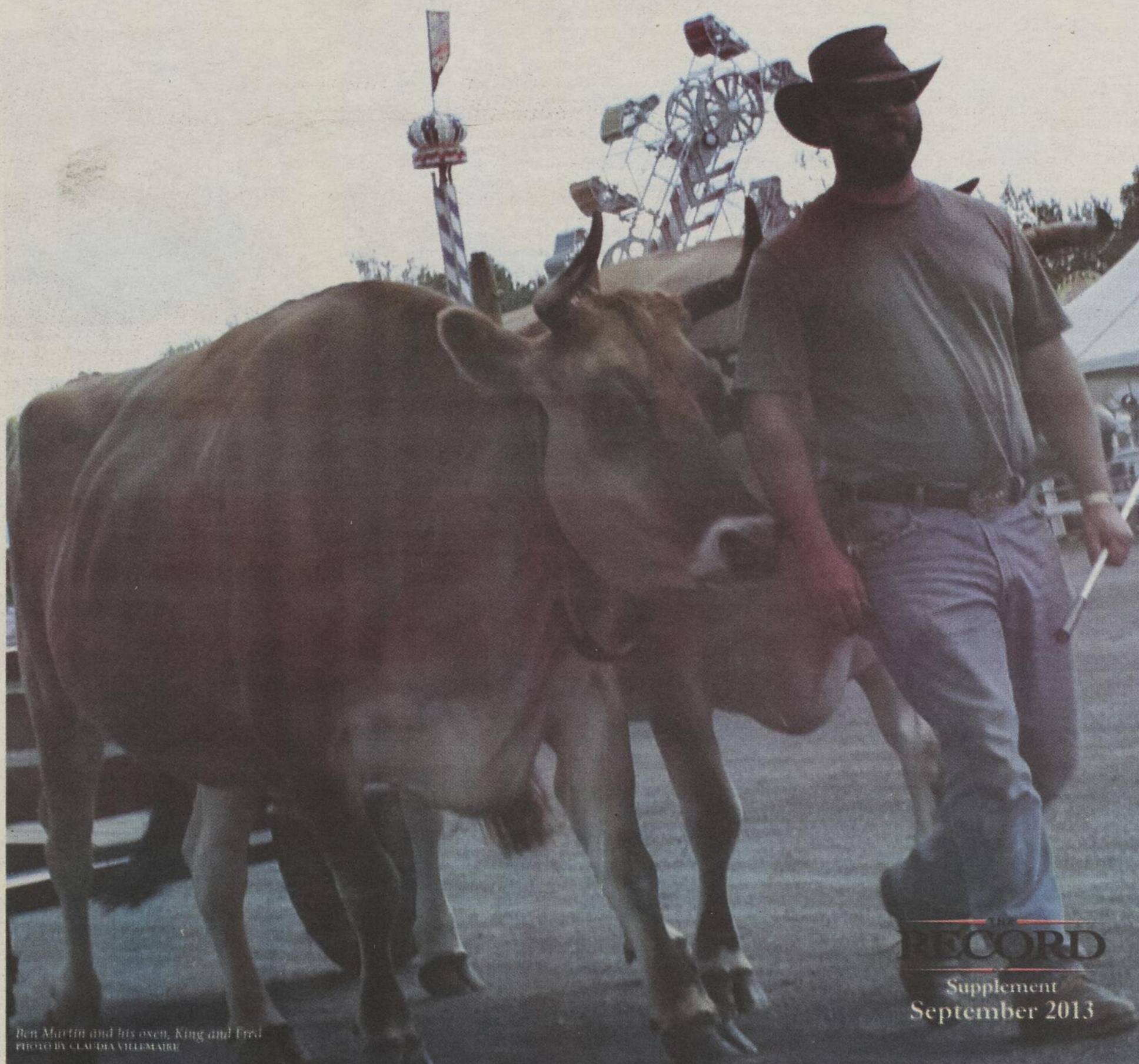


Richmond Fair



Ben Martin and his oxen, King and Fred
PHOTO BY CLAUDIA VILLEMAIRE

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New president brings new events to the fair

Race your zucchinis Sunday

By Claudia Villemaire
RICHMOND

Dyed-in-the-cloth fair goers might say, "I've seen them all," (referring to the five fairs in the Townships already over). But every fair is different and the agricultural fair that opens near Richmond this weekend has a program chock full of surprises.

