

Longtime employee marks 30th anniversary on job

Alf Shenfield has grown up with the Town of Markham.

He started working for the Township when he was 28 years old and the population was 12,500.

Mr. Shenfield is now 58 years old and the population of the Town of Markham exceeds 110,000. The deputy treasurer recently celebrated his 30th anniversary on the job.

Growing up in Markham, Mr. Shenfield attended Thornlea and Buttonville public schools and Richmond Hill High School.

It was while working as an accountant at a Dominion Bank in north Toronto that Mr. Shenfield found an opportunity to work in Markham — an ad in the Economist and Sun advertising a job with the Town.

"It was a chance to work close to home," he said. "I applied and started working as a clerk's assistant two weeks later."

He held this position for about a year, became deputy treasurer for four years, then deputy clerk for nine years and has been deputy treasurer for the past 15 years.

As a lifelong resident of Markham, Mr. Shenfield has seen many changes both in his personal and professional life, the obvious being growth.



ALF SHENFIELD
Has grown with Markham

"I've seen many Reeves and two mayors," he said, adding growth has also added tremendously to the Town's staff and facilities.

While he has mixed feelings about the Town's rapid growth, Mr. Shenfield said: "It's hard to get

off the merry-go-round when you're located so close to this giant to the south called Metro."

"There was more feeling in the older days," he said. "We were closer associated with the public and had more time to help with their problems. There's still that small-town feeling, but I don't know for how long."

As an avid amateur historian and Masonic Lodge member, Mr. Shenfield recently finished writing a book on the history of the Masonic Lodge to celebrate its 125th anniversary.

"It took about three years to do," he said. "I did all the research myself."

His latest project is collecting pictures of past masters.

"I started with five and now have 83. I'm also promised 18 more," said Mr. Shenfield. "It looks like I'll come up with 101 or 110. That's a greater success than I could have hoped for."

As for working so long in one place, Mr. Shenfield said he has no regrets whatsoever and would certainly do it again.

"It's nice working in your own municipality, especially when you're interested in it and its history," he said. "I've enjoyed it very much."

ACT helps handicapped

By Steve Houston
Staff Reporter

Local handicapped residents may be eligible for computer training and employment as a result of their disability — not in spite of it.

Alternative Computer Training (ACT) for the disabled is a non-profit organization that trains and places suitable students for their place in the data processing field. A Toronto school, it also pays the students a minimum wage while they train.

Funded federally and provincially, the program is taught by Markham's Myron Nicholson. It accepts carefully screened applicants who have been referred to ACT instructors by Vocational Rehabilitation Services, a provincial department within the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

After an intense nine-month instructional program students are placed in an internship with a participating company. The final month is made up of assessments and job search training.

"The ultimate goal of employment is really up to the individual," said ACT General Manager Albert Sarthou. "They have to work to get it."

The first class graduated one year ago and Mr. Sarthou said 80 per cent of the graduates have found computer-related employment.

To keep up with needs in the business community, ACT has an ongoing dialogue with various Canadian companies. Mr. Sarthou said this Business Advisory Council enables the best instruction for students entering the work force.

"They help us in all phases of our development to ensure that what we teach is relevant to the business world," said Mr. Sarthou.

Mr. Nicholson teaches computer applications at ACT and has been with the organization since its early days.

He said his students are more highly motivated than others because of their disabilities. Many have met barriers in the past when looking for employment.

"The whole idea I have is not to treat them as being physically disabled," he said. "It's an effective way of getting the knowledge across to them."

He said that after the course, graduates will have as much computer application knowledge as any similar graduate. He added that many are more competitive than most and work harder to prove their worth.

"I try and make it as difficult as I can so that when my students get out there they can take whatever is given to them," said Mr. Nicholson. "We've all been working very hard at it."

ACT students leave their disability at the classroom door when taking the course. Most overlook what may have hindered them in getting employment in the past. Mr. Nicholson believes this is a step in the right direction for disabled people capable of productive employment.

"All of our (placement) employers have been very impressed with our students," he noted. "It's definitely a good thing."

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Dinner changed to luncheon

A Markham Board of Trade dinner slated for Wednesday, May 21, has been changed into a luncheon scheduled for noon the same day.

John Manley of So-Green will be the guest speaker at the lunch which will be held at the Fire Fighters Club located on Esna Park Rd.

Tickets are \$12 and must be purchased in advance at the board's office. For more information call 474-0730.

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