

OPINION

Weatherman couldn't spoil family fun at fair

It was wet and it was windy. It was sunny and it was cloudy.

But the fickle weatherman couldn't dissuade me from enjoying the Markham Fair.

Truth is, it was the most satisfying Markham Fair I've ever attended.

Why? Because, for a first time, I accompanied two grandsons through the buildings and around the grounds.

Over a period of four hours, we enjoyed all the sights and sounds that only a country exhibition can provide, beginning with chips and gravy (for them) at the Markham Lions stand plus a piece of pumpkin pie (for me) when no one else was watching. Later, I added a bacon-on-a-bun at the Stouffville Lions booth.

These food staples go with the territory.

Strange as it seems, the boys were intrigued by the multitude of exhibits including Cathy Passafiume's jack-o-lantern; Aiden Hulshof's field pumpkin; Jared Simpson's three pound potato; Guy Farintosh's 21 pound watermelon; Colleen Lamanna's homecraft awards; Kiana Landry's cookie house and beautiful prize-winning quilts entered by Helen Badgerow, Wendy Ferguson and Ruth Wagg.

They were also captivated by the chorus of cock-a-doodle-does inside the rabbit, poultry and pigeon pavilion.

They were further amazed at the beauty of Paul Travis' orpington cockerel and the size of Sean Slater's giant rabbit.

The Cavalcade of Horses, organized by Blair Purcell and led by Shannon Hollands and Brandon Harrington, had the boys pressing forward for closer looks.

This display heightened their interest in Old MacDonald's Farm.

Our last stop was the horse-pull with 14 teams competing for sled-hauling honours, one entry from as far distant as Quebec. This event, although ongoing for years, still packs them in.



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

Four busy days

Always a bridesmaid but never a bride.

You've heard the adage, so had Christine Blizzard.

However, the axiom only prompted the 19-year-old Stouffville resident to give Markham Fair's ambassador's contest another whirl.

And she won, placing her front and centre at last week's four-day show.

Her assistants were Leslie Cosburn, 22, of Unionville and Emily Johnson, 23, of Stouffville.

"My cousin, Kristen (Miller), encouraged me to run again," Christine said. She's glad she did.

"I really didn't expect to win. All I could think to say at the end was 'oh my goodness'."

Despite the busy aspect of the event, Christine said she enjoyed every minute — welcoming hundreds of school children, handing out ribbons, plaques and trophies and judging the Chip Off The Old Block contest. She and her helpers also assisted at the pet show and baby contest.

She's looking forward to representing Markham Fair at the CNE next summer and attending the 2012 convention at Toronto's Royal York Hotel this spring.

Christine's chain of office, received at the conclusion of the ambassador event, was the subject of many admiring glances at the

fair's official opening.

Christine later explained it had been provided in 2004 by then Whitchurch-Stouffville mayor Sue Sherban and initially worn by that year's ambassador, Andrew Fockler.

A medallion within the chain will bear Christine's name.

A native of Stouffville, Christine attended Orchard Park and Glad Park public schools and later Stouffville District Secondary School where she captained the rugby team.

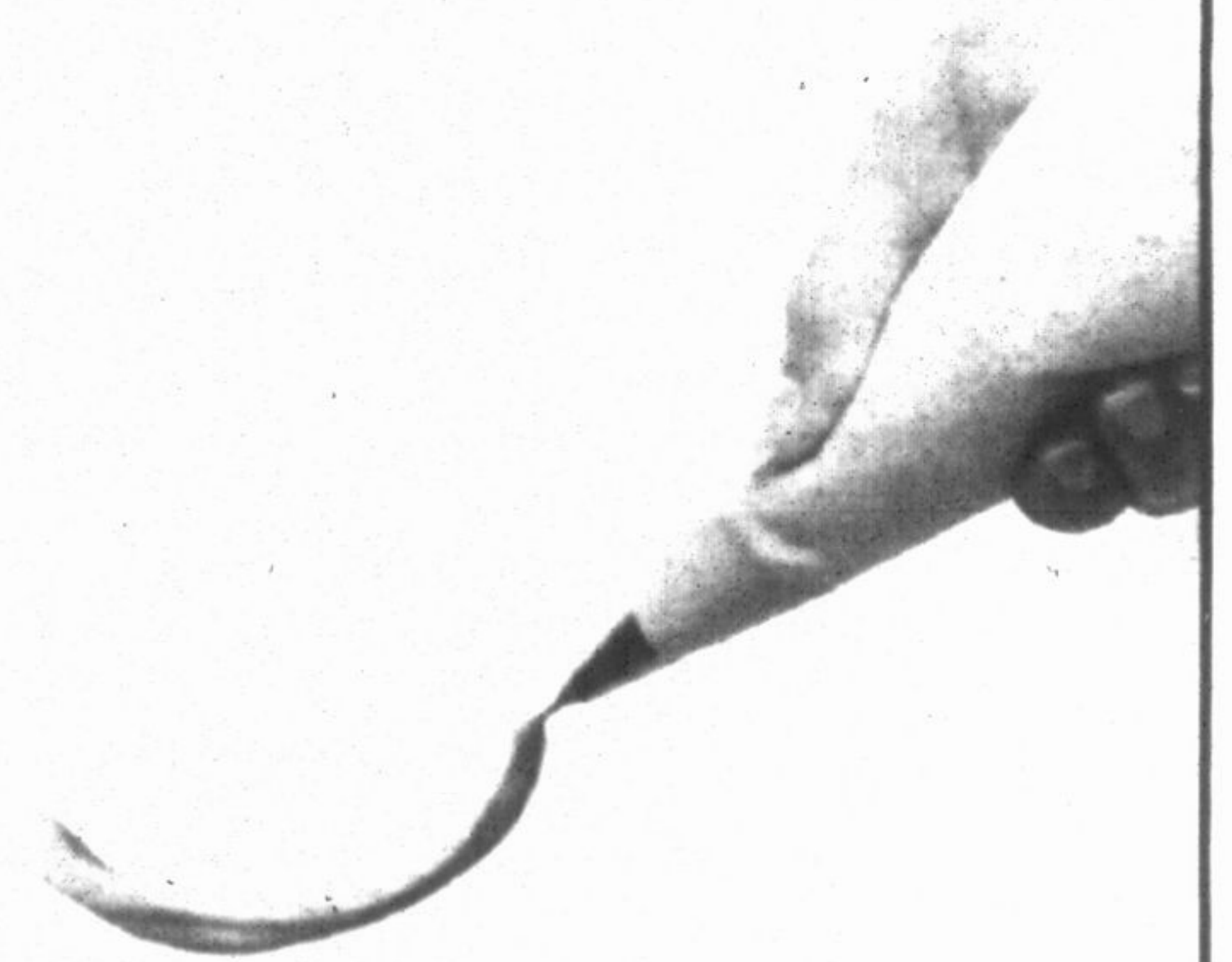
She's continuing this sports interest, playing the game with the Seneca Sting at the school's King

campus.

Christine's enrolled in the early childhood education degree course and hopes to teach special needs children following graduation.

Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 60 years.

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