Breaking news: A zucchini race demonstration is scheduled Sunday. A what? you say. Apparently zucchini races are all the rage in midwest USA. Open to youngsters from age 5 to 12, several state fairs featured

this event this year with unimagined success. Yes, of course, there are rules, but they're not too severe and the sight of zucchinis, with wheels attached to the body, costumed in whatever the young contender can imagine, wobbling down an incline that's designed with several tracks approximately a foot wide — well one can certainly imagine the excitement as these large, green or yellow vegetables assume new importance in the family kitchen.

There are usually three categories — two-, four- and six-pound veggies and, at some fairs, a class for the giants that we never know what to do with. Costumes are judged, and most fair organizers make sure their young competitors all get prize ribbons, with trophies for the winners. "So, when I saw that it seemed like a great idea and something that kind of underlines the 'green' character we want to develop at our fair," said Lucie Demers, president of the Richmond Agricultural Society, bringing some

new ideas to her first term of office.

With a passion for horses, large and small, it was only natural her dream from childhood would be to exhibit her ponies and horses. "But being elected president was not part of my dream and it seemed like a difficult challenge," she admits. "But having a great team that has been working hard to get this fair ready together with the volunteers who seem to turn up exactly when you need them has helped me learn the ropes," Demers said.

A close look at the program proves there's been lots of brainstorming since last December. With the centennial celebrations of 4-H Canada ongoing this year, the local club was encouraged to bring special events to the fair. The result is the addition of a special circa 1913 costume class to the Saturday evening horseshow in the arena.

"This will be the opening event at the horseshow and preparations are at a fever pitch, I hear," the president said. The local club is also celebrating its 40th anniversary and taking part in the Canada-wide campaign of 100 "good-turns" through the year. Maria Enright-Keenan, senior leader at the club had turned up to help An-



COURTESY

Zucchini racing has been popular at fairs around the midwestern United States.

drew Boersen, Carly Morin and their young friend Lucas bring the main gate back to life, sprucing up the entry, planting flowers and trimming brush. "The local club sponsored the flowers," Enright-Keenan explained.

Also on the program during the horseshows this year, Mustang Jo (Andre Fontaine) will bring out his popular black mustang and will also have his pony performing as well.

"We also have the incredible milking cow, a lifelike dairy cow complete with everything a regular cow has, udder, teats and a digestive system that includes a tank of liquid and

a pump. This lifelike replica will give a squirt of milk into a pail if youngsters work up the courage to give milking a cow a try. Animation and information is handled by a team of specialists who explain the whys and wherefors of a milking cow and encourage youngsters to try their hand. This demonstration has been set up at other fairs with great success, "and I expect the hundreds of children we expect Friday morning will give this working model quite a workout."

Demers has an agenda that is full of surprises for visitors to

CONT'D ON PAGE 7

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CLAUDIA VILLEMAIRE

Lucie Demers, president, Richmond Agriculture Society.

Thursday's dog show is fun and informative

By Claudia Villemaire
RICHMOND

The English language can be bewildering. Being dogged means determined. Being dog-tired means exactly that — very tired. Observing a car from the rear, travelling in front of you and noticing the wheels don't seem to be in line — "Look, that vehicle is dogging." And, your family pet would never make it to the Westminster Kennel Club show if he didn't travel in a perfectly straight line — front to back — and didn't "dog."

Thursday night, gossip has it the Richmond Fair is going to the dogs — but in the nicest way. Thursday is Sarah Oakley's dog race, masquerade and doggy demonstration night. For ten years more or less, Oakley has been organizing the Thursday evening event, inviting local dog owners, young and old, to sign up for a dog race and encouraged to present their canine best friend in costume for the preamble before the judges prior to the races.

Past years have brought costumes that turned a four-legged canine into characters from comic strips, presented pairs dressed in wedding gown and tuxedo for their wedding day, or perhaps a costume that informs the audience this dog is on the chain gang, wearing the traditional stripes of a chain gang convict.

Races are divided for contestants into three categories — large, medium and small dogs and the distance they must cross is adjusted accordingly. Owners and/or the dogs' best friends stand at the start and finish, the dog is released and must run straight and true to the waiting person. Now anyone who has had any experience with our pets knows the possibilities of a "screw-up" are endless. Cheering spectators, barking dogs on the sideline, kiddies and dogs getting wound up in leashes and restraints — any or all of these things can distract the most dogged determination of pet and handlers. Sometimes there are zigs and zags in what should be a straight run — sometimes there's just no question any particular dog will even consider the ex-

pectant person waiting with a treat hidden in his or her pocket at the finish line. There's just too much to see, too many new friends to meet and probably one brute that should have a trouncing, so, reveling in his or her newfound freedom, lopes off looking for new adventures.

