

Students hard at work

Old meet young at museum



Richard Knight records information about a large chisel — one of the artifacts to be stored at the Markham Museum. — Paula Crowell

PAULA CROWELL
Staff Reporter

This summer, old meet young at the Markham Museum where 12 university and high school students are working — and they're getting along just fine.

The museum hired the students with the help of about \$22,000 in provincial and federal grants to upgrade the curator's files and buildings on the site.

While not all the students are history majors, they share an interest in past events, an interest that has been heightened since they started their jobs.

They are divided into three groups. Four of them work for Curator Suzanne Rowe, cataloguing the many articles which are donated regularly to the museum.

Heather Henderson and Alan Darnell are the veterans of this group. They held the same jobs last summer, identifying artifacts, cataloguing and organizing them in a logical fashion.

The artifacts they worked with last year and this year are in storage and have to be stored so they are easy to locate.

The University of Toronto students are working with Pina Gianeschi and Richard Knight. They are all studying history except Heather, who is an archeology major.

The four of them have three projects assigned to them this summer. Several of the buildings on the museum site are storage areas for artifacts waiting to be catalogued.

They have already organized the Hoover House and are now working in the carriage house where many small tools and farm implements are kept. Their final project will be the basement of another building.

Worksheets which outline a written and pictorial description of each item are completed and will eventually be filed in order for the museum staff.

Working with the artifacts has given these students a different perspective on history.

"Every object has its own characteristic marks of the maker and its use, you can get a sense of time," Heather said.

"Each tool is different from the last," Pina added. "You get an enormous amount of respect for these things because they've lasted such a long time. Some of them are from the 1840s, and they're in gorgeous condition."

Once the students are finished this project, the artifacts will be ready for display. Considerable work goes into setting up a display



Steve Marshall fills in a pen and ink sketch of bygone days. It's located in the basement display area of the Markham Museum.

and this summer, assistant curator Andrea Wilson is getting help from Steve Marshall and Jodi McRoberts.

This pair is working on a display in the main building to be ready Aug. 22. They are painting murals on the walls, making platforms for exhibits as well as conducting occasional tours through the grounds.

Steve, another University of Toronto student, said the variety of jobs prevents them from getting museum fatigue. This is a condition, the students joke about, as something that affects people who tire shortly after entering a museum.

The theme display they are working on will show the progression from an agricultural community to a settled and developing area, Jodi explained.

The other six students work under the direction of Chris Bagley, technical supervisor. Their task is to sand four coats of paint in the railway station at the south of the property.

The paint has developed an alligator-skin surface and is difficult to remove. All the work is done by hand as machines might damage the wood and drywall underneath. The students work in pairs, work-

ing on the grounds for two days and sanding every third day.

They have also been encouraged to adopt an individual project at the museum. Kim Jacobi, a student at the University of Guelph, plans to research the architecture of the buildings at the museum, draw them to scale and record the alterations that have been made to them.

"It's my interest and they needed it done, so it works out well for both of us," she said.

Colleen Goudie is trying to find out about the Wilson General Store which used to be on Main St.

The store was dismantled and brought to the museum to make way for the Markham Village Lanes shopping centre. Right now it is a pile of boards lying on the grass, waiting to be despiked.


This is one of the responsibilities of Kim, Colleen and their cohorts: Scott Cluett, Steve Ashe, Valerie Ceballo and Darrell Wright.

The boards are sorted through for bad wood, which is burned, and the nails are removed.

There are about 26 buildings on the museum site, so there's always something for the students to do.



Jodi McRoberts paints a mural on the wall as part of a display to be opened Aug. 22 at the museum.



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