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THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Off the couch and on the treadmill, potato boy

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

There are those who're relatively inactive, those who're completely inactive and those who're downright lazy.

Then there's me.

Yes, your humble sports reporter is so much of a couch potato that he should be mashed up and covered with gravy.

These days just the thought of walking to the corner store — where mouthwatering junk food cries out like an irresistible siren — is enough to tire me out.

Not that there's no motivation all around me to start exercising again.

Just about every one of my old schoolmates seems to have maintained a high level of fitness while the few who didn't enjoy particularly good health back then have pushed themselves into better condition.

And if there's one thing that's truly pathetic in a small town, it's a guy who writes about athletes who's the furthest thing from one.

I'm not sure I'd be mistaken for even a bowler these days much less one of the hockey, baseball and football players regularly profiled in my sports section.

A public vow

These two factors would surely be enough to inspire even the least ambitious, but for Steve "Slug Man" LeBlanc a stronger cure is required.

And what may that be, you ask?

How about pronouncing to Milton as a whole — or at least those who read *The Champion* — that as of this moment my couch nesting, junk food-gorging days of being barely mobile are over.

And what better way to ensure all of you know if I've followed through on this resolution than joining newly opened GoodLife Fitness — a popular spot among just about everyone I come into contact with in local sports circles, many of whom would be only too happy to ridicule me for going back on my word.

I know a couple of my brother's friends who certainly would.

While starting an exercise program still seems like a weighty task (no pun intended), an initial visit to the local health club has helped curb some of my gravest reservations.

First and foremost on the list was concern over not obtaining an effective workout — something that's plagued me during past attempts at getting into shape.

Fortunately, GoodLife Fitness trainers are only too happy to map out specific programs for beginners or novices. In fact, they heavily encourage it as a way to maximize their customer retention rate.

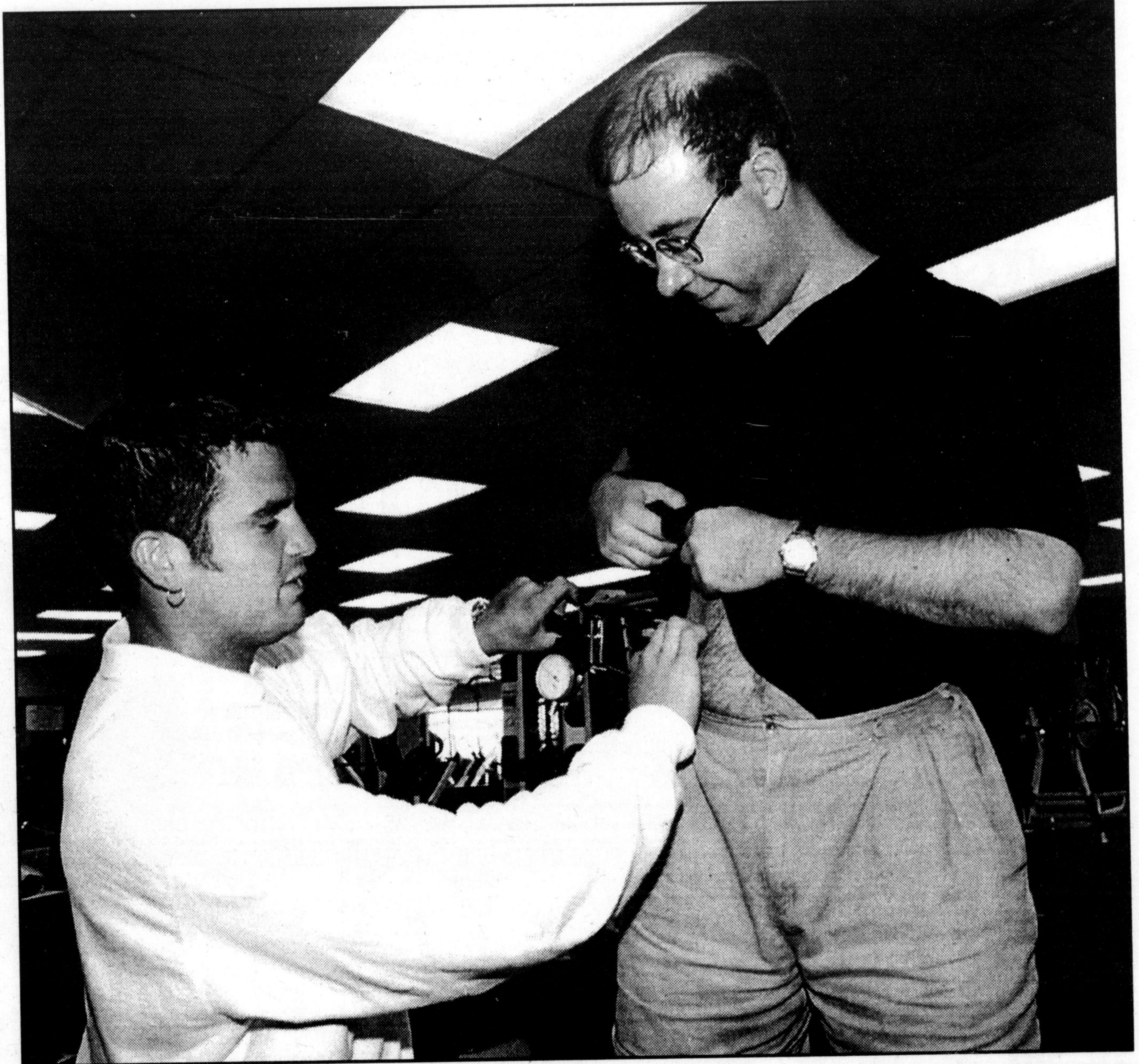
Results can be quick

Bridget, who handled my fitness assessment, explained how by combining six specific pieces of strength training equipment and just 12 minutes of cardiovascular exercise three times a week I'd lose half an inch off my midsection (a particularly unflattering area these days) and significantly increase my energy level within two months.

