

# Big year for Markham Fair's new ambassador

Cassie, meet Martha. Martha, meet Cassie. Unknowingly, their paths undoubtedly crossed Saturday at Markham Fair.

Cassie Ferguson, daughter of Ken and Christine Ferguson of Stouffville, is the fair's 2014 ambassador. Martha (Mulholland) Gardhouse, daughter of the late Dr. Fred Mulholland and wife Emily, formerly of 18th Avenue in northern Markham, was Markham Fair's queen back in 1973 - 41 years ago.

Cassie, 18, a graduate of Stouffville District Secondary School, is enrolled in a three-year sports management course at Durham College in Oshawa. She was the choice of judges Shirley O'Neill, Bryant Hulshof and Allan Bell at a crowning ceremony last Thursday.

Her attendants were Bethany Henshall, 19, of Markham and Teghan Warr, 17, of Mount Albert. Cassie was presented with an official chain of office by last year's recipient, Kaitlin Francis.

For the Stouffville girl, the honour rounds out a remarkable two months. In addition to the fair ambassador award, she was



## Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

junior class champion at September's International Plowing Match near Barrie. Jim Ferguson, an uncle who lives near Blackwater, was her coach.

In 2015, she'll advance to the ambassador competition at the CNE.

At age 10, Cassie joined the York 4-H calf and plowing clubs. She became a fair volunteer one year later and hopes to continue this involvement far into the future.

Although a Leafs' fan, her favourite sport is soccer. So much so, she's worked for TFC, the pro club

in Toronto.

At the conclusion of the ambassador contest, a cheque for \$2,000 was presented to the committee by Ken Rovinelli of Upper Unionville Inc. The donation will be divided among the three contestants to assist them with their education.

## Two-fold celebration

Martha Gardhouse marked her 61st birthday Oct. 4. What better way for the 1973 queen of Markham Fair to celebrate the occasion than to again return 41 years later.

But it wasn't the same site as where the crowning ceremony took place. That occurred at the former location at the corner of highways 48 and 7. She recalls the event like yesterday.

"It was a beautiful evening," she remembers, "clear and cool."

The judging took place in the arena dressing room. The judges included radio commentator Don Daynard, Mrs. Alan Wall, wife of then York County's Agricultural Representative and me.

Following a series of questions, the 10 young women were assisted onto a hay wagon and pulled

by a farm tractor onto the race track. There, the announcement was made: Martha Mulholland of Unionville, first; Jane Yusko, Stouffville, second and Sylvia deJong, Markham, third. The organizing committee included Gerri Seeley and Janie Armstrong. The fair's president was Ellis Britton.

"I'll never forget the anticipation," Gardhouse recalls, "my heart was in my mouth. I had to swallow quickly before stepping up to accept the crown, sash and a bouquet of flowers."

She also remembers what she was wearing - a V-neck dress and platform shoes.

Gardhouse recalls playing the role of Snow White on the fair's float at Markham's 1973 Santa Claus Parade and attending the 1974 Canadian National Exhibition as well as a fair convention at Toronto's Royal York Hotel.

Following graduation from Stouffville District Secondary School, Gardhouse studied fashion retail at Seneca College. She has a daughter Becky, the ambassador of the 2001 Schomberg Fair and a first runner-up to Miss CNE in 2002. In 2005, she was grand

champion showperson at the Beef Congress Jr. Exhibition held at London's Western Ontario Fairgrounds. Gardhouse's mother and brother David live in Stouffville.

## Remembering Karen

A scholarship in memory of Stouffville's Karen (Paisley) Murphy has been established by the Markham and East York Agricultural Society, (Markham Fair). She was the fair's president in 2009.

The announcement, beside an enlarged office photo reads: "In honour of Karen Murphy, a scholarship will be awarded annually to a deserving fair member in post-secondary education who exemplifies the values of volunteerism, community involvement and the promotion of agriculture".

Bartenders working the fair last weekend donated all their tips to the fund.

Murphy died following a courageous battle with cancer July 1.

