

Book author hopes to raise funds for mental health ward

By STEPHANIE THIESSEN
The Champion

There's a lot more to the book Gina Sonsogno will be selling next week at Milton Mall than initially meets the eye.

The book — entitled 'My Child is Learning 2001 Ways' — is designed to help parents teach their pre-school children to read and write. Part theory, part patterns and samples, it was written by Ms Sonsogno about 25 years ago when her son, Orlando, was young and she was teaching him to read and write.

She'll be selling the book — which she self-published with the help of local business Monsoon Books — Sunday at 2 p.m. in front of Shoppers Drug Mart.

The 390-page book — which costs \$30 — is what Ms Sonsogno calls an individualized learning program for young children, those with learning disabilities, developmentally-challenged kids and people new to Canada learning English. It's simple and easy to follow.

On the front cover is a photo of a young Orlando holding his baby sister, Maria.

But what the reader can't initially see are the life struggles Ms Sonsogno endured between the writing of the book and its publishing just a few weeks ago.

Five years ago today, Orlando committed suicide at the age of 23. He suffered from clinical depression. It was that tragedy that made Ms Sonsogno realize, a quarter of a century later, that she needed to get that book published — for herself, for her son's memory, for people dealing with depression and for parents and kids everywhere.

Shortly after Orlando's death, his mother established a trust fund in Orlando's name in efforts to raise money for a psychiatric ward at Milton District Hospital. But the fund has been languishing. To date, it has \$1,235 in it.

Ms Sonsogno will be donating a portion of the sales from each book to the Orlando Sonsogno Trust Fund.

