

Acton Brunch is served

More than 300 Halton Hills residents came for brunch at the monthly Acton Community Brunch, hosted by the Kinette Club of Acton on Sunday. It's scheduled to run every last Sunday of the month (except December), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Each week, proceeds go to a local charity—this month's beneficiary was St. Joseph's Church ladies group. Helping to serve were Helen Fowler, Jane Vicary and Marie Zions.

Photo by Trish England

Lights on at skateboard park soon —price tag almost doubles—

The price tag for installing lights at the skateboard park at the Mold-Masters Sportsplex is now marked at \$15,200.

Council approved, at Monday's meeting, additional funding of \$7,200 after an original estimate proved too low. The skateboard park is beside the Alcott Arena.

"How can we be almost double the cost? Are the residents not deserving of some sort of explanation?" demanded Councillor Bryan Lewis.

Director of Recreation and Parks Bryan Shynal said the \$8,000 was an "estimate without a design." Council approved the inclusion of the lights in the 2001 budget without requesting a report. But after an engineer's assessment it was deemed that lights mounted on the arena walls will not ensure safe lighting of ramps and steps.

Instead two 30-foot poles with 400-watt metal halide fixtures will be installed by Nadalin Electric Co. They will be controlled by a timer and will go off at 11 p.m. The lights will face the building so there will be minimum glare to the Guelph St. drivers.

"Typically in bring forward budget items we have information so that our estimates are more accurate. In this case we did not, and we made some assumptions that were obviously not correct," said Shynal.

It was Mayor Kathy Gastle who had promoted the lights during last minute budget deliberations, saying the youth of this town want them and "and this is an opportunity to give the kids of Halton Hills a place to go— at

least until 11 p.m."

The lights will extend the operating hours of the park during spring and fall seasons. According to a staff report, Halton Regional Police support the park lighting because it will improve surveillance opportunities and user safety. The Georgetown police station is adjacent to the park.

The extra \$7,000 will come from an unallocated Summer Jobs Services Program grant.

In an aside, Councillor Bob Inglis inquired why some town park lights are on, "when there's

nobody home."

Shynal replied it's a matter of economics. In previous years, town staff continually reset the lights based on the park playing schedule, but this year to save on labour costs, the lights are reset based on the average schedule. At this time of year, he said, most outdoor sports schedules are complete, so the parks will be dark.

He added in the days around Halloween the lights will be turned on again in most of the major parks for security reasons.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer

Bugged? Beetles swarm Halton Hills

The hot summer, an abundance of food, and overwintering success are the main reasons there are so many lady beetles clogging doorways and hanging around porches lately says a University of Guelph entomologist.

Stephen Marshall, a Professor of Entomology at the university, said the bugs — Multicoloured Asian Lady Beetles, who at this time of year travel in a mass searching for sheltered spots to spend the winter — feasted on the soybean aphids that invaded the province for the first time this summer.

"Soybean aphids exploded in our soybeans incredibly," said Marshall.

He said another reason there are so many of the beetles, which can be yellow, red and orange, is that their "natural assemblage of mortality factors" (things that kill them)

didn't come with them from Asia.

The Multicoloured Asian Lady Beetles made their first appearance in Canada in 1994 after being released in the United States to control aphids. They didn't get abundant here until two years later, and by 1998 they were the most common lady beetle in Ontario.

"It's got to have a serious impact on our native insects," said Marshall.

