

Lifestyles

Local area virtual haven for outdoor enthusiasts

Conservation Halton offers spots ideal for both hiking and biking

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Spring is in the air — and outdoor enthusiasts couldn't be happier.

Especially Miltonians — or at least those that know about the vast array of nearby destinations perfect for recreational excursions.

For those that don't — and are hoping to shake off the inactive rust of a lengthy winter — the outlying area boasts several spots ideal for hiking and biking.

Something for everyone

Under Conservation Halton's umbrella, these parks offer something for everyone — whether it be a fitness junkie looking for a labour-intensive workout or a family just hoping to take a leisurely stroll through scenic surroundings.

"We've got some wide wheelchair accessible trails at Mountsberg, while some trails at Rattlesnake Point and Crawford Lake can take up to a couple of hours and are great for the more advanced hiker," said Susan O'Neil, marketing coordinator for Conservation Halton.

"We're well known for our hiking, no matter what the difficulty level."

Stimulating experience

And while it's true a brisk walk anywhere offers significant physical benefits, a trip through a picturesque conservation area can stimulate a person's senses as well as their muscles.

Said Ms O'Neil, "At Mount Nemo for example, there's some great look-outs of the escarpment while at Hilton Falls you've got a perfect relaxing point at the falls."

Meanwhile, Conservation Halton has just as many opportunities for those looking to pedal their way into spring.

Hilton Falls Conservation Area is geared towards the beginner cyclist while more advanced trails can be found at Kelso and Mountsberg conservation areas.

The nearby parks not only offer recreational variety, but value as well. Conservation Halton has season passes for \$45 a person or \$75 a family that provide access to every park.

"That's about a quarter of the price of a gym membership," said Ms O'Neil.

"We've also got value packs for \$30 that include four one-day passes so people can see what they like before committing to a season pass."