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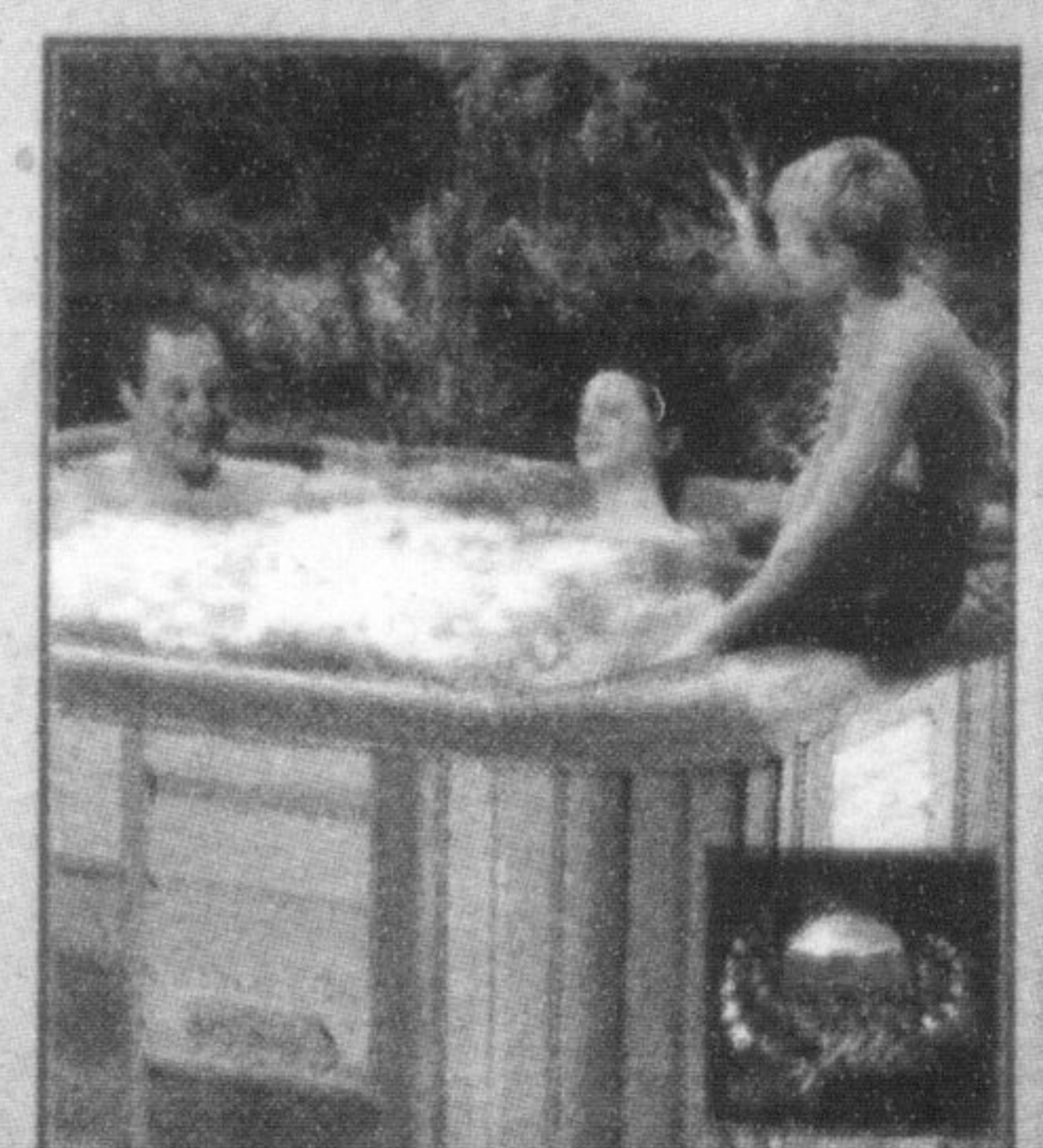
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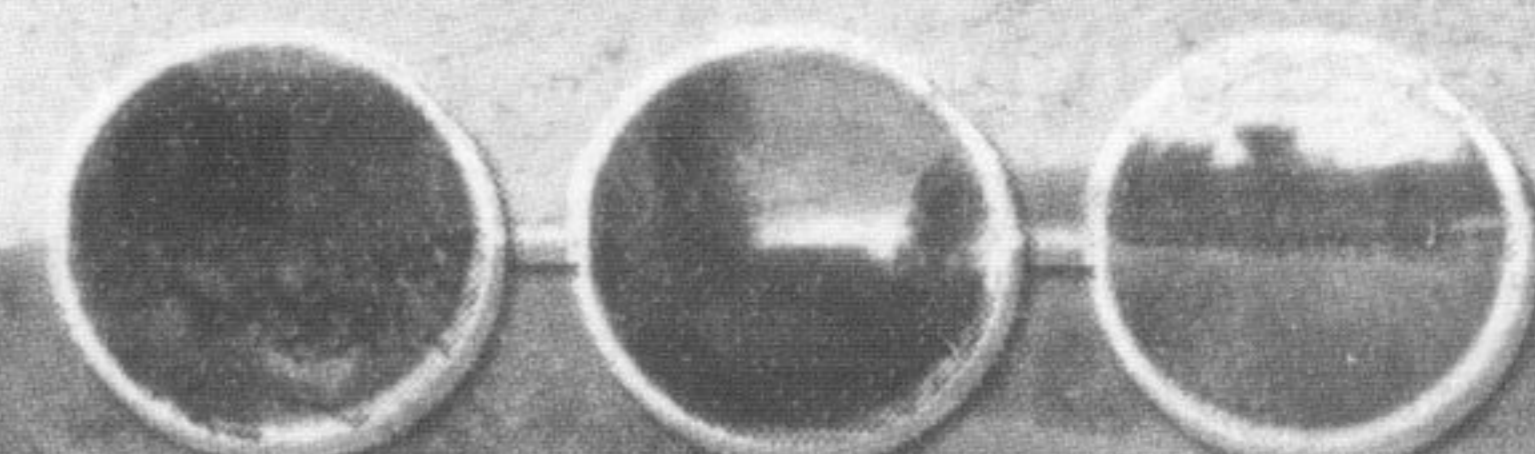
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