

Hay display will rock at Markham Fair

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

A whole bunch of giant haybales won't be munched by contented cows in Whitchurch-Stouffville and Markham, but the cattle don't seem to mind.

Instead the hay, part of a new fair competition, is being used for eye-catching displays of pigs, cows, farmers and tractors to promote Markham Fair, which opens today and runs through Sunday.

The four-day fair includes agricultural displays, horse shows, music, entertainment, clowns, crafts and food.

The most elaborate hay creation, a giant piano, guitar and drum on McCowan Road, north of Major Mackenzie Drive, is the first prize winner.

The "Markham Fair Rocks" display is in the front yard of Anne Matthiessen's house.

She and her daughters, Ella, 10 and Katie, 7, along with Ms Matthiessen's dad, hobby farmer Lorne Smith, put it all together.

Mr. Smith moved the giant haybales around and made the guitar neck. Ms. Matthiessen constructed the keyboard from an old counter-top and the girls created the scarecrow and slogan.

Faircrow, the fair mascot, caused quite a stir when he came to tell the family it had won first prize free entry to the fair and ride-all-day



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Ella Matthiessen (from left), sister Katie and mother Anne are the first winners of the haybale creations contest for the Markham Fair. In the background is their winning display, a tribute to music.

passes. A music teacher, Ms Matthiessen wanted to emphasize the entertainment side of the fair.

Mr. Smith has had a hobby farm for years with a few cattle, rabbits and cats.

"We were in the 4-H Club, so the

fair was a big part of our lives," she said.

Katie and Ella have continued the tradition by entering crafts and

Ms. Matthiessen has entered vegetables and homecrafts.

The haybale contest grew out of the giant decorated haybales that were first put out for last year's fair.

It was opened as a contest "because we are trying to get the community involved," Karen Murphy said. She co-chairs the fair's advertising committee with Candice Lee.

As you're driving around Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville this week, you'll see a haybale tractor at Stouffville and Kennedy roads and other hay creations at Steeles Avenue and 10th Line and Hwy. 404 and Bloomington Road, among others.

Many of them have been created by the volunteers on the advertising committee and the fair's past president, Lynne Harrington.

The bales themselves came from local farmers such as Paul Reesor, Scott Paisley and Murray Empringham.

They were painted by fair president Paul Donahoe.

The haybale creations are much more effective than signs, Ms. Murphy has found.

The Markham Fairgrounds are on McCowan Road at Elgin Mills Road.

For information on the fair, log on to www.markhamfair.ca or call 905-642-3247.

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