

Fairs and Festivals

York residents and visitors can enjoy a smorgasbord of special and unique events throughout York Region year-round.

While demolition derbies, horse racing and midways offer the razzle dazzle, most fairs in York Region have a country atmosphere, and it is that atmosphere that is most attractive to city dwellers.

Some of the fairs are about 150 years old. Traditionally, agricultural fairs take place in the fall, around post-harvest time as a celebration of the harvest.

Until the crops were off the fields, farmers did not have time to exhibit the year's yields and their livestock. Thanksgiving time is ideal for fall fairs such as the Woodbridge Fair and the Markham Fair.

However, fairs are becoming more community gatherings. Spring and summer fairs are also popular events in York Region, such as the Schomberg Agricultural Fair and the Sutton Fair and Horse Show.

Some of these fairs stage music shows with live bands and family entertainments. Others feature arts and crafts sales, tractor pulls, car and horse shows, antiques, clowns, fireworks and more.

The common spirit of the fairs is to promote excellence through competition in the local community.

It provides the incentive and the forum for people to compete in a friendly way, whether it is making crafts, eating pies or milking cows.

According to one fair organizer, it is like a wellness clinic for the community.

Recently, education has become another mandate of the fairs. Some fairs are involved in year-round education. An example is the York Pizza Project, organized by the Markham Fair in conjunction with the local school board. Children participating in this project spend a week in the spring learning about where pizza ingredients come from - how grain is



grown for the dough and tomatoes for the sauce, and how cows produce the milk needed for the cheese and meat for the toppings.

With amusement parks, such as Paramount Canada's Wonderland, the midway is not as unique as it used to be, although it is still popular in most fairs. However, there is still a carnival atmosphere, and most fairs maintain a busy array of activities.

There is also a boom in the popularity of homecrafts in recent years, as well as fruits, vegetable and flower entries.

Apart from fairs, special winter events are also held in the spirit of Christmas, such as the Log Cabin Christmas in the Markham Museum, the Candlelight Christmas at Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum, and the Olde Tyme Christmas in Unionville.

Here are the dates for fairs and festivals in York Region for 1997, and the spring and summer of 1998:

September 14
Feast O'Fields, McMichael Gallery

September 20
Thornhill Village Festival

September 20-21
Unionville Antique and Harvest Festival

October 2-5
Markham Fair

October 11-13
Woodbridge Fair

October 18
Craftorama, Sutton

October 18
Applefest, Markham Museum

October 25-26
Georgina Studio Tour & Sale

November 28
Markham Village Festival of Lights

November 20-23, 27-30
Bethlehem Live, CBMI Stouffville

November 29-30
Hill Potter's Guild show & sale,
Richmond Hill

September 6
Binder Twine Festival, Kleinburg

September 6
Kettleby Village Fall Fair

September 13
Harvest Festival, Markham Museum

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