

# Kartways fun - from family to family

By Trudie Zavadovics

Ownership has changed, but the family tradition is still well-rooted in Family Kartways.

Last March, Mike Sorichetti, one of seven Sorichetti siblings, bought Family Kartways from long-time owner Richard 'Pop' Clark.

Clark and his family built Family Kartways into the biggest go-kart track worldwide. The Sorichetti family aims to continue the tradition and turn Family Kartways into a first-class family playland/parkland.

The Sorichetti family itself has been in Whitby since 1958, and has been involved in numerous construction projects.

Family is very important to Mike, quick to add his business venture at Family Kartways is not a solo one. The business operation is shared by brothers Gary, Wayne, Russell, David and Tony, sister Angela and, of course mom and dad.

Mike says that as far back as he can remember, his family has always had a sense of togetherness, be it work or play. Now he has the best of both worlds - a play park he can work at making one of the best ever.

Members of the Sorichetti family delivered the Toronto Star on the same route for 30 years.

"We gave it up in the late '70s," says Mike. "Four carriers are now doing that route."

"It instilled a sense of responsibility at an early age," says Mike. "We never had things given to us."

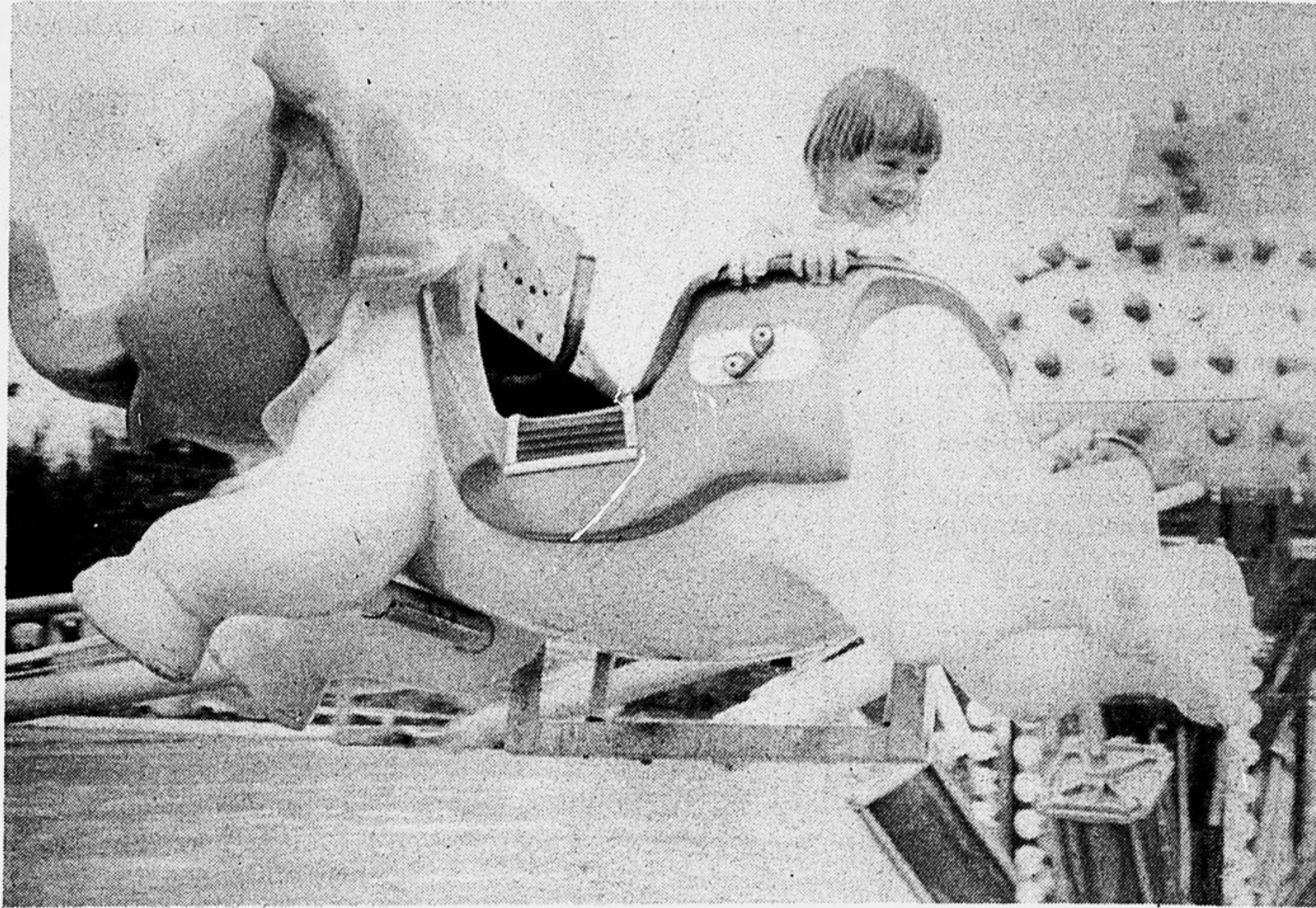
"We've always had the attitude that you have to work for what you get. The dedication and hard work is rewarding."

