

# The Thompsons' busy at Fair time

By Jeanette Anbinder

Trying to interview the Thompson family is almost an impossibility. Bob is President of the Markham Fair; Kay is Ladies President and a Director; daughter Barbara is a Junior Director; and all three are on a host of committees covering the whole gamut of what makes the Fair a bigger success every year throughout its 119 year history.

The interview is difficult for many reasons; the telephone rings regularly; friends and committee chairmen are dropping in; but most of all, you are accepted into the fold as an old friend, if not treated like part of the family. While the conversation is all "Fair Talk" it is inconsistent depending on what the last phone call was all about or who is doing the talking and who is doing the interrupting. You may start out discussing the Poultry Section, which is Bob's pet passion and end up talking Childrens Sections and Parade with Barbi or the Ladies Section with Kay; and interrupted briefly at one point when Bob calls you outside to see the Canada Geese flying overhead. "They're coming home for the night to the Conservation Area" which is just west of their home he says, and then explains in detail their life pattern and how they often visit the Thompson property. He knows

you're a "City girl" and are interested.

At one point, daughter Pat has just arrived from New York with her husband and daughter; she comes bursting into the house shouting "We won, Dad, we won!" She is referring to a race in which she and her husband entered their C-2 Pacer in New York and the winnings down there compared to Canadian races is something to shout about. The entire family is oriented towards animals and wild-life and share many mutual interests.

Being President of the Markham Fair means being a lot of things to a lot of things to a lot of people. Just being involved in year-long preparations for the event is only the one-tenth you see of an iceberg; the other nine-tenth involves activities which are seldom noticed by residents of Markham or visitors to the Fair. Bob Thompson has a wonderfully warm sense of humor which has been inherited by both daughters and mutually shared with wife Kay. Kay and the girls are definitely more vocal when it comes to describing the work done by their husband and father in his role as President, which Bob modestly gives the impression that it's all part of the job.

"I was one of the originals of the Markham Pet and Poultry Association" he tells you proudly. "I got involved

when the Markham Fair was disbanding the poultry after the fire in 1962 and Roy Crosby, who had been Sec. Treas. for 36 years came up and asked if I'd give them a hand." "He got chickens the moment we got married" interrupts Kay, "we were still living in the City then" she adds laughingly. When visiting the Thompson home, a farm right in the heart of town, you drive very slowly because of the ducks, chickens, and geese which are out taking their evening constitutional. The cows and horses were given up many years ago.

The future new site of the Markham Fair is also very much on Bob's mind. According to Kay "He is always encouraging the Directors to visit other county fairs to pick up new ideas and suggestions that can be used when plans are drawn up for the new buildings and grounds set-up". "We really don't have an awful lot of room on the present grounds to accommodate all the new exhibitors that want to enter each year and vandalism is one of our biggest problems" Bob tells you. "Did you know that in 1963 we only have seven exhibitors in the Poultry and Pet Section and this year we have 79?"

Kay has noticed an appreciable increase in the Ladies Section too. "Enthusiasm and interest has grown immensely in the last two or three years and we've

even had to bring back the Quilting" she says, "they want all the old fashioned things back". She excitedly tells you that "new residents in the area are really getting involved and show so much interest in wanting to talk and ask questions about all the displays. We're one of the very few Fairs around who have ladies on duty in the building at all times to answer questions and general information; and we even wear gold smocks so that visitors can identify us." She pauses long enough to take a breath, "It's the BEST group of women you could ever have, everyone works together beautifully and we have no problems" she adds proudly beaming.

According to Bob, the same can be said of the various Chairmen and committees with which he has association. "You know, they are all volunteers," he stresses seriously throughout the conversation, "They're not getting paid for any of the work they do; and they do a tremendous amount of work. "We're really grateful to them because without them, we wouldn't have a successful Fair."



R.H. (Bob) Thompson is president of Markham Fair '74. His wife Kay is head of the ladies section and a director. Daughter Barbara is a junior director.

## Fair Queen of '55

By Jeanette Anbinder

"What have you been doing since you won the Queen of the Markham Fair Contest in 1955?" I asked Marjorie Davie (nee Barber) when I visited her at home in Uxbridge last week. Events and occurrences come pouring out like water over Niagara Falls and are described in almost chronological order in fullest detail. Marjorie is always doing something!

For those who have never heard of Marjorie Davie, she was born in the home where her parents, Harry and Evelyn Barber still reside near Gormley. At school and in college she was a proficient athlete, cheerleader and honor student who was later to become a Thornton model part-time and a school teacher full-time. In 1955 at the age of 19, and a student at Teachers College, she won the Markham Fair Queen contest because, as she seriously tells you, "It was the Fair's Centennial year and a 100th anniversary is so significant. I thought if I'm ever going to be the Queen of the Fair, I'd like it to be in that centennial year."

After spending some time in California, in 1960 Marjorie came back and married Gord Davie, a pharmacist who owns the Rexall Drug Store in Uxbridge and is now the mother of three children,

George 13, Marianne 11 and Mike 7. Because of her continuing interest in education, she became the first woman School Trustee in Uxbridge in 1965, holding that office until 1968. She is also actively involved in her United Church, the I.O.D.E. and a local Little Theatre Group as well as community social activities.

This gracious and beautiful lady, who obviously still has all the attributes necessary for modelling, tells you that her interest in county fairs is "part of my heritage - my roots are in the Fair". She recalls as a youngster visiting many Markham and Richmond Hill Fairs with her parents, three sisters and two brothers in tow. "My father bred Jersey cattle and my mother entered her needlework" Marje explains. Her interest in Fairs has never diminished. Their home is a display case for her prize winning needlecraft from previous Fairs and she proudly shows you the quilt she is entering this year. It is her first attempt at a quilt and it's beautiful. She is also entering crewel work, a flower arrangement, a patch-work skirt and home-made bread. "After all" she says, smiling broadly, "That's what county fairs are all about."

Marjorie is an energetically vital person

who lives life to the fullest. She has a zest for living that oozes out of every pore and her misty grey eyes sparkle with humour and vitality as she relates recent achievements and future goals and ambitions. One of her many hobbies is world travelling and the family have lived in St. George, Bermuda, spent considerable time in Scotland, and recently vacationed in Monaco. Her sports activities include tennis, squash and skiing in winter and she can still remember "pitching the Peaches baseball team to victory in the Markham Township finals in 1955".

Preserved in her "old memory chest", as she calls it, Marjorie has kept the dress she wore when she was crowned Queen in 1955 and hopes to donate it to the Markham Historical Museum. She is looking ahead to when the Fair will celebrate its 200th anniversary in 2055 when the dress will be a relic of the past and play a small part in the continuing history of Markham and Ontario country fairs.

Marjorie is busy making plans for her next project which will be to open a boutique in her husband's new "super drug-store" this winter. "There is so much local talent in Uxbridge and we don't have anywhere where these talented artists and craftsmen can display their work!"



Back in 1955, Markham Fair crowned Marjorie Barber of Victoria Square its 'queen' for a year. Now Mrs. Gord Davie and living in Uxbridge, she enjoys an active life. Gord and

Marjorie are shown here with children (left to right) - Marianne, 11; George, 13; and Michael, 6.