

Wilbur Latimer

Fair once meant school holiday

By Aileen Johnson
 Everyone has different memories of Markham Fair, but to Wilbur Latimer, 77, it meant a school holiday, dancing girls and his first hot dog. Newer residents of Markham are forming their own remembrances.

"Oh, it's changed so much now," he lamented. "I have to admit that the day off school helped endear my generation to the event," Mr. Latimer commented.

"Where else would I have received the chance to see dancing girls who kick as high as their waist, or sample the new five cent rage billed as a Coney Island Red Hot? Those hot dogs were so novel my mother would order extras to take home on the train — to Unionville."

The high kicking of the dancers never enticed the young Latimer into the show tent. It cost a nickel and watching them would have meant one less ice cream cone. "I did fall for one of the

barker's pitches and wound up paying money to see a girl surrounded by snakes; it was terrible," he said.

As a young lad, Wilbur Latimer remembered winning a watch in a ring-toss game. That was almost 70 years ago, yet he can readily reconstruct the strategy he used to win the coveted prize.

To Brenda Marshall, 7, of Senator Reesor's Drive, the Fair conjures up visions of a ferris wheel and a scarecrow collection. Brenda proudly announced that she had entered a drawing of Old MacDonald's Farm this year. She rolled her eyes at the suggestion of a red ribbon.

Brenda's mother, Pat used terms such as "focal point" and "unique" to describe Markham Fair. Since their move to Markham the Marshalls feel they are part of a community. They are already involved in the area's service clubs.

"The Fair is a reminder of our capability to work with our hands. It provides continuity in an ever changing society," she said.

The Krol family of Christman Court feel the same way. Holly favors viewing the antiques on display while her sister Patricia prefers handicrafts.

"The Fair creates a setting for today's generation to learn appreciation for what was once done out of necessity both on the farm and in the home," their mother Blanche said.

"We as parents no longer have attics to store things and consequently have little to hand down to our children. Markham Fair is a reminder to stop rushing and to think about the past. It's a shame that it is only an annual offering," Mrs. Krol added.

Markham Fair 1976, is an opportunity for the retired to reminisce; young parents to reflect; and a little girl to dream.



Riding the Ferris wheel

This picture will bring back a few memories. The gentleman (right) is Charles Reeve, President of Markham Fair in 1969.

With him on the ferris wheel is the late Lex McKenzie, for many years the M.P.P. of York North. —Jim Thomas

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