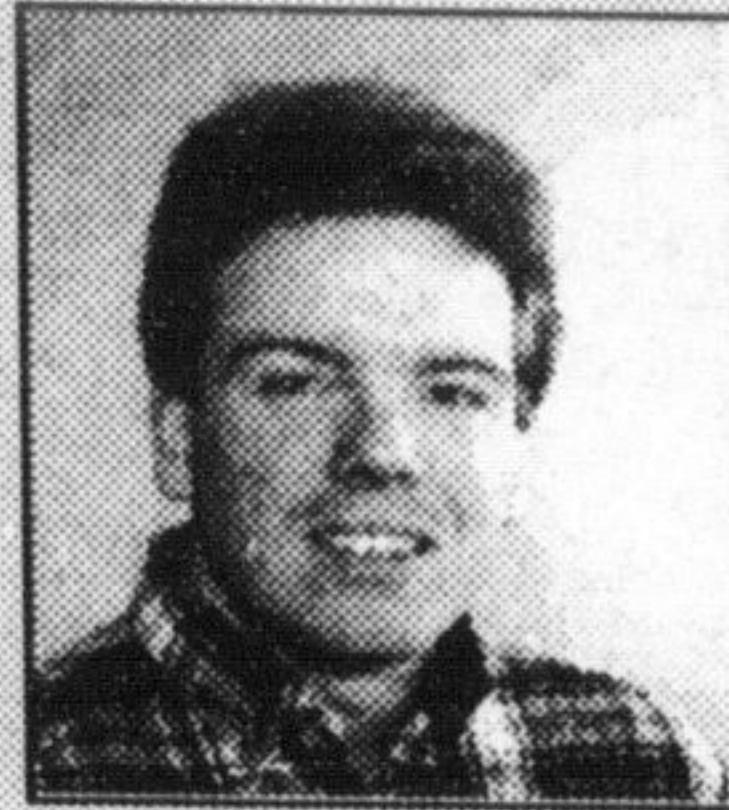


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Brian Penman

# Penman praises Dofasco for a \$1 million donation

By BRAD REAUME  
*The Champion*

According to Brian Penman, an important partnership has been established between environmental conservation and business.

Hamilton steelmaker Dofasco will donate \$1 million to Conservation Ontario, spread over four years.

Mr. Penman was recently elected vice-chair of Conservation Ontario, an umbrella organization for 38 conservation authori-

ties across the province.

He is currently chair of the Halton Region Conservation Authority and a Milton town councillor.

While no plans have been forwarded for use of the funds Mr. Penman was pleased with the donation and the credibility it provides when lobbying for other corporate donations.

"We search through annual reports for companies who make commitments to help the environment," he said. "Then we ask them to put their money where their mouth is."

The Hamilton steelmaker will have a large say in how their donation is spent. Mr. Penman said there are dozens of places it would be useful, including particular projects in Ontario's 38 conservation authorities and educational opportunities.

He has been lobbying universities and colleges to include environmental issues as part of their business courses. However, the Dofasco donation goes far beyond simple recognition of those concerns, he said.

"The donation by Dofasco is an anchor, it shows that a large corporation cares about the environment and paves the way for other companies to donate money to conservation," he said.

Meanwhile Conservation Ontario is intent on demystifying the work of conservation authorities across Ontario.

Many problems stem from public ignorance of conservation authorities, Mr. Penman said. He provided an example of someone wanting to improve a piece of property by filling in a swamp.

That person does not understand the area could be protected because it is the headwaters of a river or creek and provides water regeneration, wetland habitat and other environmental advantages.

In addition, he said he will likely travel to northern Ontario to demonstrate to those conservation authorities that their membership in Conservation Ontario is important.

"There are different concerns and relationships in northern Ontario. Some of the authorities are huge because they are watershed based and can include 20-30 communities.

"Conservation Ontario is spearheading an evolution of conservation authorities," said Mr. Penman, who added the small administrative organization runs a major annual conference at the University of Guelph.

