

Lifestyles

✓ Fitness program leads to new lifestyle for runner



Local woman gears up for grueling Ironman competition next summer

By **FANNIE SUNSHINE**
The Champion

Four years ago, Julie Shelton couldn't run a full lap around a track.

Now the 26-year-old is gearing up for the Ironman Canada competition next summer in Penticton, B.C.

"I saw the Ironman on TV when I was 15 or 16 and it looked so cool."

But she didn't start running until she was 22, she recalled, due to ailing knee problems.

"I was in terrible pain all the time and I thought I should be a lot more active," Ms Shelton said, adding she suffers from patella femoral syndrome and iliotibial syndrome, which affect the tissue surrounding the knee. "So I started an exercise program to strengthen my knees."

The program consisted of walking on the treadmill, followed by running.

"It was a slow process but I kept going until I was hooked (on working out). I also felt better."

Since then, Ms Shelton has joined the Burlington Swim Club and the Milton Runners, she continued, adding she's participated in several triathlons throughout Ontario.

"My first triathlon was in Guelph in 1999 and I placed sixth in my age group. I was really impressed. For me it's never been about placing. I do this because I want to finish the race in the time I set for myself."

Ms Shelton said she runs, swims and

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JULIE SHELTON

bikes six days a week for 15 to 20 hours per week. "I still have my knee pain but now I'm a super fit athlete. Training has also helped my asthma."

She's currently training for a marathon at the end of October in Niagara Falls, she added. "It's a huge lifestyle change. Now when I get together with friends we go for a run or swim."

Ms Shelton said she won't start training for the Ironman — which consists of a 3.8 km swim, a 180 km bike ride and a 42.2 km run — until after the new year.

The competition will also serve as a fundraiser for the Canadian Diabetes Association.

"When I found out about the funds going toward diabetes research, it was an even greater reason to compete," she said, adding her grandmother passed away due to complications from diabetes.

Ms Shelton is currently in the process of raising \$10,000 to be eligible to compete in the Ironman.

"You can buy a spot but they go so quickly. So I have to raise \$10,000 or I don't get to go."

To support Ms Shelton in her Ironman quest, donations in her name can be made by calling 1-800-BANTING, ext. 425, or e-mailing to jcmboyer@hotmail.com. Donations of \$15 or more are eligible for a tax receipt.

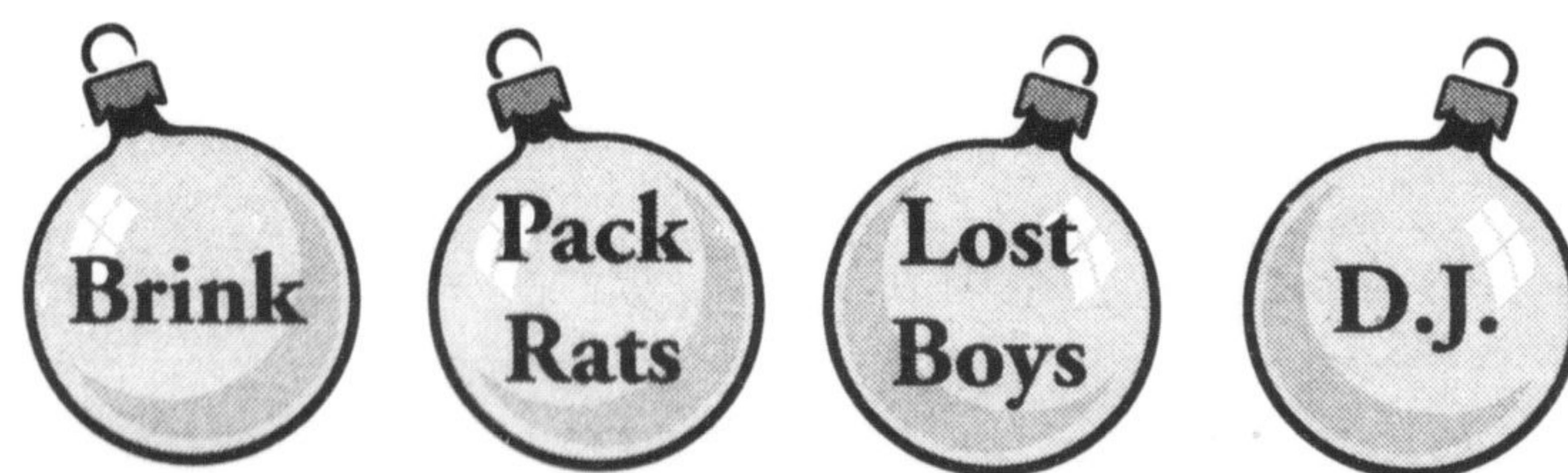
Milton newcomer Julie Shelton has certainly made impressive strides in her fitness over the past few years. She's currently training for an Ironman competition in BC next summer and hopes to raise \$10,000 for diabetes in the process.

Photos by **GRAHAM PAINE**

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