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

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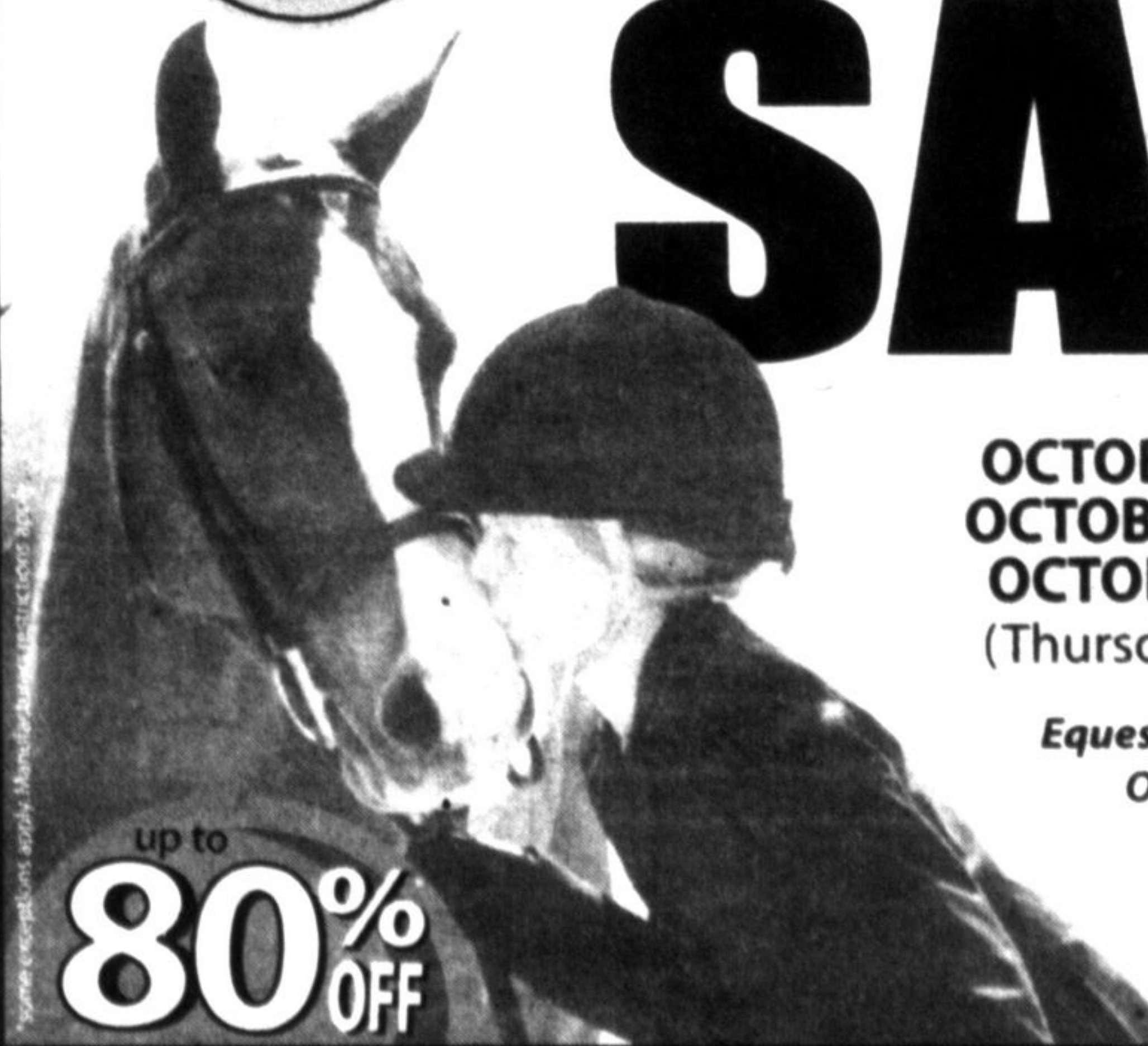
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