

# New souvenir booth this year



A second souvenir booth has been added to the Markham Fairgrounds this year for the convenience of fairgoers. It's at the east gate, and offers Markham Fair clothing, collector's plates, environmentally healthy shopping bags and collectible items such as mugs, spoons and bells, (and just in case), waterproof ponchos.

Those wishing to take home a memento from the Markham Fair will find not just one, but two souvenir booths this year.

Along with the one that is found inside the homecraft building, there will now be a new booth located by the entrance of the east gates.

Souvenir booth co-ordinator, Gail Pocer comments, "We added to the second booth, mainly to cater to the people who might not visit the Homecraft Building."

On top of selling traditional Markham Fair collectibles and clothing, they will also be selling reusable canvas bags to promote the issue of environmental awareness.

Pocer explains, "We felt that in keeping with the agricultural theme of the fair and the importance of maintaining a healthy environment, we would try to do our part. The bags are 100 per cent cotton, are quite large, about 16 inches wide and 13 inches deep, with a square bottom and gussets on the sides. They're really versatile and handy for many

things, like taking to the grocery store and saving on the use of plastic bags."

Gail adds that the bags are completely washable and have sturdy carrying handles.

"Inside the bags, we'll be putting flyers with helpful tips on how to help save the environment."

The first souvenir shop at the fair began about 12 years ago, when they started manufacturing and selling collector's plates. Through the artistry of Pat Wheeler, each year the plates depict a different farm-related scene to tie in with the agricultural foundation of the fair.

The picture is generally chosen by the fair president, and this year, Carol White has selected a picture of two Clydesdales pulling a buggy.

Over the years, the booth has gradually increased its inventory. Other collectibles such as mugs, spoons, and bells came along in the '80s, and clothing items like sweatshirts, t-shirts, hats and visors are

now available in the shop.

Gail Pocer says, "We will always sell the traditional China Collectibles, but with the clothing, I try to keep up with modern styles. This year, we'll be selling neon colored t-shirts and baseball caps. All the clothing has 'Markham Fair' on it. Let's face it, everybody needs a sweatshirt, for example, so why not get one with the Markham Fair's name on it."

Although no one ever wants it to rain at the fair, just in case, the souvenir booth always stocks waterproof ponchos.

The volunteers who man the souvenir booth go to many lengths to make the little shops appealing. "We try to put up some interesting and imaginative displays in the booths, to attract attention. But it should be pointed out that this is not a business, we are totally non-profit; what it really is, is a Markham Fair tradition," Gail notes.

## 'Fair' contests planned

**Teen Talent Contest** - Friday, Sept. 28 - 7 p.m.

Always a hit at the Markham Fair, this year's Teen Talent Contest will be held in the Entertainment Tent on Friday, Sept. 28 at 7 p.m.

Judging is done in three categories; solo dance, group dance and variety act. Cash prizes will be awarded. To register, call Cathy Lee at 294-3179.

**Pet Contest** - Friday, Sept. 28 - 4 p.m.

Kids of all ages are invited to bring their pets to the Cattle Barn just before 4 p.m., to be a part of the popular "Pet Contest". In this event, there's no such thing as a pet that's too large or too small.

**Town Crier's Competition** - Sat., Sept. 29 - 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Town Crier Competition is one of the Fair's most colorful and loud contest, as at least 12 Town Criers from across Ontario, enter the "cry-offs" at 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. The host for the event, will be Markham's own, Town Crier, John

Webster.

**"Chip Off the Old Block"** - Saturday, Sept. 29 - 1:30 p.m.

Always an entertaining tradition at the fair is the "Chip Off the Old Block" competition, which will be held on the Outdoor Stage on Saturday at 1:30 p.m.

A guaranteed crowd pleaser, the contestants in this contest are parents with their "look-a-like" children.

**Bubble Gum Blowing Contest** - Saturday, Sept. 29 - 3 p.m.

On the Outdoor Stage, kids of all ages will be blowing up a storm in the "Bubble Gum Blowing" competition at 3 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 29.

**Fiddle Contest** - Saturday, Sept. 29 - 7 p.m.

Now in its 14th year, the "Fiddle Contest" always draws a large crowd at the Markham Fair. It will be held in the Entertainment Tent on Saturday, Sept. 29 at 7 p.m., and features the fiddling talents of around 15 contestants every year.

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