

Seed program is launched by teachers' union

Young minds are sprouting thanks to the Seeds of Learning campaign launched recently by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO).

This province-wide program will distribute bean seeds to 700,000 Ontario elementary students. The seeds come with corresponding grade-specific learning materials which support the existing provincial curriculum.

For instance, kindergarten students will use the germination and growth of their beans to learn measurement terms (tall/short, empty/full).

Grade 5 students will learn how the natural environment shaped the cultures of early civilizations.

"The way we see it, our job is to try to bring learning to life for our students," said Kathy Clarke, president of the Halton ETFO local. "We want children to share our love for learning and discovery."

She said a key part of the initiative is a report teachers may hand out to students.

Children can complete it and bring it home for their parents to see, or they can fill it out with their parents' help.

The program is funded by ETFO union dues. It's part of a three-year public relations campaign to "create a positive image around teachers and show the importance of well-funded public education," according to Halton ETFO vice-president Linda Middaugh.

The campaign began last summer and will continue this year with a lecture series.

Crawford Lake to celebrate Mother Earth Day Sunday

Conservation Halton will celebrate Mother Earth Day at Crawford Lake Conservation Area Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Earth Day festivities will include two special guest presenters. Chief Top Leaf (Albert McArdle) of the Mohawk Nation will be encouraging visitors to look, listen and learn about Mother Earth through traditional legends, dance and props.

The Bruce Trail Association will present a special multi-media presentation about the beautiful natural spaces in southern Ontario at 2 p.m.

Professor T. Vulture, the Conservation Halton mascot, will tour Crawford Lake throughout the day. Kids of all ages might spot Professor T. Vulture as they make a free button to take home, sip some nature's tea or see if they won a prize in the free raffle.

While exploring the reconstructed Iroquoian village, visitors can join in some storytelling and hear creation legends from North America's first peoples and from around the world.

They can then join staff for the guided 'Earth Walk' through the woodlands to Crawford Lake where participants can help make space for native species by harvesting some periwinkle for their gardens. Pre-register for the hike upon arrival at Crawford Lake as space is limited.

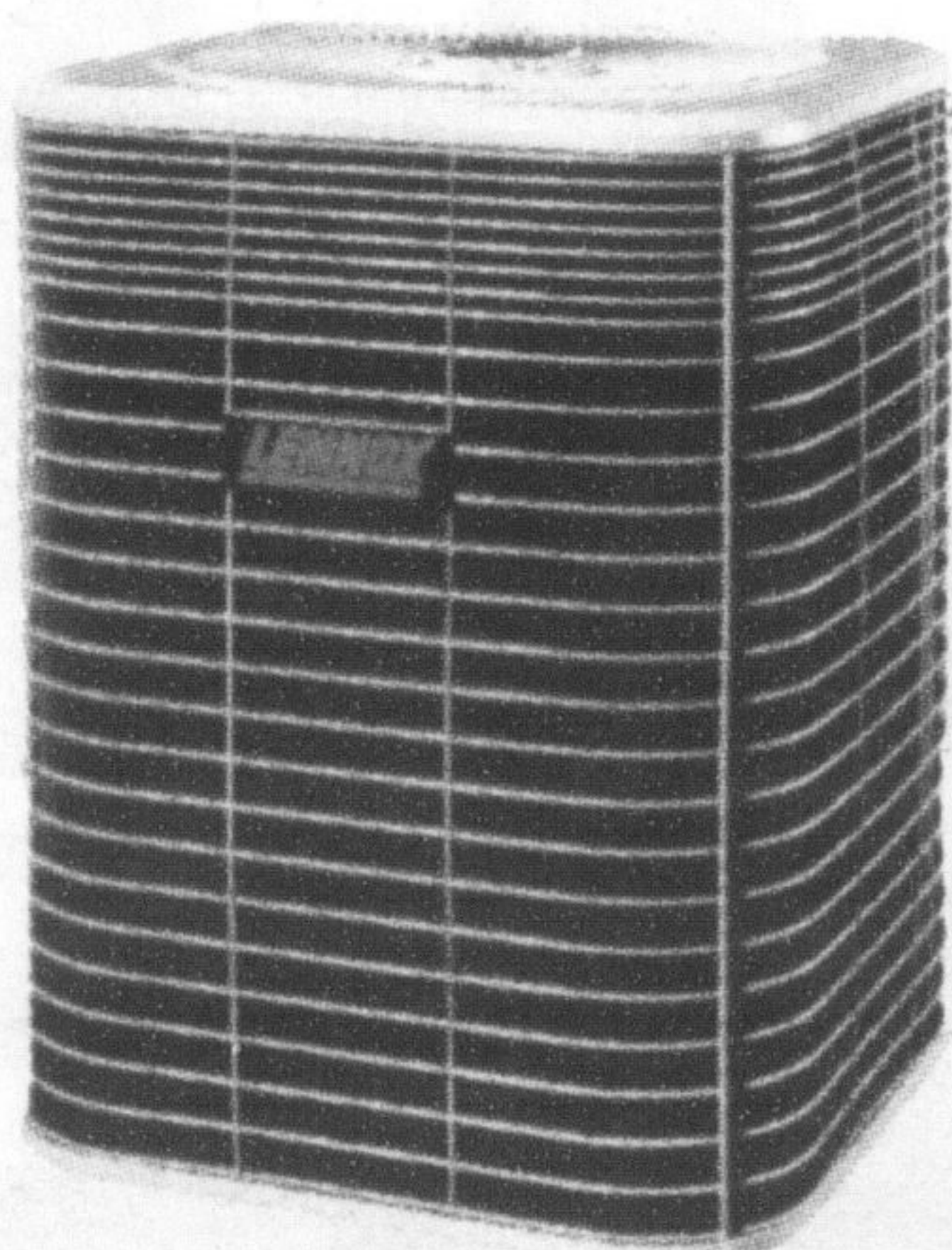
Participants can visit the Conservation Centre and see the displays at the newly-expanded gift shop. By purchasing a snack or souvenir visitors will be supporting the conservation as all funds are reinvested in Crawford Lake. Visitors can also show their love for Mother Earth by packing snacks and lunches from home in reusable containers.