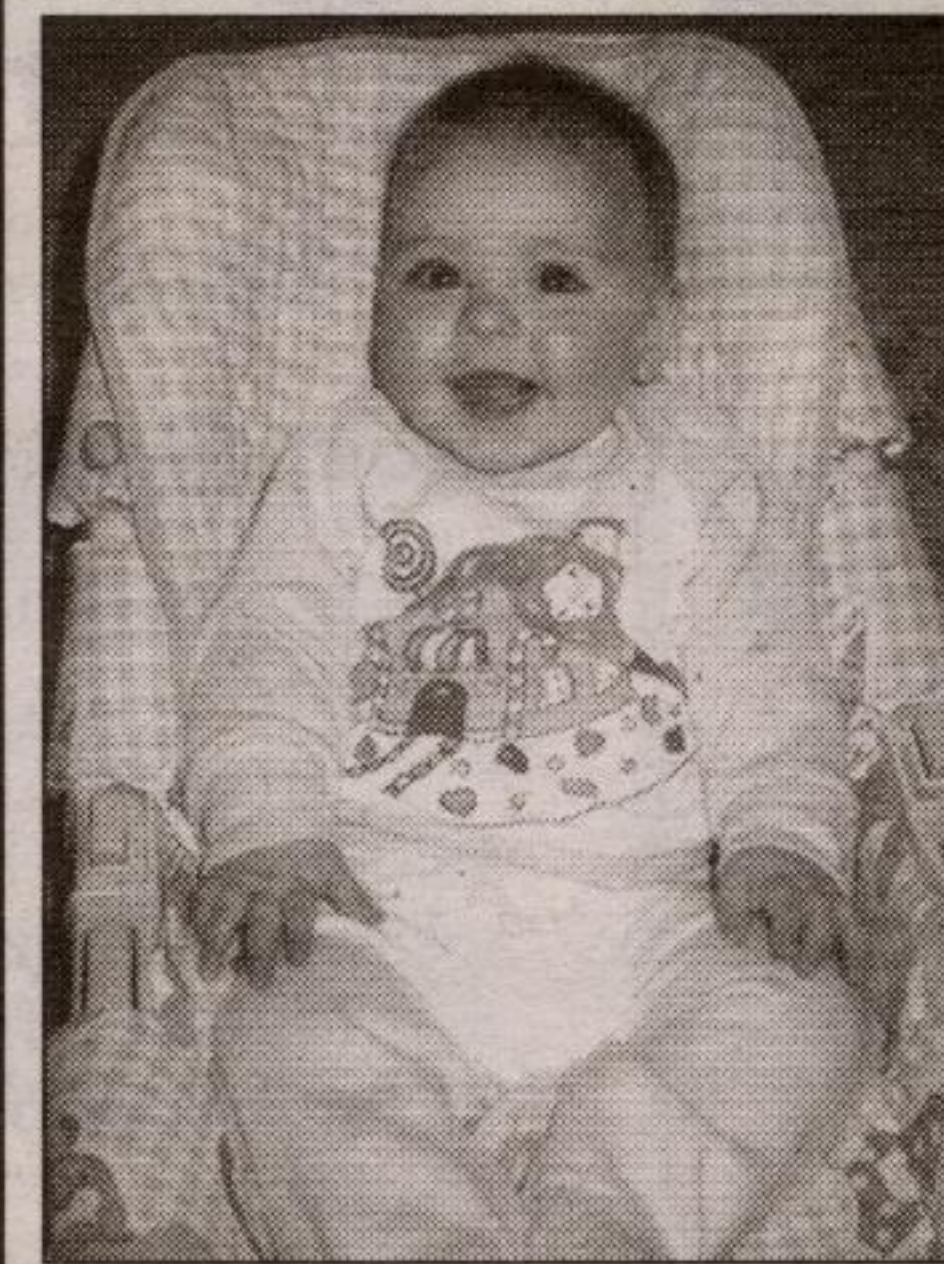
Marshall, who said he's received thousands of inquiries about the lady beetles, has also received reports they are biting people.

"It's abnormal for them to be biting," he said. "They're crowded and starving."

He said if you want to get rid of the beetles a vacuum cleaner will do the job.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

