

President gears up for Markham Fair

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Correspondent

The best way to describe the present state of this year's Markham Fair preparations is to compare them with the story of the little engine that could, says 1989 Fair President Diane Ward. "Any day now we'll be reaching the top of the hill and then we start the huge rush down which will culminate in the open-

ing of the Fair," she says. "While an enormous amount of work has been going on behind the scenes since just after last year's Fair, the most vital ingredient for success is beyond the control of even the hardest working volunteer. In Diane's words, "The sun is the most important thing; it will make or break us." While the weather last year was on the side

of the organizers, the directors are taking no chances. "We're going to have a new souvenir booth at which we'll be selling sweat shirts, mugs, buttons and rain ponchos," she grins. "We've also done a lot of grading and ditching, which will make a difference if we do have rain." A special design has been created for this year's Fair by Diane and former Tribune cartoonist Pat Wheeler. "Every year the president works with whoever they like to create a design," Diane says. "I love Pat's work and she knows the Fair. She's come up with something really fantastic."

A major feature of the 1989 event is the new building, which will house commercial and general interest exhibits. And this year, Diane has come up with a novel approach to the opening ceremonies. "We're having a competition for people from the media and they're going to have to do fun farm-type activities at the opening," she notes. Details are a closely guarded secret ("we don't want anyone boning up in advance") and she describes the judges as "the most highly qualified people: the audience. There'll be an official applause meter and representatives from major media in the area will be invited to take up the challenge. A cheque will be made out to the Markham-Stouffville Hospital fund in the name of the winner. To entertain the younger children, two bands, Kideo and I'm Just a Kid, will be appearing at the Fair. "We'll also have a big rock band, but we haven't got final confirmation on who'll be playing yet," she says. "And the work between fairs never really stops. After cleaning up loose ends from one fair, working with the auditor and preparing govern-



Markham Fair President Diane Ward is behind this year's event. New touches have been added to the 1989 Fair, including the sale of rain ponchos — just in case.

ment reports which we have to do, because they help us with some of the livestock prize money and the rentals," Diane estimates that those closely involved with running the Fair get just one week off at Christmas. It's not just a matter of organization, she emphasizes. "You suddenly realize you've got to know an awful lot more than you do and you haven't enough time to learn," she observes. "You must have some background; not just the written history, but why things are done the way they are. It's important to understand that when you want to make changes."

None of the people involved are professionals and are all volunteers, she points out. "We all have one thing in common and that's our love for the Fair. We have to remember that and do what we think is in the best interests of the Fair itself."

It's also important to maintain the rural and agricultural aspects of the event, she stresses. While rentals provide a significant contribution to the Fair, "we've turned down a couple this year, partly because we were concerned about our neighbors." She says people on neighboring properties are "very understanding," and feels it's important to

consider them by avoiding unnecessary disruption. The only other source of revenue is ticket sales.

"Because the weather was good last year and lots of people came, we were able to put up the new building," she notes.

Five hundred volunteers are involved in putting the event together. "It couldn't be done without them; we appreciate every minute they give us. They make this truly a community affair."

When this year's Fair winds up, Diane will take on the role of past president for 1990, after which she'll be pursuing other interests.

"Our constitution doesn't allow me to come back on the board for at least three years, so I'll be going on to something else," she says.

She has no concerns about having time on her hands. "Next year we're moving to a new house which is being built for us a couple of miles north of here. I certainly don't want to leave this community. And of course I'll still be involved with the Fair."

Among her many hobbies are painting, creating miniatures and quilting, and her home is filled with examples of her beautiful work.

"I'll have a huge workshop in the new house and it's going to be just terrific," she declares. "I'll go down at 8:30 in the morning and come up at 10:30 at night."

After a decade of involvement with the Fair, it's difficult to imagine Diane not being involved in some way in the years to come, but whichever direction her talents take her next, her hard work, enthusiasm and dedication will continue to enhance Markham Fair for many years to come.

In the meantime, she urges those interested in helping out at this year's event to get in touch with the Fair office at 640-1576 or 640-3247.

Information booklets on homecraft and general exhibits are available from the Tribune office, or by calling the numbers above.

Crime Stoppers Outboard motors are stolen

Toronto and Regional Crime Stoppers and the York Regional Police Force are asking the public's help in an effort to apprehend the person(s) responsible for a break and enter that happened in the Markham area.

Between the dates of Friday, June 23 at 9 p.m. and Saturday, June 24 at 7:30 a.m., unknown person(s) went to the business premises of Central Outboard Marina on Woodbine Ave. in Markham.

The suspect(s) gained entry to the premises by smashing in a glass panel of a door situated on the south side of the premises. Once inside the culprit(s) removed two outboard motors from the showroom. The wanted person(s) fled from the scene with the stolen property.

The stolen property is described as follows:

- 1) 1989 9.9-h.p. Mercury outboard motor, black in color. Serial #0A731756.
- 2) 1989 8-h.p. Mercury outboard motor, black in color. Serial #0A746960.

This is how you can help us solve this investigation: If you know the person(s) responsible for this break-in or have any information about this incident, call Crime Stoppers. You pay off with information and Crime Stoppers pays off with cash.

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