



Sixteen-year-old Teresa Buckle was named junior Club and looks forward to competing in the showmanship champion at the Sutton Fair Markham Fair this fall. Saturday. She's a member of the Sharon Dairy. —Jim Thomas



Leanne Verzin, 18, was photographed at the Sutton Fair giving a lift to her apricot poodle Topper on her dapple gray horse, Dusty. —Jim Thomas

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## Two in the saddle

Leanne Verzin, 18, was photographed at the Sutton Fair giving a lift to her apricot poodle Topper on her dapple gray horse, Dusty. —Jim Thomas

## 4-H Club Leaders needed for farm-based youth organization

By KATE GILDERDALE

With increasing competition for jobs in today's world, experience in a chosen field can be a real asset for someone beginning a new career.

4-H clubs in York Region can help young people gain practical knowledge through a wide variety of programs. Started 75 years ago in Rolands, Manitoba as a boys and girls club, 4-H (head, heart, hands and health) took its present name in 1952.

"The emphasis is on personal development, learning and leadership skills," explains Kathy Simpson, a rural organization specialist with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in Newmarket.

Young people between 12 and 21 get involved in groups ranging from dairy calf and horse clubs to outdoors and ploughing clubs. A recent project covered personal finances.

Group members attend six meetings and carry out a variety of activities related to their specific topic.

"Dairy club projects, for example, will teach skills such as calf training and showmanship as well as providing necessary information on nutrition," Kathy notes. "Outdoor clubs will concentrate on a variety of areas including cooking and leaf identification."

Members are given the opportunity to work with animals and learn firsthand how to deal with them.

"Each project wraps up with an achievement program," Kathy states. Livestock is usually shown at local fairs and 4-H clubs across York Region will meet September 7 at the Markham Fairgrounds, where they will make presentations and show their projects.

The club also encourages members to hone their public speaking skills during meetings and at national and regional events.

"We have about 30 clubs in York Region," Kathy estimates. "Last year we had 192 members and 46 volunteer leaders." Total Ontario membership is about 16,000.

Although there has been some decline in membership, it has tended to follow the overall population pattern and is not seen as a crisis by 4-H.

But efforts to recruit both leaders and members will continue to be a priority and a promotional pamphlet on 4-H and its aims will be distributed to community centres across the region.

The main qualifications for club leaders are an interest in their topic and a desire to work with young people. Prior to each project, leaders undergo a training session to increase their awareness of the topic and to help them feel comfortable working with their group.

Meetings can be held at a leader's or a member's home or in a community hall. A minimum of six people are required to start a club.

Kathy emphasizes that 4-H is not just a rural club for young people living on farms. It's open to anyone interested in learning or improving skills in many different areas.

"We offer such a wide variety of projects and topics, and it's a really great organization to be involved in," she states. "A lot of members have been able to put 4-H experience on their resumes which has helped them get jobs."

"The 4-H model is to learn by doing," Kathy says. "Similar organizations are found in 80 countries throughout the world."

Members are encouraged to accept responsibility, be good citizens and use their free time effectively.

For more information about the club or becoming a leader, call Kathy in Newmarket at 895-4519 or toll free at 1-800-263-3241.

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