Oakley, who is a dog groomer herself, just smiles and says, "That's the fun part. You just never know for sure. But we insist on leashed animals at all times except when they actually race."

Immediately after the races and presentation of trophies and ribbons, AcroCanin, professional dog trainers with a group of their students have performed a demonstration of agility, racing through the obstacle course, catching the Frisbee and obedience trials for several years. This is a fascinating show proving it's possible to teach a dog a multitude of activities, teach him to be obedient, be a guardian of your home and family and a much-loved family pet.

Registration is at 6 p.m. and the costume class is scheduled at 7 p.m.



FILE PHOTO

Sarah Oakley offers up a dog show and races Thursday.

Spunky minis in the spotlight Friday

By Claudia Villemaire
RICHMOND

For the second year, those spunky tiny miniature horses will be in the spotlight once again at the 157th Richmond Fair, thanks to the efforts of Mickey Blemings and his wife Maureen. Their love affair with these tiny equines began several years ago when, during a trip out of province, they attended a horse show where the miniatures were being shown.

"Actually Maureen fell for them first," Blemings admits, "but I wasn't long wanting to know more about them and soon considering taking one home."

These days, holidays are planned around miniature horse show events and they often find themselves many miles off track just to visit a miniature horse owner/exhibitor. On the Blemings' farm these days, mornings will find him out early, exercising his minis on the front lawn, allowing them to nibble in difficult corners where lawn tractors and clippers leave a fringe of tasty grass.

"You can do this with these little animals. A newborn colt is easily carried in your arms, not much heavier than a large breed puppy. But you must never forget, these are horses, not ponies. They have horse characters and personalities and must be treated the same way." These sometimes fiery little

equines can be as temperamental as any highly bred horse and, if they lash out with a hoof, the imprint will take some days to disappear, depending where they connect with your body. "But, like a horse, they will connect with their master, develop trust and confidence and can be trained the same as any horse," Blemings insists ponies don't have the same character. "This is a real, miniature horse," he says.

Visitors at Richmond Fair can enjoy these minis on Friday evening as they compete in the hitch class.

Judging begins bright and early Friday morning with heavy horses first at 9 a.m. This is Children's Day with hundreds of elementary school children arriving, tumbling out of dozens of school buses like an invasion bent on learning everything there is to know about a fair, for many their first stop the Youth Fair section in the main building, where hundreds of arts and crafts projects will be welcomed, displayed in their proper categories and judged later, after lunch.

CONT'D ON PAGE 7



Good luck!



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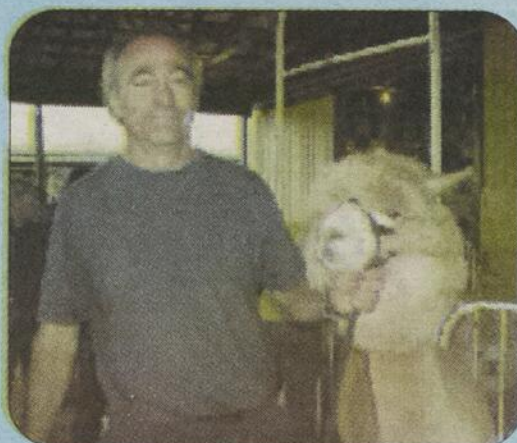
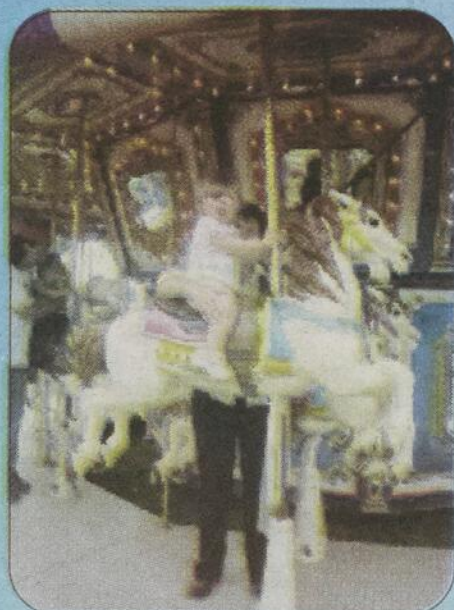
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Thursday September 6

