



Tony Arkell, Markham Fair's Secretary-Manager is a busy man all year round. He's continually promoting new uses for the grounds and

buildings during the off season. The Fair opens at 6 p.m., Oct. 1 and concludes at 6 p.m., Oct. 5.

—Jim Thomas

Fair's manager has a big job all year round

By BRENDA LITTLE

Every successful show usually has one key person behind the scenes who makes sure everything runs smoothly. Markham Fair is no exception.

Its key player is the new Secretary Manager Tony Arkell.

Tony is the man who bears the burden of coordinating everything involving the fairgrounds and the Fair itself.

"My duties involve everything from drumming up rentals to organizing prize ribbons," says Tony. "It's a double full-time job."

Unlike most other people involved with the Fair, Tony is a full-time paid employee who runs the grounds and office year-round. And, although it's a hectic job, he loves it.

"The best thing about it is the variety," says Tony. "An enormous variety of stuff runs though the office everyday."

During Fair time, Tony's duties include a bit of everything.

"I co-ordinate all activities," says Tony. "And I make sure all the chairman know what's going on."

Tony also has the thankless job of being the complaints and problem-solving department.

"If anyone has a problem they come to me," says Tony.

During the two-month period surrounding the Fair, Tony works about 16 hours a day. Before the Fair he has to get the prize lists and entry forms out. After the Fair there are about 2,000 cheques to be processed.

Although he doesn't work 16 hours a day the other 10 months of the year, he still manages to do the work of 10 people. In the off-season, as well as running the office, he doubles as a public relations department, organizing promotion campaigns and drumming up rentals.

Although he has only been working as secretary manager for a few months, he has already increased rentals by 100 per cent.

"I spend a great deal more on promotion than my predecessor did," says Tony. "I want people to know we (the fairgrounds) are here. I just hate to see the place empty. It's such a waste."

One of the most valuable rentals Tony contracted was the Budweiser truck show.

"It brought in a great deal of money for Markham Fair and it helped the community," says Tony.

Tony is also responsible for bringing the recent, very successful cat show to the fairgrounds and for arranging for the Markham Sportsman Show to be held at the grounds in May.

"The key is promotion," insists Tony. "The more you promote, the more people will come."

"Also alot of time and a smiling face helps," he chuckles. "Be nice to people and they'll be nice to you."

Tony definitely has that market cornered. It's no wonder that when the position of secretary manager was vacated by Gerry Mann, friends recommended him for the job. He's a receptive, friendly person and is definitely no stranger to the Fair.

Before accepting his current job, Tony managed a big cattle operation in Aurora and always showed his livestock at the Fair. He has also been a Markham Fair judge on numerous occasions. Tony's wife, Yvonne, is on the flower committee as well.

Last year, Tony helped Gerry Mann with the secretary manager's duties. In doing so he quickly learned the ropes.

Although he took on some of the secretary manager's duties last year, this year will be special.

"I'm looking forward to my first Fair as the official secretary manager," says Tony. "It'll be quite a challenge."

As long as that challenge remains so will Tony.

"As things stand now, I plan to stay for a while," says Tony. "The job offers so many possibilities."

One of the 'possibilities' Tony is currently working on is that of putting most of his daily work on computer.

"The day-to-day paper work is so tedious and time consuming," says Tony. "So much time and effort can be saved by using a computer."

When his routine jobs are loaded into the computer, Tony will have even more time to devote to promotion, thus making the Fair even more successful.

"I want to make it as successful as I can," says Tony. "It's a challenge but I really enjoy it."

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