This also helped kill my preconception that it would take ages and ages for any type of workout to produce results.

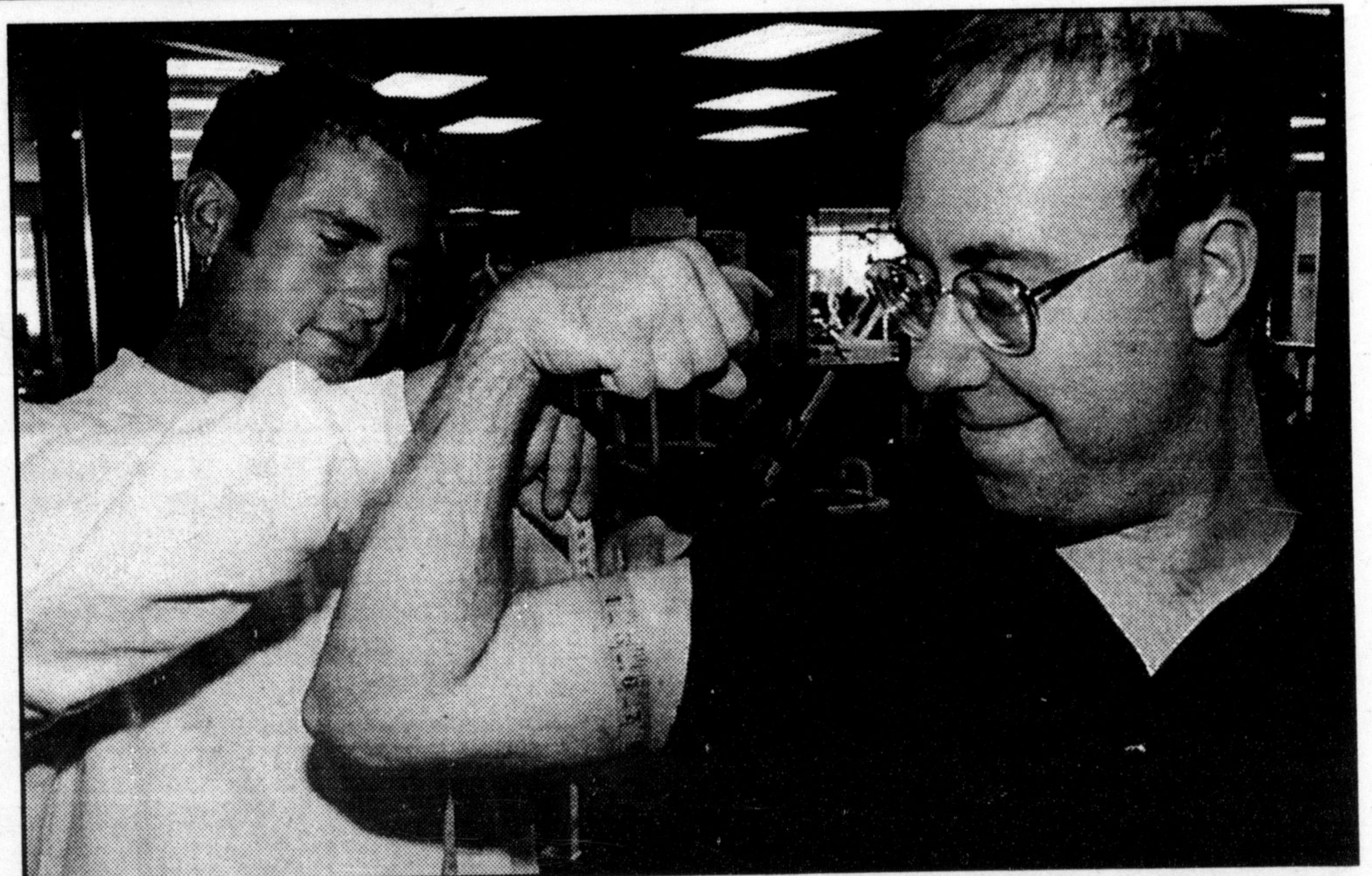
The fact that Bridget made no move to call the paramedics when she took my heart rate and blood pressure filled me with optimism as well.

• see PLUNGE on page 18




Determined to shed those unsightly pounds, Champion sports reporter Steve LeBlanc (above and right) has begun exercising at GoodLife Fitness under the watchful eye of expert trainers like Dan Taaffe. Having gone public with the move, Steve knows he better tough it out, unless he wants to be subjected to merciless cross-examination from the jocks he interviews.

Photos by GRAHAM PAINE



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