- 6:00 pm Registration for amateur dog competition
- 7:00 pm Amateur Dog Competition, conformation & race classes
- Obstacle course demonstration by canine clubs

Friday September 7

- 9:00 am Opening of the Petting Zoo
Draft horse Judging
- 9:30 am Youth Fair Judging
Zoo Granby Mobile
- 10:00 am Horticulture & Ladies Building Judging
Beef Judging
- 1:00 pm Sheep Judging
- 5:00 pm Midway opens
Official Opening
- 7:00 pm Street Truck Pull
Horse Show
- 9:00 pm Country Band: 'Slightly Haggard'



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Saturday September 8

- 9:00 am Pony Show
- Opening of the Petting Zoo
- 9:30 am Holstein, Ayrshire & Jersey Judging
- 10:00 am Rabbit & Poultry Judging
- 11:00 am Youth Talent Show
- 12:00 am Midway opens
- 1:30 pm Mad Science
- 2:00 pm Country Les Perdus Line Dancing
- A.S.T.T.Q. Truck Pulls
- 3:00 pm Mad Science
- 4:00 pm Band: 'Lucky Boy (Luc)'
- 5:30 pm Shepherd & Shepherdess Lead Class
- 6:00 pm A.S.T.T.Q. Truck & Tractor Pull
- Horse Show
- 6:20 pm Irish Dancers
- 9:30 pm Country Band: 'Bad Boys'



Sunday September 9

- 9:00 am Pony & light horse Judging
- Opening of the Petting Zoo
- 4-H & Young Farmers Interclub
- Competition
- 11:30 am Farm Tractor Pull
- 12:00 pm Midway opens
- Mad Science
- 2:00 pm Band: 'Richard Perron'
- Horse Show
- 6:00 pm End of Richmond Fair



nd Windsor on Route 143. 28 Route 143, exit 88 off highway 55.

Gilbert Carrier organizes the pulling competitions

Don't forget your earplugs

By Claudia Villemaire
RICHMOND

He's a dynamo. Probably his wife calls him a workaholic — always working at his pet projects — once farm tractor racing and lawn tractor competitions, more recently he claims he's slowed down to only the lawn tractor racing but watching him scurry back and forth at the Richmond fairgrounds this week, one would wonder what his definition of slowing down really means. Always on the move, Gilbert Carrier doesn't know the meaning of the word stop. With energy in every stride, Carrier scurries from task to task, lining up the cement blocks that protect spectators in the bleachers from the tractors and pickup trucks going through the rigours of a pulling competition with modified motors cracking eardrums, black smoke billowing and high powered motors screaming at many more RPMs than most tractors or pickups would ever call on, even in the most challenging situations.

Carrier, a new director on the society board of directors, has already introduced the region's pull and drag race supporters to a series of racing on ice and, this summer, lawn tractor racing, with a grand finale at the Richmond Fair.

"We have a great facility here for this type of event and I feel we should find ways to use it more often," he said, over his shoulder, hurrying to his vehicle for another tool.

Something new on the traditional pull program, Carrier is organizing lawn tractor races Thursday evening, the first day of the 157th Richmond Fair. "We



CLAUDIA VILLEMAIRE

Gilbert Carrier, a new director, bringing new events.

have two categories, up to 14-horsepower and 14 to 16 hp. The rules are strict about any tinkering with motor specifications, playing with the notion perhaps a power clutch or modified combustion chamber would outpower competitors. "We insist on strict adherence to the rules which prohibit modifications along the same lines of stock farm tractor competitions." Carrier explained the basic idea was to have an event that would be fun, make special categories for the younger would-be racers and present something the public will enjoy watching. There's no doubt they do make some noise and smoke, but nothing like the "giant" ones with several engines installed in modified frames, high-performance parts and pieces in the combustion engine and hotter than usual sparkplugs.

Carrier's career began at an early age when, by chance he was taken to a pulling competition and drag race. "Oh yes, I used to take part in the tractor pulling. But that's a time-consuming hobby and it takes lots of money to keep up with the competition." Carrier was also racing with his lawn tractor and finally, with a young family beginning to show interest in this

type of event, the Carriers concentrated on perfecting their skills with the lawn tractor. "Now my son is also racing with me or I should say against me, and just last week, he finally beat me at an event in the Beauce," he says proudly, shaking his head at how quickly they grow and even get ahead of their parents, at least in this field of competition.

