

'Priceless' fair honours long-time associates

Priceless.

In a single word, president Kim Empringham described her memories of this year's Markham Fair.

Priceless.

The Stouffville mother of two used this descriptive time and again during her address to a hall filled with celebrants at the 2003 banquet and ball, Saturday night. She was accorded a standing ovation.

Kim used the following comparisons to make her point:

A family pass to the fair cost \$18, but the look on a little girl's face as she touches a baby chick for the first time — priceless.

An all-day ticket to ride the midway was eight dollars, but clouds of dust and steam concealing cars in the demolition derby — priceless.



Beer nuts and candy floss were \$5, but seeing your five-year-old daughter dragged across the show ring by her calf — priceless.

Her listeners, appreciating these experiences, weighed on every word.

Nor did she forget those who made it all happen, the 780 volunteers who gave of their time and talents to see the big show through. Priceless, she said.

But the speaker saved her best for last, paying a personal tribute to her husband, her daughters and her parents.

Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

"Mom and dad, you spent many years at the fair. You were great sounding boards," she said. She praised husband Murray for the way he juggled his plans around her meetings. And daughters Rebecca and Laura, "my loudest supporters and home-grown cheerleaders."

INURED STOUFFVILLE RESIDENT RECOGNIZED

At the same time, she didn't gloss over the negatives — the serious injury to Stouffville's Jody Brown, a Markham firefighter, in a freak race track accident.

"We're happy you're here tonight," she said, "you've a long road ahead; we're behind you all the way."

And ongoing confrontations with the weatherman. "The wind and the rain, the wind and the hail, the wind and the snow, priceless, or maybe we paid the price," she said, with reference to depressed attendance.

"But true fair attendees didn't see it that way. They wanted to be here regardless," she said, "they knew where to find priceless."

Kim said too often fair volunteers forget just how priceless they themselves are, with many unique experiences to offer.

"It was an incredible fair," she told her audience. "It's been an incredible year."

Ambassador Katie Forfar said, to her, the fair presents something uniquely different, a sharp contrast to Markham's "sea of houses."

Homecraft president Lorna Sheehy proudly announced Wendy Walton's award-winning quilt would hold a place of distinction in the display at the Association's annual convention in Toronto's Royal York Hotel this spring.

65 YEARS EXHIBITING

Sixty-four long-service awards were presented including one to Lloyd Ayre of Oshawa, a sheep exhibitor 65 years. For health reasons, Mr. Ayre could not attend.

Also recognized were Barry Little, 45 years, Robert Thompson, 40 years, Bryan Armstrong, 35 years, Frank Hendy, Lyla Jones, Barbara Hoover and Bill Snowball, 30 years, Carol DeGeer, Brian Lee, Mary Mann, Pat Marshall, Don Miller, Steve Mowder, Aloma Provis and Pat Wheeler, 25 years.

Describing long-serving volunteers as "The Senators Club," past-president Dennis Seeley said Barry Little, Robert Thompson and Bryan Armstrong had distinguished themselves through matchless loyalty and commitment. He joked that Mr. Little had started out showing rabbits and later jersey calves.

"Quite a come-down," he said.

PASSION FOR POULTRY

He recalled Mr. Thompson's great passion for poultry, and how, a half-century later, Mr. Armstrong had "followed in the footsteps of his grandfather."

"This is a great and wonderful night," he said.

The president called it "priceless."

Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 50 years.

Santa Claus parade has child's theme

Snowflakes or not, Santa's coming to Stouffville.

Although it's hard to believe, the jolly old fellow with his red suit and white whiskers is set to visit Stouffville Saturday, Dec. 6, as the highlight of the Stouffville Kinsmen Santa Claus Parade.

THREE WEEKS TO GO

There are less than three weeks for local schools, businesses and community groups to create a float or entry for this tradition of more than 30 years.

This year's theme is "A Kid's Christmas."

The parade starts at 2 p.m. from

Cam Fella Boulevard in the east end of town, proceeding west along Main Street.

The father and son team of Bruce and Paul Gribbon is again running the parade, with the chairperson duties handed over to Paul this year.

The Kinsmen are hoping to beat last year's total of close to 100 entries.

In previous years, crowds lining Main Street have cheered on bands, bagpipers, horse-drawn carriages, Newfoundland dogs and lots of small shepherds, angels and Marys and Josephs on school or community group floats.

The Kinsmen are assisted by students from Stouffville District Secondary School on parade day.

There is no fee for non-profit groups entering a float, but local businesses are asked to pay \$25 for their entries to help cover parade costs.

