

# Juno winner excited to be headlining Stampede

Two-time Juno award winner George Canyon will be right at home at the Markham Stampede.

"I jumped at it. I'm really looking forward to it. We live on a ranch and have horses. I am a team roper," he said.

Team roping is a rodeo event in which you tie the head and heels and contain the animal without hurting it, he said.

Markham is Mr. Canyon's only stop in Ontario. The morning after he performs, he is flying to Vancouver for another show.

But he decided he wanted to be involved in the stampede after he saw the enthusiasm of the organizing committee.

"Whenever I see that kind of excitement, I'm honoured and humbled. There was a real, sincere level of excitement over the event. That tells me a lot," he said.

Mr. Canyon will play his classics, as well as a few tunes from his second CD *Somebody Wrote Love*, and favourites by Johnny Cash and Willy Nelson that he is about to record for a tribute album.

In March, Mr. Canyon won his second consecutive country recording of the year Juno Award for *Somebody Wrote Love*. He also won male artist of the year and single of the year at the 2006 Canadian Country Music Awards.



Mr. Canyon will kick off The Great Markham Stampede with a concert at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 25 at the Markham Fairground. Joining him will be Beverley Mahood and Wendell Ferguson, who has backed up artists such as George Fox, Shania Twain, Tommy Hunter and The Dixie Chicks. As a child, Beverley Mahood was teased for her strong Irish accent but today, she recognizes how her background contributed to her love of music.

Ms Mahood remembers standing on her parents' coffee table, singing.

"I loved that feeling," she said. Eventually, Ms Mahood recognized country music was right for her.

"They are songs that have a story and songs of the heart," Ms Mahood, 32, said.

Ms Mahood was born in Northern Ireland, but she and her family moved from Belfast to Canada when she was about six and after that lived in towns across Ontario.

"I'm a bit of a gypsy," she said. "I'm from every hometown. I don't think I spent two Christmases in the same place."

She remembers feeling like she would never fit in because of her accent. One of her teachers even sent her to speech therapy because of it.

But later, Ms Mahood realized differences are good in the music business. Her first radio release, *Girl Out Of The Ordinary*, sprung from always being the new girl in school.

Ms Mahood spent a year hosting *Breakfast Television* in Vancouver. In fall 2005, she started hosting *CMT Central on Country Music Central*.

At the upcoming concert, the audi-

ence can expect her to perform hits such as *I Want a Man* as well as new tunes and cover songs people have grown up with.

"I hope everyone comes away having a good time. That is the most important thing," she said.

For more on the Markham Stampede, go to [www.themarkhamstampede.com](http://www.themarkhamstampede.com).

For more information on Mr. Ferguson, go to [www.wendellferguson.com](http://www.wendellferguson.com).

For more on Beverley Mahood, go to [www.beverlymahood.com](http://www.beverlymahood.com).

For more in George Canyon, go to [www.georgecanyon.com](http://www.georgecanyon.com).



## Group aims to bring Asian community to weekend event

You don't normally associate rodeo with Chinese Canadian culture.

But Mimi Chau is trying to change that.

That's why her organization, the S.E.A.S. Centre (Support Enhance Access Service Centre), formerly the South East Asian Services Centre, is running an event at The Markham Stampede to be held May 25 to 26 at the Markham Fairgrounds.

The centre is holding a mah-jong tournament for 128 participants at the stampede on May 26.

Mah-jong is a Chinese game for four people played with 136 or 144 pieces called tiles.

"I want to contribute more and get more of the Chinese community to participate in mainstream activities," Ms Chau said.

"Many Asian people, we have never seen a rodeo, only on television. Most Chinese Canadians are shy. This is a Western-style event," she said.

The centre has also lined up 100 professional line dancing instructors to offer free lessons after the mah-jong tournament.

"It will be a really big thing. Exciting," Ms Chau said.

The Markham Stampede begins with Juno Award-winning country singer George Canyon who will perform Friday, May 25 at 7 p.m. Joining Mr. Canyon will be Canadian country star Beverley Mahood, co-host of Country Music Television Canada's *CMT Central*. Joining them on stage is

Wendell Ferguson, a seven-time Canadian Country Guitarist of the Year winner.