Carrier reassured spectators on the safety for all concerned in these events.

"No matter what age group you're in, you must wear the full regalia of a motocross racer — the chest protector, security belts that keep head and neck upright no matter what, motocross-type boots, and most of all, a properly functioning and installed 'kill' switch that will instantly shut a motor down if a crisis arises. This switch is connected to the driver's wrist, so any sudden movement or jerk will activate the switch, ensuring the motor stops turning and so do the wheels."

This week, Carrier has been making sure the pulling track is in shape for the Thursday night event. "This is the first time we do this at the fair, and we want to make a good impression," he added, stringing large cement blocks together at the track's edge, stomping around on the surface where a special mix of sand, clay and gravel is compacted and rolled with heavy equipment, checking known wet spots that could turn to muddy slop if heavy rains plague the fair and ordering whatever fill material to remedy the situation.

"We started the lawn tractor racing this winter, icing the track and trying to set up an event that would attract racers and the public too. It was a terrific amount of work and I do have a family and a family business to tend to, so we have decided to hold only one race this coming winter," Carrier announced. "Getting enough publicity is always a challenge and persuading sponsors and volunteers during the cold months is not always easy," he added. "So, we'll have one big event next time around."

In the meantime, Carrier has been busy rounding up competitors for this first-time event at the fair. "Thursday has traditionally been the 'dog' night with races and activities for them. It's a busy place with exhibitors arriving with cattle and horses, families bringing in their arts and crafts and main building exhibits, and the organizers rushing about trying to get the last details done in time for the Friday morning children's day." Carrier persuaded organizers Thursday would be an ideal time to introduce another event, giving the public a choice of things to do and see. The result is a full program of lawn tractor races with separate age categories for competitors and two classes for the machines themselves.

"These are a variety of stock machines

CONT'D ON PAGE 7

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New president

CONT'D FROM PAGE 2

this fair. A demonstration on the versatility of the pumpkin, a short course on the different varieties and the preparation of various foods for sampling such as pumpkin soup, preserves, cake and much more, is another "must see" kiosk.

"We'll have a ventriloquist performing here and there all weekend too, and the Irish dancers will entertain in the recreation tent Saturday."

Demers, with her five children, (now all grown up, the youngest girls, twins, now 20 years old), her horses and helping with the never-ending duties at their farmstead, one would think Demers was busy enough.

"This has been quite a year," she said, admitting her first year as president meant a lot to learn very quickly. "But I had been volunteering quite a while, then was on the board of directors, and always ready to help out in the horse categories. But being president was quite a challenge."

"We all agreed that working at making this fair 'more green,' has meant recycle bins for bottles and cans, now being handled by the 4-H. We raised the parking fee in the hope families and friends would team up to fill vehicles arriving at the fair. That means less pollution and less stress in the parking lots."

The introduction of lawn tractor races will be Thursday, the canine costume class and races in the arena begin at 7 p.m. followed by demonstrations of obstacle course training and obedience by AcroCanin, well known dog trainers, handlers and groomers who have appeared at this event for several years.

Admission on Thursday is \$5. Friday, Saturday and Sunday is \$10 and parking is \$5. Absolutely no parking along the highway is permitted.

"The Surete has made it quite clear — anyone parking along the highway will be ticketed," Clifford Lancaster, vice president, said earlier.

Spunky minis

CONT'D FROM PAGE 3

Sarah Fowler has been leading organizers in this section where entries can be a garden in a box — pipe cleaner figures; Lego erection sets, some with moving parts; and a display of posters that challenge judges with unusual talent and understanding of colour and depth far beyond their years.

Horticulture also comes under the scrutiny of the judges in this building as well.

By afternoon, beef cattle exhibitors should be ready for their turn in the competition circle with several breeds appearing during the afternoon. Out behind the beef barn, sheep — five breeds in all — will take their turn in front of the judges. This is an interesting event which brings sheep of various breeds and ages into the show ring, held only by the handler. Most animals, like cattle and horses, must be haltered and led, but sheep are handled and manoeuvred by hand only — quite a fascinating activity to watch.