AWARDS FOR TOP ENTRIES

Entries will be judged for awards in five categories including the most humorous, best school, best theme and most original.

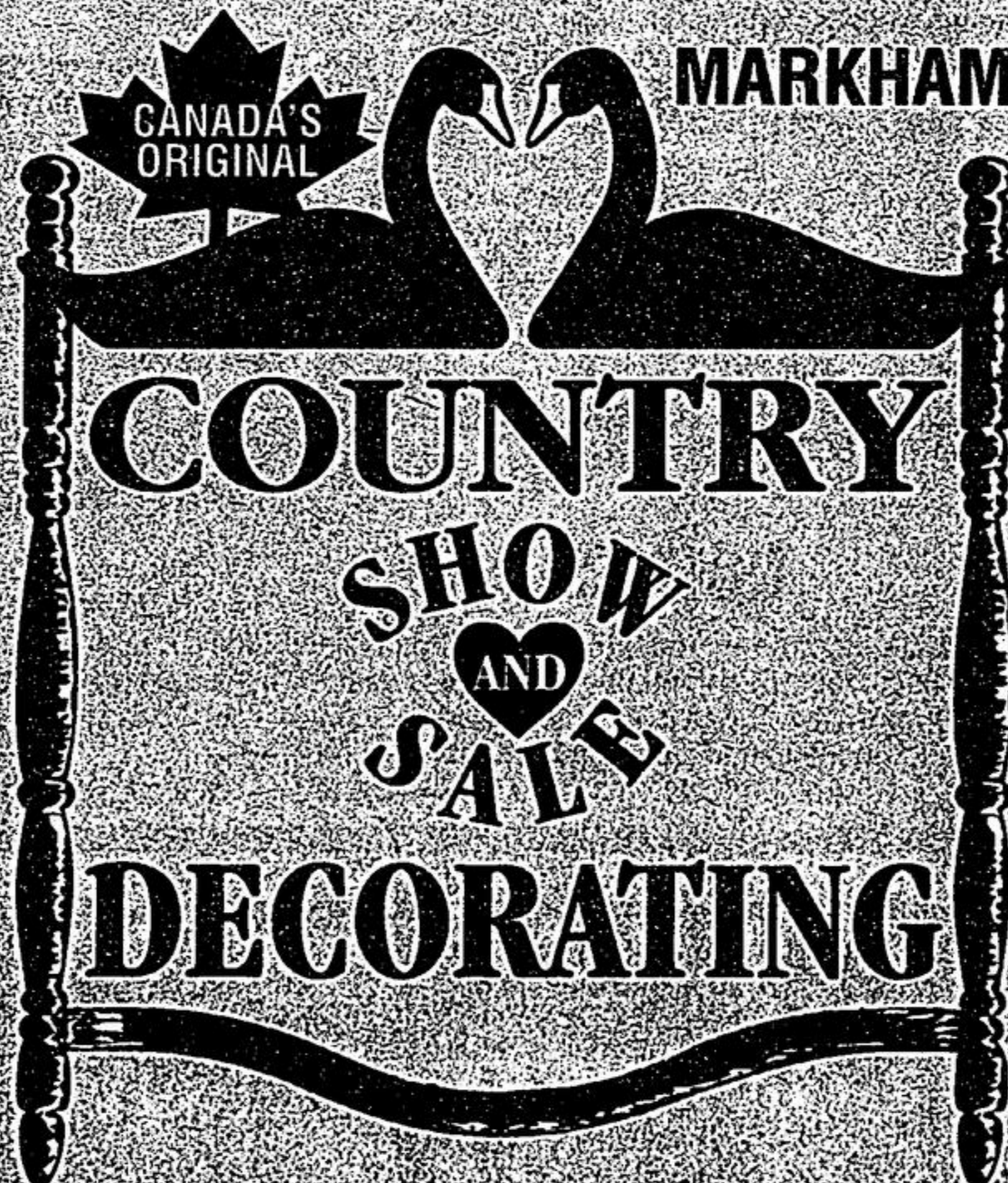
The best over-all float receives the Mayor's Trophy.

To enter the parade, call 905-640-5004.

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NOVEMBER 14-16

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| Berry Ellen Reversible Coats | D & L Crafts | Jaboli II | Photo Decor by Christine | The Orange Crate Food Co. |
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| Butcher Block | Deer Ridge Farm | Kaymade Handmade Quilts | Pipestone Studio | The Popcorn Lady |
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