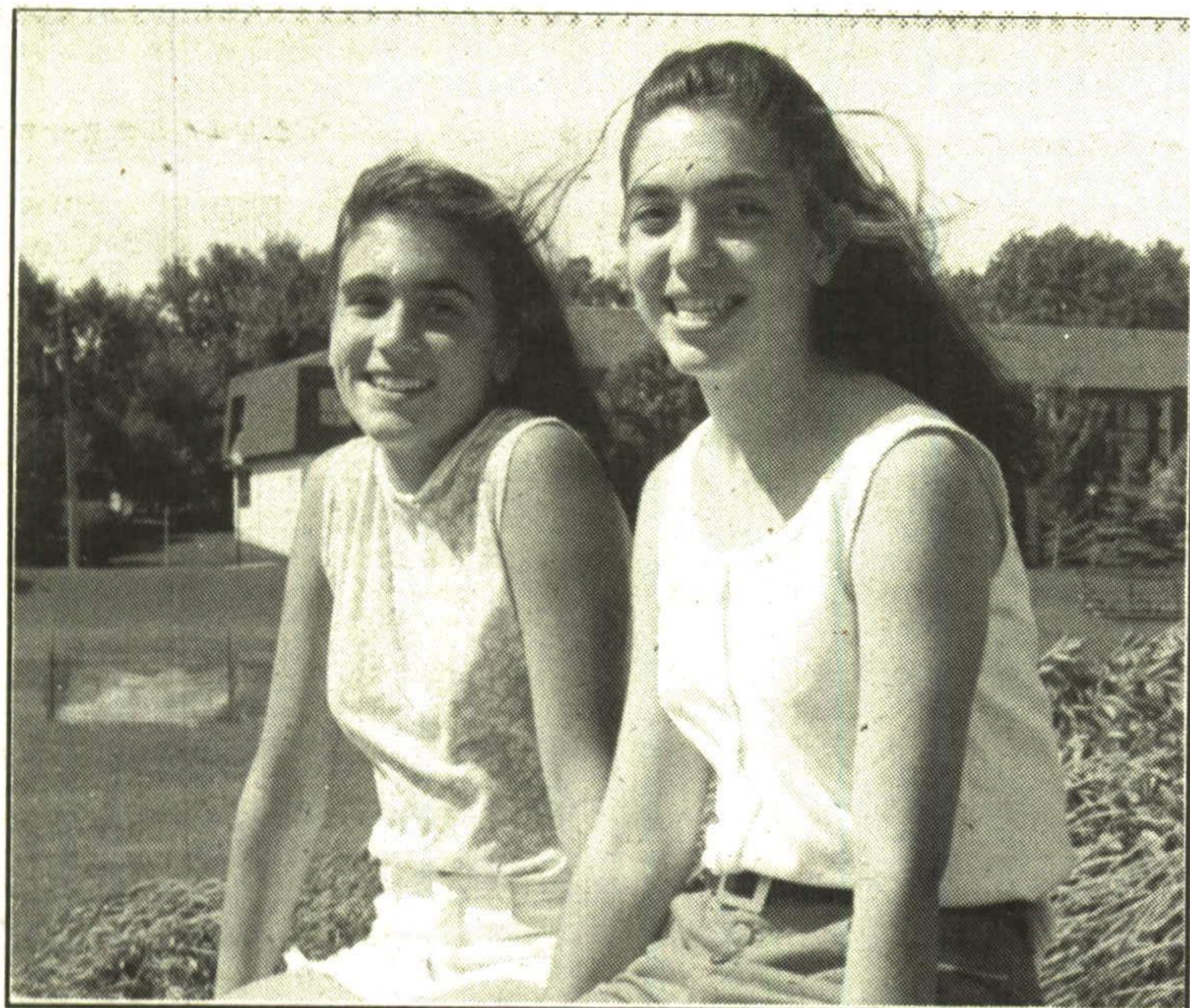


Taking a break

Carla Jenkins, 15, and Angela Orticello, 15, take a break from their tennis game to enjoy a summer afternoon at Fairy Lake, Acton recently.



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Beechbrooke OMB hearing Farming no longer viable in Eighth Line area: expert says

By **STUART JOHNSTON**

Staff writer

The rural areas north of Georgetown are in a "state of transition" from agriculture to minor residential development, the Ontario Municipal Board was told this week.

