

# A FAIRER DAY I'VE NEVER KNOWN

Sniff the air, and you know it's that time of year.

Did you catch it? The scent of popcorn, sizzling hotdogs and sausages on buns, the mixed odours of baked goods, sun-warmed vegetables, livestock, and yes, manure. They're some of the smells of our annual fall fairs, to go with an extravaganza of sights and sensations.

There are children, trudging along behind Mom and Dad, holding cotton candy one-third as large as they are, in rainbow hues of rose or buttery yellow or peacock. No one knows why they make cotton candy so large; you can rarely finish the whole thing with out feeling a little queasy over so much sugar. And the spun softness certainly has a way of wrapping its sticky strands across face, hands or hair, no matter how hard you try to stay clean, as your mother admonished.

Everything appears much larger in scale when you're only little and peering over the tabletops at loaves of fresh breads, or sitting small but acting fearless on a merry-go-round as great glossy steeds chase one another in a never ending prance.

You can hear the giggles and shouts of excitement on all sides, as someone celebrates their first prize ribbon, or little kids take their ride on a Tilt-o-Wheel. Memories are being formed on all sides, whether joyous or

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mildly disappointing, with this sharing of rural lifestyle and the onset of harvest time.

My first memory of fall fairs is, luckily, a pleasant one. I may certainly have been to previous fairs, but my delight in this day in Milton, September 1966, is the most concrete.

In Kindergarten I loved to paint, and Mrs. Bentley, who taught Kindergarten for years at Percy W. Merry school, always encouraged me with whatever I undertook. One morning Mrs. Bentley told the class to work on *Mary Had a Little Lamb* pictures, which I did industriously, fashioning a bright orange bus full of children (Mary must have ridden a bus, as I did), a field full of tulips and daisies, and of course, Mary with a fashionable bob, pink bow in her hair and a curly-haired lamb by her side. And then school let out for the summer, and I guess I forgot all about my painting.

That autumn I went to the Milton Fair with my family to enjoy all the bounty of rural Ontario. I loved looking at livestock, especially horses, and marveled at the grown-up 4-H kids that had raised their own. Someday, I vowed, I would win a prize too.

Imagine my surprise when we entered the "artistic" section of the building and passed crocheting, quilting,

knitting and other creative displays. We came upon the children's work, and I felt the thrilling shock of my world narrowing to pinpoint one item. It was, of course, my painting, with a red First Prize sticker at the side. I was thrilled to the core, wondering how the world would be the same after achieving such an honour.

Then to my horror, I noticed that the old "Kindergarten" me had misspelled the word bus as "buss!" Perhaps the judges hadn't noticed. My parents, however, thought it was all right, as evidenced by the big grins on their faces. I guess a six-year-old wasn't to be criticized for her spelling. And yet, I suppose the writer in me was forming even then, for I'm still dismayed when I miss a typo or make an error in spelling.

With the countryside ablaze in colour, the richness of scents and vibrancy of sights and sounds, the feeling of a fall fair is one that will never leave us. If summer is the softness of an Impressionist watercolour, then fall is a bold Group of Seven oil, proclaiming that this is our season of maturity. As country folk, we seize this time for wondrous celebrations of the goodness of our earth and skill of our own hands, like one long Thanksgiving with which we've been blessed.

## Pretty fair sampling...

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The Fair opens Friday night with a heavy horse pull followed by the Miss Acton Fall Fair Pageant with entertainment by Eddie and the Stingrays. Saturday's events include a gigantic parade, crazy canoe races, the Northern Borders Flyball and Canine Team as well as a garden tractor pull and highway truck pull. On Sunday, events will include an antique tractor pull, a kiddie pedal tractor pull and a 4X4 truck pull. New to the fair this year is Timber Sports Lumberjack Demonstration. Throughout the entire weekend, visitors will be able to enjoy a full midway, hall and field exhibits and the KenJen petting zoo, featuring

over 65 different kinds of animals. Call (519) 853-4699.


Last but not least there's the 145th annual Milton Fall Fair, held on September 25, 26 and 27. Friday morning is Youth Day when over 1,800 school children are expected at the many demonstrations and displays. The children's pet show on Saturday has added a "stuffed animal" category so that children who don't have pets can participate. This year's entertainment lineup includes children's performer "Markus," the Magic Mike show and the band "Southern Region." Regular events will include truck and tractor pulls, two demolition derbys, four horse shows, the exhibit hall (this year's theme is "Old Country

Store"), livestock shows, kiddie's tractor pull and a full midway.