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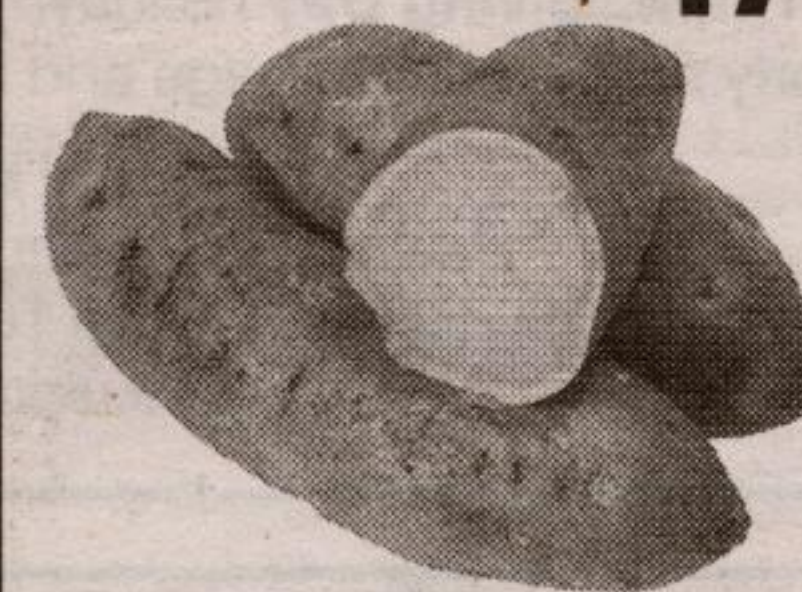
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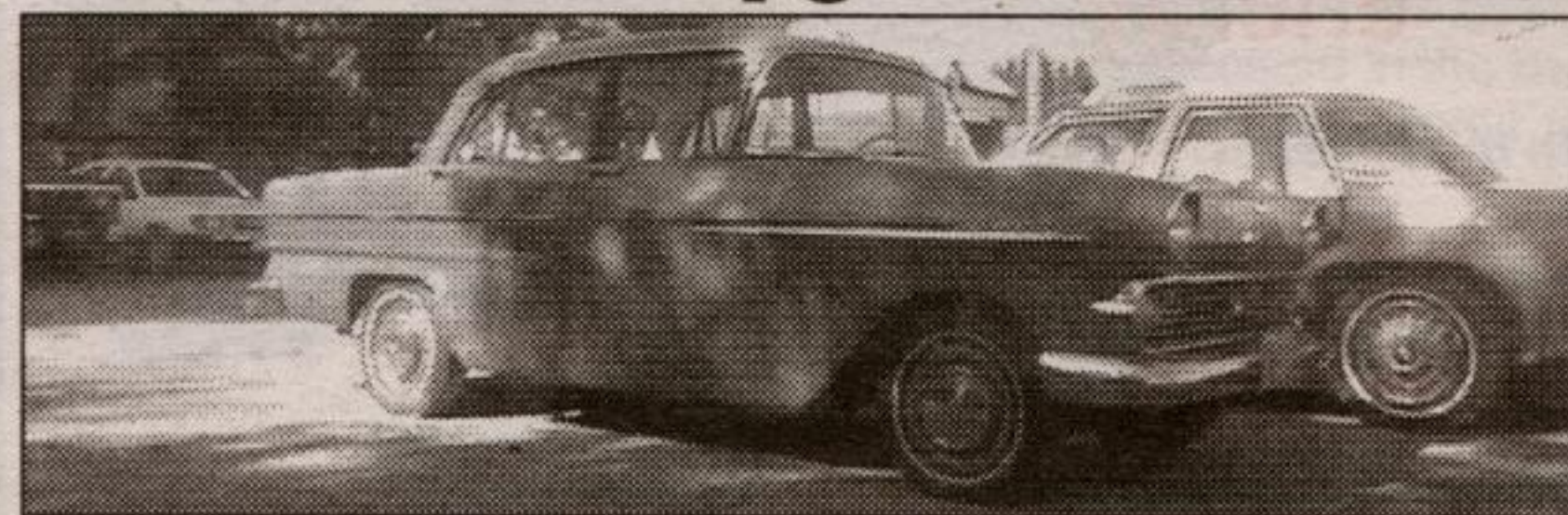
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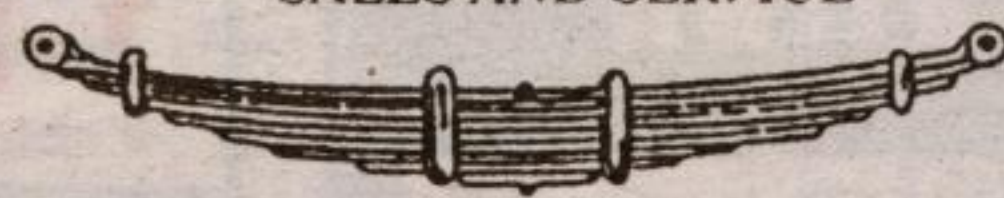
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