"I feel very strongly about the family business. It's not like work. It's having a bunch of fun together. Everyone knows their responsibility."

Richard 'Pop' Clark, an avid stock-car racer, bought Family Kartways in 1963.

With wife Betty and children Tim, Tom, Debbie, Bob and Jim, he owned and operated the track until he recently sold it to the Sorichetti family this past March.

During the 27 years he owned Family Kartways, Clark turned it into the largest go-kart track in the world in size and popularity. The Sorichetti family aims to carry on the tradition of deve-



KRISTEN CONNER tries out the new rides in Kiddieland at Family Kartways.

loping Family Kartways into the best it can be.

"Dad was an expansionist," says Bob Clark. "To this day he is one of the hardest-working guys I've ever seen."

Bob Clark says that the track underwent nine expansions over the period of time his father owned the company.

Bob, also an expansionist, now owns FKL Go-Karts, a company that manufactures go-karts to North America and 39 other countries around the world.

He also owns five go-kart tracks, one each in Calgary, Kitchener, Brantford, Hamilton and Kissimmee, just outside Orlando, Fla.

Bob says that brothers Jim, Tim and Tom are very proficient go-kart racers, having won among them 12 national championships over the last three or four years.

No one was more surprised to see Pop Clark sell Family Kartways than Bob. Although he's never directly asked his dad, Bob has his own ideas as to why he sold the business.

"I think everything has its

time and place. He built it from nothing to the world's largest go-kart track. I guess it was just time for him to move on."

He may have sold Family Kartways but Pop is by no means out of the running when it comes to business. He is involved in real estate and construction at Marco Island in Florida.

Mike Sorichetti worked at Family Kartways for six years before taking ownership. He had significant input into the mammoth gamesroom that has over 150 games including a shooting gallery that brings the 'Wild West' to life.

The 35-acre property is gradually becoming a vision of rolling hills and attractive landscaping where gravel-laden, barren land once laid. A rainbow of flowers and greenery is sprouting up to welcome guests. Sorichetti takes both pleasure and pride in helping to make that transformation.

In the four short months since they took over the park, Kiddieland has doubled in size, and in importance, in the park.

"I increased Kiddieland by 100 per cent. I felt it was not an area that was neglected, but overlooked."

A kiddie ferris wheel, flying elephant, pony cart ride and Alice in Wonderland teacups now join the pirate ship, kiddy go-karts, bumper boats, train ride and free balloons that bring Kiddieland to life.

Also developed was a free Kiddieland program, headlined with six professional shows over the summer.

Canada Day was made magical with the talents of magician Glen Ottaway.

On Aug. 5, the Stylamanders, a nationally renowned duo, will involve tiny audience members in a variety of fun and frolic that could include dance and bubble-blowing contests, or

conversations with Waldo, the talking dog.

Aug. 19, Lenny the Clown will take time off from his appearances on YTV to entertain in Kiddieland. And September will bring Doug Barr, who has written and recorded several children's albums. All shows are free and show time is 3 p.m.

Besides the acts, cartoon characters circulate throughout Kiddieland to delight youngsters.

Go-kart track built into world's largest

"We set up this program for kids and parents," says Sorichetti. "We want kids and parents in Durham Region to have a place to see a professional show free of charge." The acts are scheduled every two weeks throughout the summer.

Family Kartways claims to have the world's largest go-kart track. The mile-and-a-half, winding roadway has been rebuilt with improvements to sound and safety features. All rides are regularly safety inspected and have passed with flying colors. Sorichetti says he wants to show families in Durham Region that "we have a parkside equal to the track."

There are also two miniature golf courses, a picnic area, four-story high waterslide, and seven batting cages.

"People have seen improvements in the past few months," says Sorichetti. "We want everyone to enjoy our establishment."



Hot dogging

MICHELANGELO, a Mutant Ninja Teenage Turtle, served hot dogs and entertained at a barbecue at Shoppers Drug Mart at the Kendalwood shopping plaza on Saturday. Funds raised were donated to a program at Whitby Psychiatric Hospital.

Peter Tomblin photo

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