David Cressman, an agricultural specialist hired by Lois and Kent McClure to investigate soil conditions on their 63-acre Eighth Line property, testified that the rural area has "attracted interest for various forms of rural development" in the past, and will continue to do so. It was his opinion farming is no longer a viable business in the area bordered by Trafalgar Rd., Winston Churchill Blvd., Hwy. 7 and the Erin-Halton Hills boundary, due to relatively poor soil quality and inflated land prices.

The McClure's are hoping to build 20 rural estate homes on their land, located south of the Erin-Halton Hills boundary, but the Hickory Falls Ratepayers Association objected and referred the matter to the OMB. They fear the McClure's Beechbrooke homes will

detract from the rural character of the area, and will have detrimental effects on water and land quality.

Both the town and Halton Region approved the subdivision, but the Niagara Escarpment Commission rejected it because the property is designated as a natural area under the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

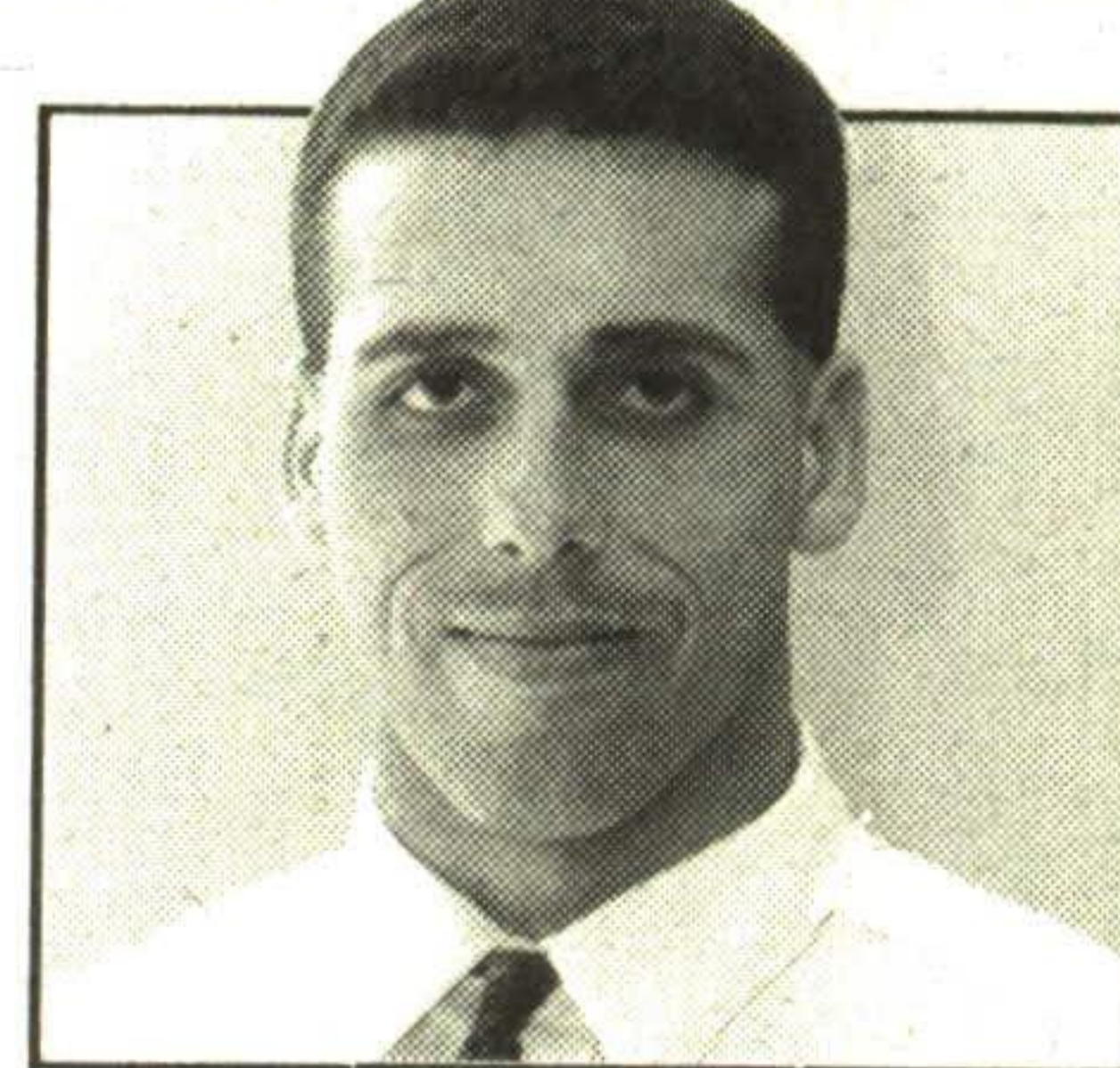
The hearings began Tuesday at the Civic Centre, and will likely continue for at least another week.