Tom McDonald, president of the Halton Agricultural Society, looks forward to the variety of this year's events.

"The goal... is to educate and make the urban community aware of the importance and changes in the agricultural industry that has always been the backbone of our country. Countless volunteers have laid the groundwork for a successful fair we can all take pride in." For more info, call (905) 878-5689.

To truly appreciate all that these rural events deploy, we suggest taking in each one of them. See you at the Fair!

May, Sept., Oct., Nov.:  
Sat., Sun., Holidays  
June: Wed. to Sun.  
July & August: Daily

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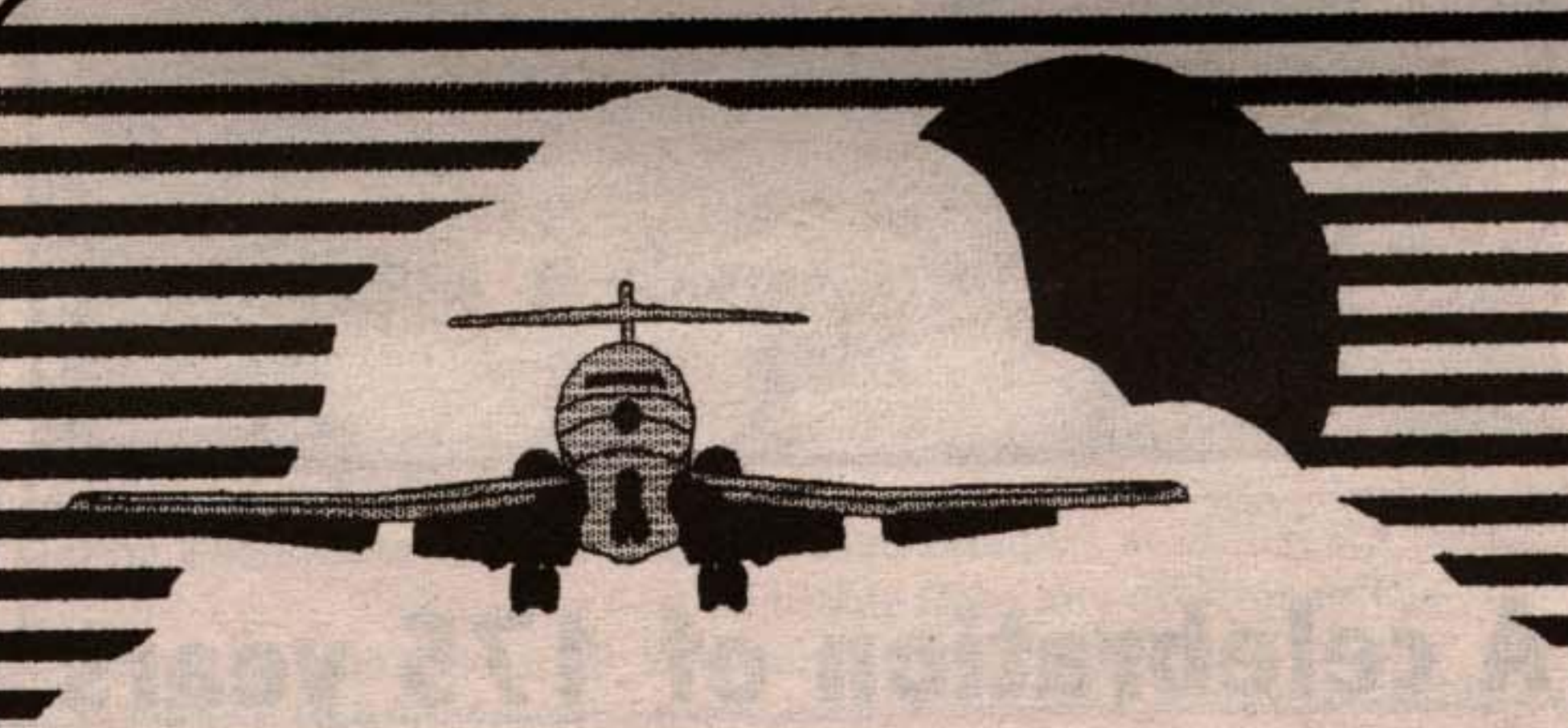
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*Fall Registration*  
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