage presence, quality of vocals and the suitability of their material. Each presented two songs.

The back-up band was composed of Steve Crossgrey, Ernie Holbling, Buster Fykes, Brian Towner, and Bob Wilburn.

The Junior Vocal Champion of the Cobalt Country and Folk Festival, Dwayne Wall, New Liskeard, made a special guest appearance.

May trim budget

DURHAM — Financial troubles in 1981, may force Durham Region to trim its staff, according to finance chairman, John Aker.

Capital projects may also feel the pinch, Aker said, because of a predicted \$2 million to \$2.5 million drop in revenue from development charges.

"We've been expecting this," Aker said, "we can react to it very quickly."

He said he didn't think the expected cuts were severe; the

region could delay such things as land acquisitions for roads. Alderman Ed Kolodzie said the cuts must take place. The drop in development charges, which affects new housing, will cut down assessment growth in the region.

"They'll have to cut back on capital projects and they'll have to cut back on staff in engineering," he said. "Less projects mean less staff. If you don't have work, you can't make it."

Concern over scrapyards

STOUFFVILLE — Strong fences make good neighbors, according to the late poet, Robert Frost. But, then he never lived across the road from a scrapyard.

Had he, he might have been more inclined to stress their height, rather than their strength. That's the way several neighbors of Vince Gallo, proprietor of Don Mills Steel and Metal, Woodbine Ave., Gormley, viewed the matter, anyway, when they visited Whitchurch-Stouffville planning board last week.

While praising Gallo for the work he had done to help improve the general look of the premises, J. Robert Gardiner, spokesman for the small group, said he felt the fence around the yard should be considerably more than its present six feet. At the moment, the fence sways all the way down one side, as the mounds of scrap metal inside both lean against it and over it.

Gardiner felt, also, the fence should be painted "a natural color," to help blend in more with the surrounding area.

Earlier in the evening, Gallo said he had planned to landscape the outside area, banking up the front and planting some trees.

Gardiner said he was also concerned with the "noise factors" of the yard, and with the scrap that was dumped by people in front, just off the road.

Said Mayor Eldred King: "That's not Mr. Gallo's responsibility; we have dumping all through the municipality."

Councillor Jim Doble suggested that poplar, pine and cedar trees be planted in front. The latter had been planted in front of a house on Highway 48 and had grown up in no time.

"You can't even see the house now," Doble said.

A woman in the audience said she hoped the new sign Gallo was planning to put up on the premises, would blend in with the neighborhood; there was an antique store and a tea room, for example.

Gardiner said he would like to see "some program for parking." He said the neighbors were afraid the yard would become "a large container operation" and recommended spot zoning. He said he would like to thank Gallo "for listening to his neighbors and making an effort to improve the situation."

Council will get together with its planner to discuss zoning of the property.

MARKHAM — It was a long way to come, but the trip was worth it.

Houndhaven's Nordic Raider, a two-year-old Norwegian Elkhound from Sault Ste. Marie owned by Jim Martin and handled by Lisa Lake won Best In Show Saturday, at the Markham Kennel Club's annual dog show.

This is the first time Lisa has handled the dog, and this is his first Best In Show win.

On Sunday a Keeshond from Milton, Geluk Is Kaddaks' Big Tough Man, known to his friends as Beetlebug, owned by Ken and Lynda Bonham and handled by Katie Rodley captured the prize.

The class winners and their owners in the Saturday show were Keljeager's Just Like Sir (American Cocker Spaniel), Mrs. E. Smith, Sporting Dogs Class; Houndhaven's Nordic Raider (Norwegian Elkhound), Jim Martin, Hounds; Le Dayphin of Limberlost (Great

Pyrenees), Dr. Ellen Brown, Working Dogs; Minotaurus Midnight Airman (Bull Terrier); J. Brocks and R. Sobun, Terriers; Snospark's Taste of Honey (Maltese), Peter and Patti Scott, Toys; Geluk Is Kaddaks' Big Tough Man (Keeshond), Ken and Lynda Bonham, Non-Sporting Dogs; and Vondersha's First Edition (Doberman), Allan Davidson, Best Puppy In Show.

Class winners from Sunday were St. Aldwyns Snowflake (English Pointer), Mr. and Mrs. H.M. MacLeod, Sporting Dogs;

Lorricbrook Railsplitter (Whippet), Estelle Lyon, Hounds; Diamonaires Dealer's Choice (Boxer), Mr. and Mrs. S. Whitmore, Working Dogs; Music's Roberta (Kerry Blue Terriers), Knut Egeberg, Terriers; Rubilman's Ambassador Bull (Pug), Bill and Ruth Brooks, Toys; Geluk Is Kaddaks' Big Tough Man (Keeshond), Ken and Lynda Bonham, Non-Sporting; and Ken-Way's Sir Lance (American Cocker Spaniel), Ken and Grace Richards, Best Puppy In Show.



Houndhaven's Nordic Raider, a two-year-old Norwegian Elkhound from Sault Ste. Marie captured the Best In Show trophy at the Markham Kennel Club's Dog Show, Aug. 23. He's owned by Jim Martin. Ed Schroeter



Bill Wallace, R.R. 3, Stouffville, won first prize in the male vocalist class in the Amateur Country and Western Competition at the Markham Fairgrounds. As one selection, he chose his own composition, "Big Strapper". Ed Schroeter