

With summer near, fair's close behind

By CANDACE KNIGHT

"What are my qualifications for fair manager? Well, I've exhibited apples and handed out free cider in the barbecue line . . . oh yes! I also faithfully attend every year." Gilbert "Gil" Mello, newly-appointed Santa Cruz County Fair manager, has been on the job just about three weeks.

Mello already has his own ideas about the 57-year-old event. "People are what make the fair good . . . fairs are people," he said. The new manager would like to see as many individuals as possible involved in the 1978 fair.

By the Sept. 12 opening date, Mello hopes to be well versed in the many areas that make up the annual event. He says he couldn't have a better person to teach him than maintenance manager John Kegebein. Kegebein has worked a number of years with the fair, and according to Mello, "John knows it all."

In response, Kegebein laughed and said, "I may not know it ALL, but I've sure been around here long enough!"

Others acquainting Mello with fair operation are members of the board of directors. Although some are new, Mello noted others are "oldtimers" and give him a great deal of help.

Mello said a continual effort is necessary to make the fair "home grown." He feels a tremendous amount of talent exists in the county in areas of entertainment, the arts and management skills; therefore it is possible to put on the fair with a minimum of assistance from outside the area.

Because of the county's diversity, Mello noted a great number of differing ideas of what the fair should include. A tremendous intellectual spectrum exists through the University, he noted, as does a strong ethnic community. There are many artists and craftsmen, 4-H'ers, horsemen and women, plus great interest in home arts. All of the areas, and more, he said, desire exposure at the fair.

One area of concern is the

said, is due to an increased county population, interesting attractions, and the inclusion of current items such as arts and crafts, which bring more exhibitors. When a friend has entered an item in the fair, one is more likely to attend, just to see the results.

Entries in most areas have showed a continual increase. Some exhibitors enter only one year; they may find competition too rough or may disagree with judging procedures. In some departments, he said, individuals who have exhibited for many seasons and know what the judges look for, enter just about every category and make it a very disheartening experience for the novice. A plan to ease the situation for beginners will take effect in the home arts department this year. In the baked goods all previous sweepstakes winners (those who received the largest number of total points) will enter items in a master's category, leaving more opportunities for those who are just starting and those who have not won many ribbons in the past.

Mabel Henri, director of the home arts division, anticipates this will result in more winners and even better competition between the "masters."

Children as well as adults display their accomplishments at the fair. For youngsters, there are departments in floriculture, livestock, cooking, sewing and 4-H projects. "Children may exhibit in nearly every area of the fair, inside or outside the 4-H program," said Mello.

One enters the fair by obtaining a premium booklet that lists departments, categories, deadlines and many rules and regulations. Mello said the fair itself is subject to state approval of entries and Santa Cruz fair recently received the approved drafts of the 1978 premium books from Sacramento.

With the assistance of Eva Stokes, (who Mello praised for her time and patience) the 1977 booklet was updated, corrections from department heads and the state were completed, and printing will take place next month for the 1978 edition. All exhibitors from last year will receive the publication automatically; those who would like to receive one may arrange to by calling the fair office weekdays 724-5671.

Rules may seem complicated to a beginner, and Mello would eventually like to see them simplified. But for now,



GIL MELLO: People are what make fairs good . . .

he said, he must concentrate on Sept. 12.

Besides preparing premium booklets for press, the fair office is currently arranging for entertainment and publicity, looking into exhibit space for each department, making repairs and building new quarters for livestock, and working with department heads and 4-H advisory committees.

The fairgrounds are far from deserted this time of year in fact, Mello said, the facilities are used year round. Some activities include motocross, skeet shooting, little

league, auto races, the circus, horseshows, dances, 4-H shows, wedding receptions and group picnics.

With Santa Cruz County being the second smallest in the state, Mello feels the fair is something to be proud of. He expects the attendance to top the 100,000 mark in 1978.

The 1978 fair will feature community displays, entertainment, a barbecue, attractions for senior citizens, and much, much more. That's a far cry from its beginning in 1921 as an outgrowth of the Farm Bureau's produce show.



carnival. "I was shocked to find out the carnival isn't here year round!" Mello joked. He went on to say that many dislike the carnival. "It isn't my cup of tea, either," he said.

A contract already exists for a carnival which the out-going management seemed satisfied with last year. Mello, although he has never hired a carnival before, plans to keep a watchful and critical eye on the operation when it arrives in September.

Just about every fair does include a carnival, however, similarities can end with that, he commented. He feels there is a real difference between one's home fair and others. Santa Cruz County fair, he feels, must be for the county and close outlying areas. He feels this fair will cross county lines and include people from Aromas and Moss Landing.

Attendance was down slightly in 1977 due to rain and the threat of rain for most of the fair's running. Generally, though, in the past few years the number of fairgoers have been on the upswing. This, he



Phil Rose uses a weed cutter to keep the fairgrounds looking neat.

Photo contest entries asked

Amateur photographs taken on UCSC campus since Jan. 1 are eligible for a photo contest in conjunction with the college's open house Sunday, May 21. There will be a black and a color category.

There is no entry fee or age limit. Entries must be in frames or brackets ready to be hung. Size must be at least five by seven inches, but no larger than sixteen by twenty inches.

Bring entries to UCSC

Public Affairs office, Room 257 or the Central Services building no later than Friday. Winners in both categories will receive a first prize of \$50. Second and third place winners will be awarded \$25 and \$10.

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