

150th Fall Fair stirs memories from years ago

BY JAMIE HARRISON
The Georgetown Gemini

Georgetown is ready to add the 150th chapter to the history of its Fall Fair this weekend. And despite the fact that both the name and the original location have changed it hasn't diminished the grand old institution — the Georgetown Fall Fair.

First held in Stewarttown in 1846, the Fall Fair was a gathering place at harvest time for farmers to exhibit livestock and produce while women gathered to judge hooked rugs, quilts and other wares.

The fair moved from Stewarttown to Georgetown in 1875, taking place in Market Square, an area defined by what is now Market and Main Streets and Park Avenue (at the time known as Factory Street). Market Square, an otherwise vacant lot at the time, was blocked in by an eight foot high fence to prevent gate crashers.

From 1875 to around 1908, Georgetown and Acton alternated hosting the fair, then called the Esquesing Fall Fair. After 1908, with the fair firmly entrenched in Georgetown, the name was changed in 1966 to the Georgetown Fall Fair.

Several fair board members from the 1946 Fall Fair, the centennial anniversary,

are still active with the Fair board and are lending their support and memories to add to the spirit of the 150th anniversary.

Charlotte Ironside was a member of the 1946 fair board, and served as secretary and treasurer for the Esquesing Historical Society.

"I was raised in a home where the Georgetown Fair was very important," Ironside said. "I guess I've been involved since I was in public school."

Her uncle, W.A. Wilson, was secretary of the Georgetown Agricultural Society for several years. She grew up in her uncle's house.

"My first memory is of the midway — that was great excitement when I was a kid. In those days the women all got their new fall outfits and fancy hats to wear at the fair," Ironside said.

Some of the changes Ironside has seen over the years have reflected the changes in Georgetown, as it has developed into a suburban centre.

"You still have your rural areas, you still have livestock, cattle, horses and sheep. Georgetown still depends on its rural areas," Ironside said, adding, "The 4-H Clubs are still important."

Craig Reid, board president at the time of the cen-

nial fair, said one of the most striking changes is the price of admission. In 1946 entry to the fair could be gained for a mere 35 cents; in 1996 admission is much higher, but still reasonable at \$6.

"The hall exhibits took on new life (at that time)," Reid said. "They were numerous, with more variety."

The hall displays were largely handled by the women in Georgetown, who also had the responsibility of organizing euchre parties and fundraising for the cooking schools.

And Reid agreed that the 4-H clubs played a large role.

"The 4-H exhibit at the fair was strong. Young farm people were encouraged to get involved."

This applied to Jean Ruddell, whose family owned most of what is now Moore Park. She believes that the addition of the agriculture tent will help urban

High school student dies in crash

Students at Georgetown District High School will start the year on a sad note, mourning the death of 16-year-old Ken Thomson.

Thomson was pronounced dead at a Mount Forest hospital following a car accident. He and his father were driving home from stock car races at Varney Speedway near

and suburban youth to see what farm life is really like.

She also remembers the horse races at the fair, a practice which stopped in the 1960s.

Ruddell relishes her memories but looks forward to the future, realizing the fair has to change with the times.

"Changes will be needed. Larger areas for the accommodation of beef and dairy cattle with weather protections and stabling, and the midways need more space to set up rides and booths. The buildings are in need of repair and replacement," Ruddell said.

"Government funding at all levels is being reduced or eliminated."

"Perhaps the answer to our fair problems will be to combine Georgetown and Acton fairs as it was before 1908. A county-wide exhibition could be a way."

Mount Forest when a pickup truck crossed the line, colliding with the Thomson vehicle. Don Thomson was treated for minor injuries.

Mount Forest OPP have laid charges against a Holstein man in connection with the accident, believed to be alcohol related.

Thomson was about to return to GDHS for Gr. 11.

Funeral services for Ken Thomson were held last Wednesday at J.S. Jones and Son Funeral Home.

NEWS SHORTS

Assault charges

An altercation between a man and a woman at the North Halton Trailer Park on 25 Side Road resulted in the man being charged with assault.

The incident took place last Saturday, shortly after noon. The woman alleges the man punched her in the face during an argument and threatened to kill her. The man apparently also released propane gas in the trailer and said he would light it.

He was arrested and charged with assault, uttering threats and mischief and was held until his bail hearing yesterday (Tuesday).

Attempted theft

A watchful neighbour prevented the theft of a 1989 GMC pickup truck on Craig Crescent at 4:45 am last Saturday.

The culprits had located a hidden ignition key in the truck and started the engine, when the neighbour phoned the truck's owner. The would-be thieves fled, leaving the engine running.

Banting Road break-in

Thieves broke into a Banting Road residence sometime between August 14 and 16. They entered the garage and took a set of golf clubs, a video camcorder and an electric drill. The value of the stolen items is \$2,200.

DID YOU KNOW?

That since its inception most of Halton Hills has undergone name changes at various points in history?

Georgetown was once known as Hungry Hollow, Limehouse as Fountain Green, Norval as McNabville, and Glen Williams as Williamsburg, with Acton once going under the moniker of Danville.

As the communities grew the names changed, often reflecting the changing face of the communities. For a historical look at Halton Hills, see page 4.

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