

Markham's fair a family tradition

By T. ROGERS GARDHAM
 Bryan Armstrong, 1st vice-president of Markham Fair at 32, may be one of the Board's younger members but the tradition in his family goes back 123 years. This tradition is a very personal one for him as he is a direct descendant of Capt. William Armstrong who gave the Fair its first fixed site by granting five acres for its continuing use at the corner of Hwy. 7 and 48 in 1860.

His grandfather, Robert P. Armstrong, was the Fair's president from 1933 through 1935. While the story is apocryphal to a degree, it is said that he saved the Fair from a financial crisis during the Great Depression through a personal investment.

Bryan recalls visiting the Fair with his grandfather. The car would be parked under a shade tree near the race track. People would come and visit with his grandfather while his grandmother would sit in the shade and knit and visit with the ladies who dropped by.

Bryan also believes the growth of the Fair and the diversity of the crowds is one of the greatest changes he has observed over the years. In earlier times, the Fair was the main social event of the year. There was less dependence on crowds from outlying areas, particularly Toronto and on gate receipts. The competition between farmers, particularly on the race track, was keen, but for many fairgoers it was a time for visiting, up-dating family developments and a meeting place for renewing friendships.

Bryan feels today's Fair crowd is a wide cross section of urban and city-dwellers who primarily come for entertainment and to recall personal memories or the nostalgia of farm life.

He should know, as past few years have seen him involved with the administration of the admissions to the Fair and gate control. He has also been in charge of media advertising and a market survey shows the majority of Fairgoers are in their mid 30's and are from the technical or professional workforce. The family units involve one or two children with the parents generally below the age of 40.

Bryan and his wife, Janie, live on their 150-acre farm near Mt. Albert about an hour drive from the fairgrounds. They have three children: Sarah, 7, Jason, 5, and Jessica, 1. Bryan is a cash-crop farmer and also works the 150 acre family farm near Locust Hill which is "about 15 minutes down the road" from his farm. He is also employed in the advertising department of The Stouffville Tribune.

Bryan was literally born into farming and credits his parents, Fred and Marjorie Armstrong, with nurturing his interest in the farming way of life. After graduating from Public School, Bryan says his was the last Grade Eight graduating class from Locust Hill School as it was subsequently closed. He attended Markham Dist. High School graduating from Grade 13. He then studied Radio and T.V. Arts at Ryerson. From there, he went on to an advertising ex-

ecutive position with a major agency, but the call of the farm was too strong and he returned to the "first love of my life".

As a result of his exposure in the world of advertising, he began to do T.V. commercials about five years ago and has appeared in 23 for such national brands as Old Vienna, Black's Camera, Freudent and Bell Canada. He will soon be seen looking down from billboards in the Metro area telling people to enjoy Kentucky Fried Chicken. Presently, he will host a T.V. Talk Show for young people on C.F.T.O. entitled "Welcome To My World".

Bryan believes the Fair's goal is to continue to work toward improvement of its administrative organization and upgrade its facilities in order to expand its programs outside of the Fair, with a view to attracting new shows involving larger segments of the agricultural community. He sees the fairgrounds as a "People Place"

with various applications and uses. "We need to encourage Markham Fair as a meeting place", he adds, "bringing people of common interests and heritage together. The Wide-man Family Reunion, held Aug. 27 is a prime example".

If tradition continues, he is in line to become the 1984 president of Markham Fair. It will be the 50th anniversary of his grandfather's term of leadership. While the financial situation of the Fair may not be of the critical nature of 50 years ago, the challenge of the future still remains. With full recognition of the past and equipped with the insight of tradition, Bryan Armstrong appears well suited to meet this challenge.



Bryan Armstrong

Government response slow for appeal

Dea Editer: I suppose an individual's problems are the most important---to that person. Others, however, don't always see them that way. Hence the tendency to "drag one's feet" when it comes to answering complaints.

Then again, government departments may be busy with more important matters, resulting in further delays.

Be that as it may, I for one, can't understand why officials didn't respond faster to the appeal from several Lake residents concerning the dead and dying seagulls at Glendale Beach.

If that's as fast as staff personnel can move, I sure am glad none of them are members of our volunteer fire department!

Sincerely,
 Gordon J. Booth,
 R.R. 2, Stouffville.

School start quite smooth

BALLANTRAE — "A very smooth beginning," was the way Principal Gary Hicks described the first day at Ballantrae Public School.

The attendance, including Kindergarten, was placed at 365, little change from September '82 when an enrolment of 364 was recorded.

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Saturday September 17, 1983
 Centennial Arena Noon - 2:00 p.m.
 Thornhill Arena 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

New registrants are required to submit a photocopy (non returnable) of proof-of-age.

Ice times are Saturdays and Mondays, beginning October 15, 1983, at Milliken and Clatworthy Arenas.

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Includes: deluxe motorcoach transportation, admission to Fest Mall, a jug of beer (per couple), Fest hat and more...

Itinerary: depart Markham 9:30 a.m., return Markham midnight, visit to farmers market, airshow, Canada's Snowbirds, a day of FUN

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MARKHAM PROCLAMATION

The Council of the Town of Markham hereby proclaims the week of September 18th, 1983 as "Legion Week" in the Town of Markham.

Anthony Roman
 Mayor

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