On the Saturday, the Markham Stampede will feature events ranging from the Wild West Rodeo Show, The Amazing Superdogs, Suzuki Freestyle Demonstrations Team, Markham Board of Trade (Trade Show), North American Cavalry Challenge, Governor General's Horse Guards and Band, Petting Zoo, FIT Forklift Rodeo, all day concerts and more.

To find out more information about the Markham Stampede, check [www.markham-board.com](http://www.markham-board.com) or e-mail: [info@themarkhamstampede.com](mailto:info@themarkhamstampede.com). For more information on the S.E.A.S. Centre, go to [www.seascentre.org](http://www.seascentre.org).



## History, cavalry come together during Markham Stampede

The 2007 North American Cavalry Challenge is an international military equestrian competition—a mix of cavalry, mounted law enforcement and historical re-enactment groups from around North America.

Ted Dentay oversees this event coming to York Region this month as part of the Markham Stampede.

"This is a huge bunch of fun," said Mr. Dentay, a rider who has been part of the horseguard cavalry squadron since 1986. "Developing an impressive and safe display of military horsemanship has been a challenge."

Mr. Dentay is an armourer, weapons specialist, special effects technician and head of the Canadian Military Brigade group, a heritage organization that aims to preserve and perpetuate the skills and history of the cavalry.

Creating the competition was a challenge in itself, he said.

Specially developed blank rounds require the same safety consciousness as of-live rounds. Simulating battlefield hazards such as smoke, fire and explosions take a lot of forethought, particularly since "modern" horses haven't been trained to withstand these assaults on their senses, Mr. Dentay said.

The competition is about horsemanship and presentation, Mr. Dentay said.

One challenge is for the horse and rider to work as partners, to be the mirror image of one another.

Another challenge includes military field jumping. In the competition, a fake fire simulates a bombed out farmhouse in a battlefield.

"It is terribly scary. Horses don't like that and neither do most riders, but it is absolutely harmless," Mr. Dentay said.

Elastic bands and pieces of aluminum foil can simulate barbed wire.

The worst case scenario is an elastic band will break," he said.

It will be held at the Markham Fairgrounds, McCowan and Elgin Mills roads, May 23 to 26. Net proceeds will be donated to Canada's last two



cavalry units, Cavalry Squadron and Calgary's Mounted Troop.

For more information on the the North American Cavalry Challenge, go to [www.themarkhamstampede.com](http://www.themarkhamstampede.com).

## Superdogs get down, dirty

Get ready to see dogs barrel racing, performing in agility relays, jumping and speed racing.

The Amazing Superdogs are coming to the Markham Stampede May 26 at 9 a.m.

Being part of the Stampede has its advantages for the dogs, according to Herb Williams, founder of the show.

When the dogs perform indoors at theatres, they usually do their tricks on carpet.

"Performing in the dirt gives. They will be a lot more athletic."

The Superdogs will perform relays in which they compete on agility equipment.

"The speed will be phenomenal," Mr. Williams said.

Three teams of five dogs per team will compete in the Superdogs show. Two high performing jumping dogs will perform.

The Superdogs team includes Pot Roast (a bulldog), Hamlet (a Boston terrier) and Cutter (an Irish setter).

The show appeals to all ages, Mr. Williams said.

"That is part of the magic of the show."

In a performance at the Bell Centre in Montreal, he heard a boy tell his grandfather, "Gee grandpa, I didn't know you could be so much fun."

At the shows, enthusiasm is contagious, Mr. Williams said.

"You cannot sit and let kids cheer for the dogs and not do it yourself."

The Superdogs are honorary members of many humane societies across the country, he added. "We get gold stars from humane societies everywhere we go," Mr. Williams said.

For more information on the Superdogs, go to [www.superdogs.com](http://www.superdogs.com).

For more on The Markham Stampede, go to [www.themarkhamstampede.com](http://www.themarkhamstampede.com).