Admission costs \$5 and is free for children aged 4 years of age and under. Crawford Lake is located on the corner of Steeles Avenue at Guelph Line.

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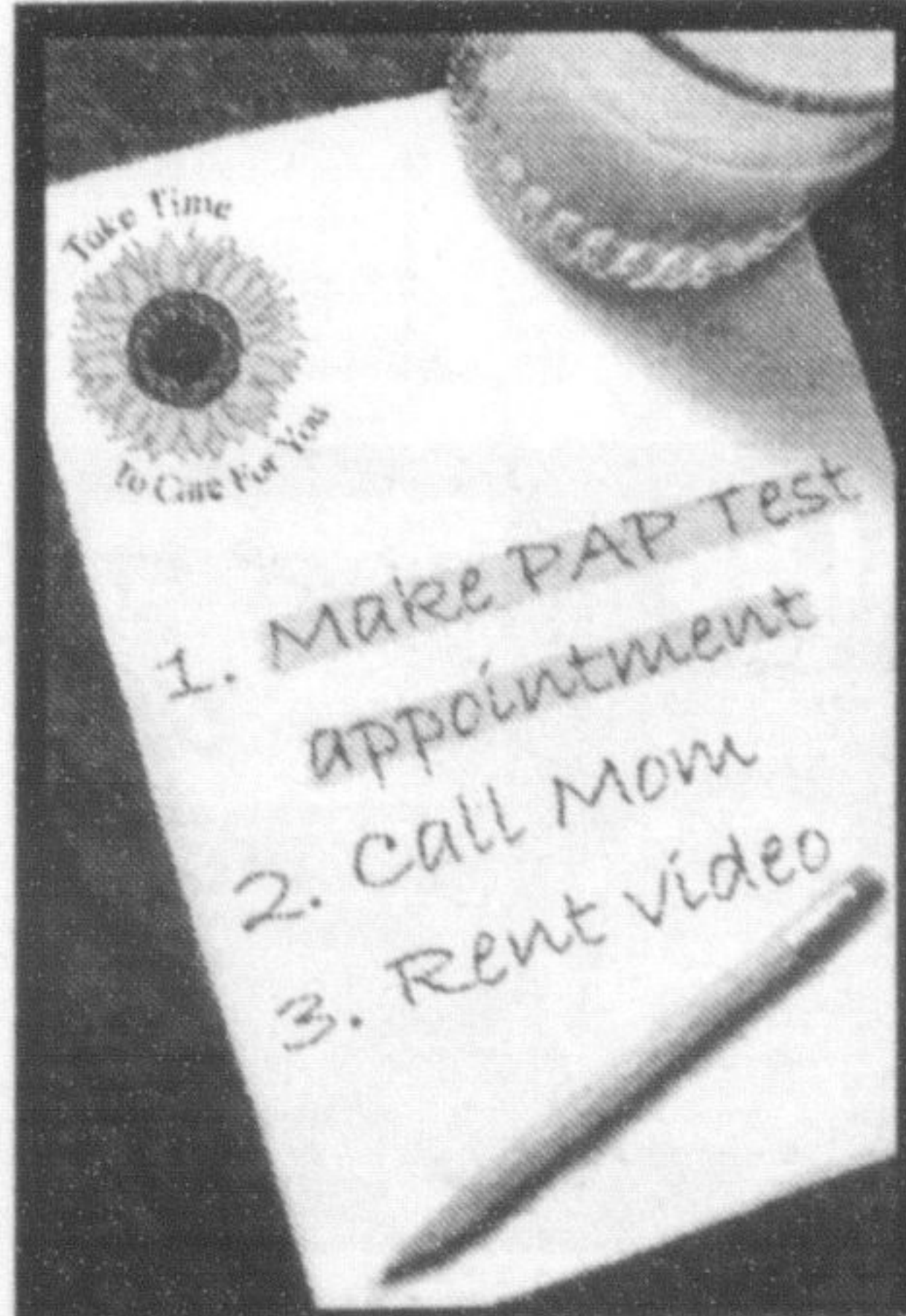
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