Saturday, the pony show gets underway outside in the exterior ring and for a hands-on experience with fluffy rabbits and fuzzy alpacas, visit the petting farm where tiny rabbits, chicks, feathered friends of all colours and maybe a pony colt or a donkey will tolerate the tickle of timid, tiny hands making their first attempt to get acquainted. The Adams family have looked after this division of the poultry house for years and

are veterans at guiding their young visitors around the pens and enclosures, introducing children and animals. To the rear, where a cacophony of crowing roosters and clucking hens and pullets entice visitors to come in and enjoy the colors and feathered poultry and aquatic birds, perhaps an old fashioned turkey with his blue wattles and grey feathering. Sometimes an incubator is set up where passing youngsters can watch the determined pecking of a chick, cracking and breaking out of its shell to wobble around on newborn legs, eventually, as it dries, turning into a ball of fluff finally finding the feeder tray and water.

Saturday is poultry and rabbit judging day too, beginning at 10 a.m. and, out in the recreation tent, the youth talent competition gets underway at 11 a.m. Also at 9 a.m., dairy cattle begin to appear in the arena. Avery Perkins, another new director this year, is enthusiastic about the large Jersey show this year.

"We have 120 Holsteins registered and nearly as many Jerseys," he's proud to announce. A dairy farmer himself, finding entries have filled the dairy stable this year is a sign milk producers are still around. Perkins and his daughter Sandra were busy at the fairgrounds this week, along with Billy Johnston, also in his first year as director, was busy installing eaves troughs over doorways and patching roofs wherever time and weather had perforated the roofing material.

Even vice presidents have to get physical, according to Clifford Lancaster.

"I've been a vice-president ever since the year I was president," he says, chuckling, and climbing into a hole where an exposed water pipe was spurting water through a perforation, "caused by who knows what," he says. Picking up a shovel while Serge Nault with his tiny excavator stood by to advise on the best solution to this repair, exposed more pipe, pinpointed the trouble and both men proceeded to cut the pipe and replace the gap with a new length, effectively stopping the leak, a situation that would have only worsened as water needs increase during fair days. Actually, the Lancaster family, Clifford's father and mother, have looked after setting up tables and shelves in the horticulture department for more than fifty years. Vegetables, flowers and plants line one side of this building where a



CLAUDIA VILLEMAIRE

Valerie Fowler and daughter Emma working to re-decorate the fair office this week.

Gilbert Carrier

CONT'D FROM PAGE 6

— not modified and we try to keep the weight and horsepower on a fairly balanced basis. That means a lot depends on the driver's ability and it's a perfect time to pick a favourite and cheer him or her on." This event is under the rules and regulations of the ATTFQ, (Association de tirs de tracteurs de Quebec).

Friday evening the regular pulls begin organized by ASSTQ with "street" truck and 10-wheeler pulls beginning in the afternoon. Saturday the trucks are back and the excitement of seeing the professional competitors with their huge modified tractors spouting smoke and flame and making a horrendous noise as motors fire up to their maximum (earplugs are a good idea, especially for the youngsters), fill the evening with excitement and usually attract record numbers of followers of these event for these competitions. Sunday afternoon regular farm type tractors take over the pulling track, with categories for older models and no tinkering with motor parts allowed.

For a more detailed program, consult the website at exporichmondfair.ca.

Admission Thursday is \$5; Friday, Saturday and Sunday, \$10. Children 4 years old and under are free. Weekend passes, including parking, are \$30 for adults, and \$15 for children 14 years old and under.

brehtaking display of quilts and handmade and fanciful articles are also lining the walls and filling every space. Here visitors can find rest and refreshment with this department offering homemade doughnuts and coffee, tea or milk for sale. There are tables and chairs nearby and visitors are encouraged to sit back, relax and enjoy these displays of local talent and ingenuity.

At 6 p.m., the shepherd and shepherdess contest gets underway in the arena. Competitors must be wearing woollen garments if possible and enter the show ring with a sheep on halter.

Sunday, light horses and ponies are judged in the outdoor ring and the 4-H Inter Club competition gets underway in the arena, all starting at 9 a.m. This day, there's a band playing all afternoon in the recreation tent and, at 2 p.m., the 4-H turkey and meat chicken auction gets underway in the Kiddies Corner at the front of the arena. Proceeds go to the Canadian Cancer Society and well-known auctioneer Butch (David) Crack and son David Jr. will be doing the honours.

Finally, as the last competitors on their farm tractors work towards a winner and the band, "Richard Peron" begins its last shift of country music, lengthening shadows signal the end of another Richmond Fair.

"With some luck with the weather, we think we have a good fair with a variety of activities and displays for all ages lined up. I must say a big thank you to my team of directors and volunteers who have worked hard and well. I had a lot to learn for my first year and I couldn't have done it without them," Perkins said.



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