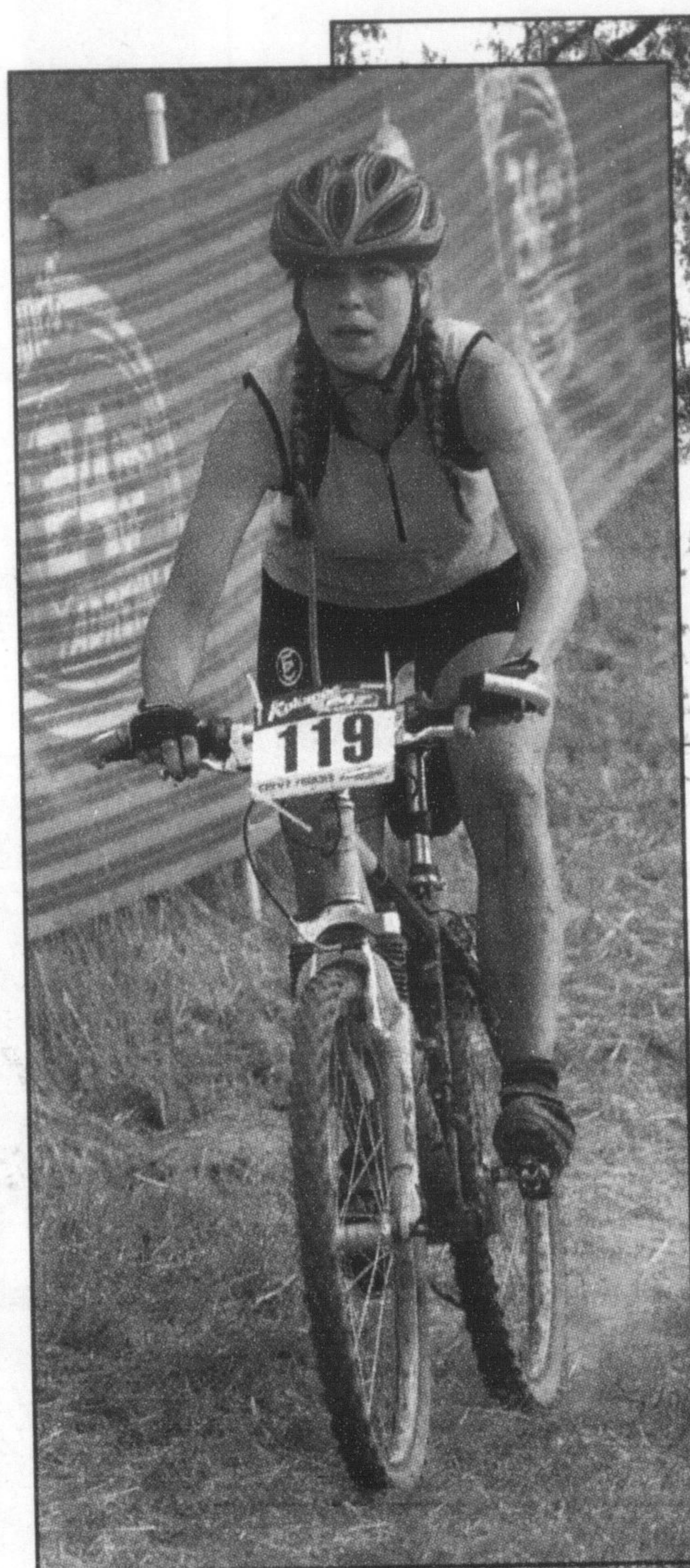
Rock climbing at Rattlesnake Point

Conservation Halton even offers rock climbing at Rattlesnake Point Conservation Area and when the weather gets a little warmer will have swimming and sailing opportunities available at Kelso Conservation Area.

For the animal lover in the family, Mountsberg Conservation Area offers the chance to see plenty of birds of prey plus bigger creatures like bison and elk — not to mention a number group excursions like its upcoming frog watcher's hike.

Said Ms O'Neil, "There's so many things available all within about 15 minutes (of downtown Milton). There really is something for everyone."

To find out more about specific events at any of the local sites, visit the Conservation Halton's website at www.conservationhalton.on.ca.



A young family takes in the picturesque surroundings during a stroll through Rattlesnake Point while (inset) a biker makes her way down a hill at Kelso. These and other nearby conservation sites offer great recreational opportunities throughout the spring and summer.

Photos by
GRAHAM PAINE



I won't be tip-toeing through the tulips anytime soon

My big toe hurts. My big toe hurts a lot. My big toe hurts all the time, and my big toe has been hurting for almost a month.

It all started with a rather innocent exhibition of strength and skill. At certain hockey arenas, I can hold onto the railing and stretch straight out so that my feet are flat against the wall off the ground. It's pretty impressive, if I do say so myself.

Usually, I only do it to impress the kids, because they're not big enough to reach the wall, and because that's all I can usually impress. But this particular time, I was showing the adults my great skill as we waited for the teams to return after intermission.

Something wasn't right — the wall was either wet or uneven, because I came crashing down on my foot, which of course is headed up by the big toe. After everybody finished laughing, somebody asked me if I was okay. I wasn't, but I wasn't letting on for a second.

Later that night, it hurt so badly I couldn't sleep. The same the next day. I didn't go to the hospital, for a number of reasons.

Actually, for a lot of reasons. The first was that it hurt too much, and if somebody there touched it, it would hurt even more. That's the reason I didn't put ice on it, as well. I don't put ice on anything, because I don't like the way it feels, usually worse than the pain itself. Another rea-



with **MURRAY TOWNSEND**

On the loose

son was that I've hurt my toe in the past and know there's not much they can do with it.

Thirdly, when I pulled off my sock I could see that I had not cut the nail on that particular toe

for much too long. It's kind of like when your mother tells you to make sure you have on clean underwear in case you get in an accident. Well, I hadn't cut my toenail and I couldn't do it then because it hurt too much.

Finally, the last reason I didn't go was because my experience is that pain always goes away eventually. Unless something is broken, but even if a toe is broken they don't put a cast on it.

Sitting around in the emergency waiting room for them to tell me something I already knew didn't make a lot of sense.

True to my philosophy, within a few days I could put on my shoe in less than 10 minutes,

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