One of the ways the umbrella organization can help is by coordinating staff sharing between authorities. Individual authorities may not have the resources necessary to hire a hydrogeologist but by joining together could benefit by sharing one.

In addition, Conservation Ontario can help Greater Toronto Area (GTA) authorities present a united front to the provincial government when pressures of development and the need for green space clash.

"We are not a bunch of tree huggers, anything but," Mr. Penman said. "With more than 2 million additional people expected in the GTA by about 2017 we have to find a way to manage green space, water and development and make it all sustainable."

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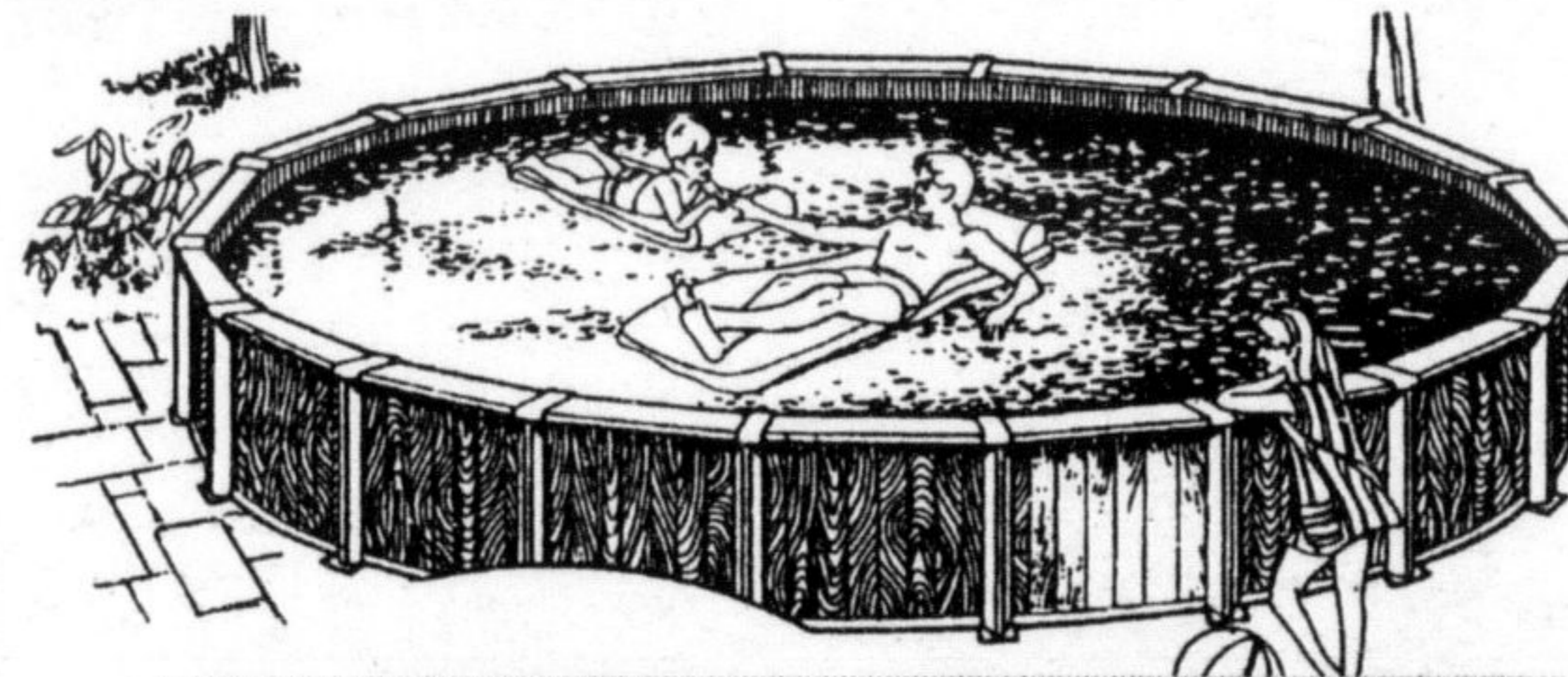
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