"Land prices here are 10 times the value of the best farmland in Ontario. So, it's clear anyone wanting to purchase land for farming will have an unrealistic prospect in front of them," Cressman said. "The land cannot support good farming because of its poor qualities."

Cressman noted the McClure property, originally mapped as having the best soil suitable for farming, is actually dry, rocky and contains gravel — not viable farmland at all.

Witnesses testifying on behalf of the NEC and the Hickory Falls Ratepayers are expected to take the stand next week.

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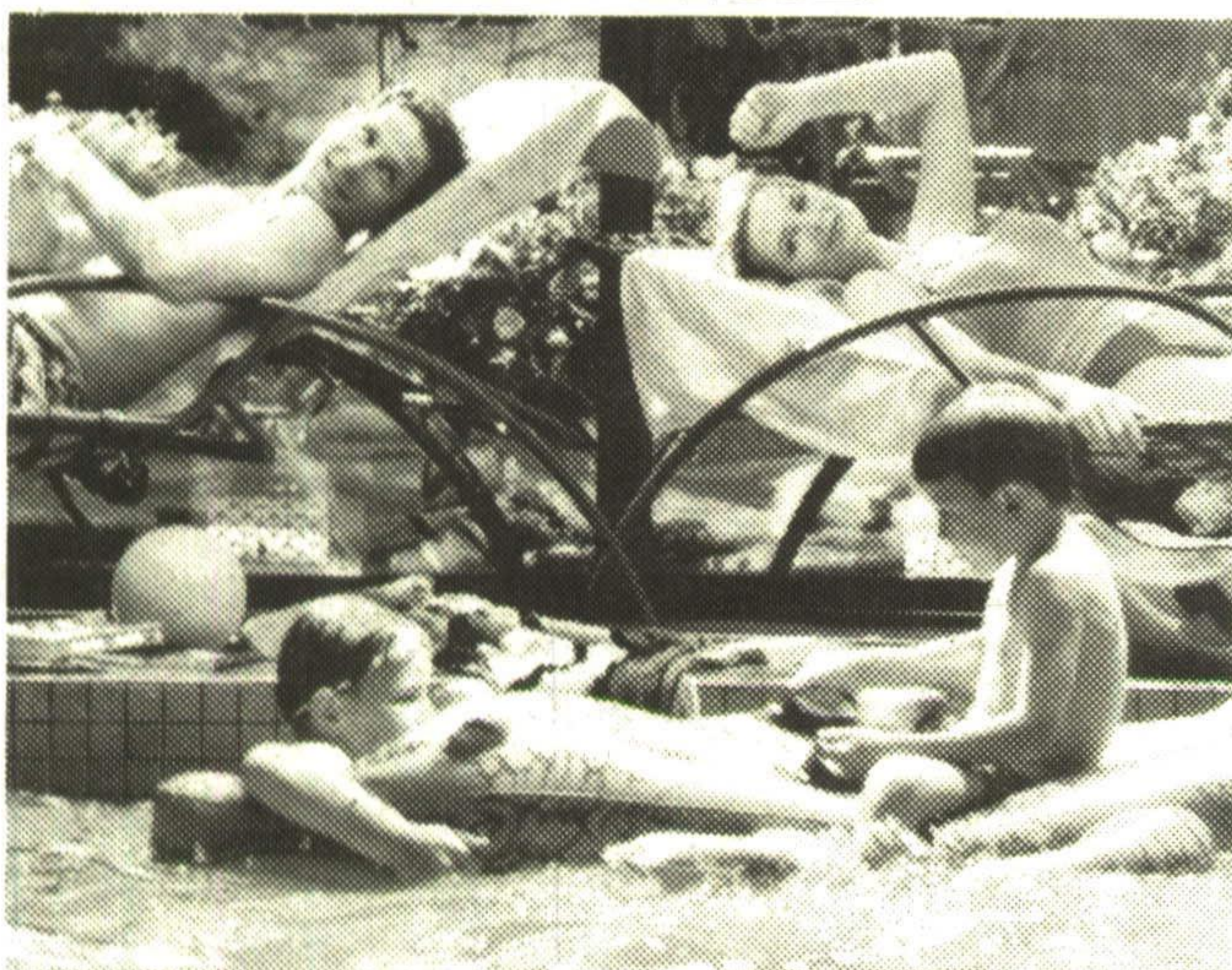
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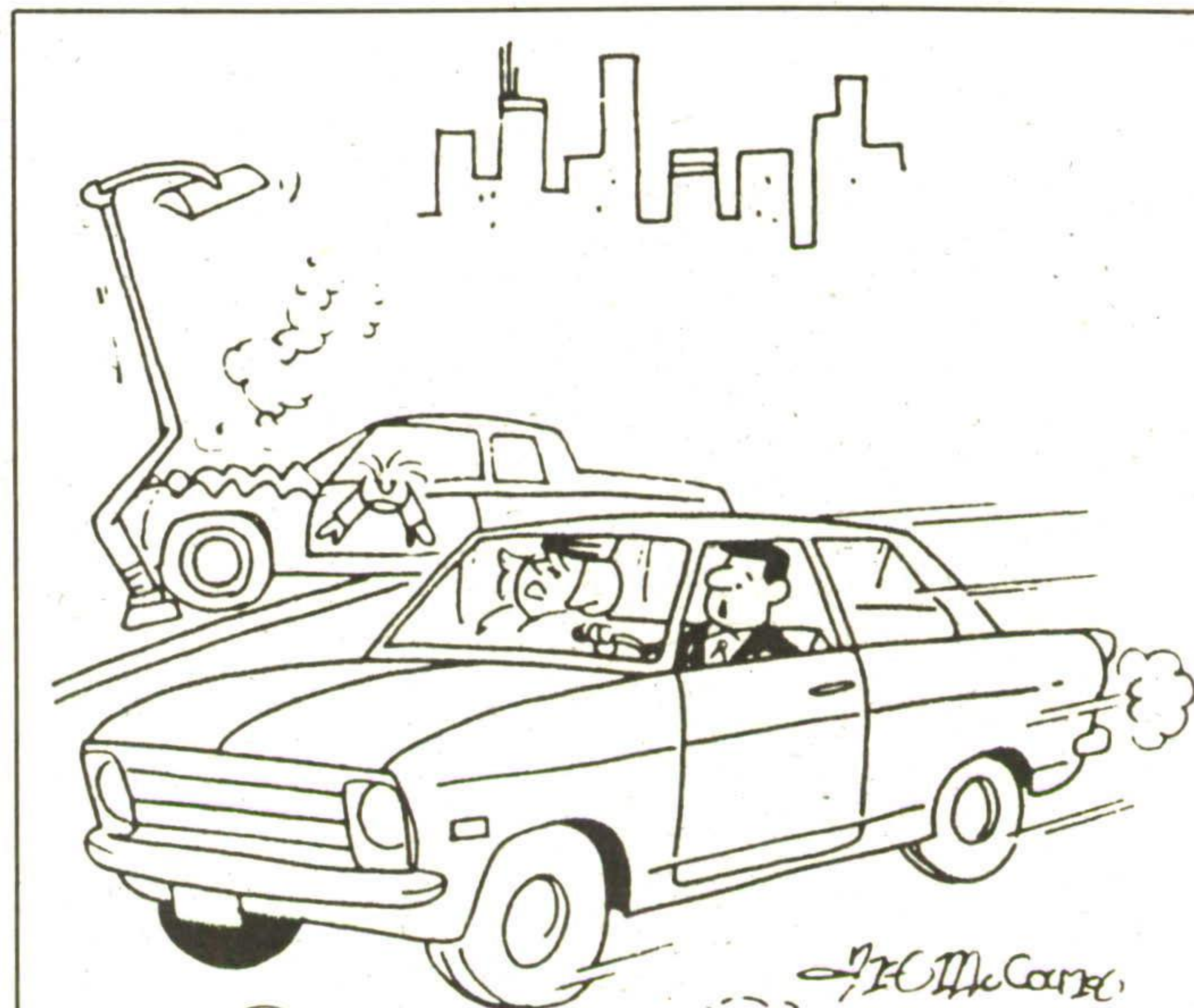


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