

# Making a splash in a unique twist on hockey

*Couple set to compete at world underwater hockey championships*

By Herb Garbutt  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

When John Harland first told his wife about the sport he had recently rediscovered, it wasn't an overwhelming response.

"I thought it was ridiculous," said Bonny Chan. "I couldn't believe something like this existed."

Five years later, Chan has warmed up to the game of underwater hockey — so much so that she will join Harland at the world championships next week in Sheffield, England.

"It took a long time to grow on me," said Chan. "I had tried snorkeling before but I had glasses so I couldn't get the mask to fit properly and I couldn't see much."

Underwater hockey is played in a pool with six players per side, wearing snorkel masks and fins. Players use short sticks to move a weighted puck along the bottom of the pool, and like hockey, try to score by shooting it into the opposition's net. Unlike hockey, you have to do it while holding your breath.

Harland said although some people can hold their breath for up to six minutes under water, players typically spend eight to 10 seconds under the water before coming up for air but may stay down as long as 25 seconds if they are involved in the play.

"It's a balance, holding your breath and



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

**NOT YOUR TYPICAL HOCKEY GEAR:** Bonny Chan and husband John Harland show the equipment they use to compete in underwater hockey.

playing aggressively but conserving air. You learn when to relax on the bottom."

The turning point for Chan came when she got her own, properly-fitted equipment and contact lenses.

"Once you can see and breathe you can start focusing on the subtleties of the game instead of the fear of drowning."

Harland initially played underwater hockey as a teenager when he was growing up in Kenora. Now 30, he was reintroduced to the game six years ago while living in Seattle.

"I had been a competitive swimmer and I wanted to get back into the pool, but just something recreational," he said. "Then it

turned into a competitive thing."

Harland says when he travels for work, he can always find a game with a local group no matter what city he's in.

Harland is the only player from Ontario on the 12-member men's national team. Over the past two years, team members have met to play, often just splitting into two groups and playing against one another. However, they recently had a chance to play the U.S. and the U.S. masters' team in San Jose and won the tournament.

Harland said Australia and the defending champion New Zealand will provide the stiffest competition while France and England will also be contenders in the 16-team tournament.

This will mark Harland's second trip to the worlds but his first for Canada. He played for the U.S. at the 2004 worlds in New Zealand, shortly before moving to Milton.

The Milton Community Fund is providing funding for the couple to help them make the trip to England to represent Canada.

Chan, 33, will play for the Canadian women's masters (32-and-over) team. Though she said she wasn't very athletic when she started playing underwater hockey, Chan has since competed in a triathlon.

And she also enjoys the social aspect of the game.

"It's such a small community in North America. You get to know all the players," she said. "You show up for a practice in a new town and they're thrilled to have someone new there."




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## Milton Minor Baseball Association

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• MAJOR MOSQUITO – 1996,	• MAJOR BANTAM – 1992,
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**All Applicants Must Be (Or Be Willing To Become)  
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(Please note if you e-mail them that you must receive a  
response acknowledging their receipt - DO NOT ASSUME WE RECEIVED THEM).

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**Milton Minor Baseball would also like to invite all  
current players and any new players who attend tryouts  
to pre-register for next season at this season's prices.**

**All current house league players can pre-register on  
SATURDAY AUGUST 12, 2006 AT ROTARY PARK.**

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### THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

As the President of Milton Minor Baseball, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteer coaches and board members for their hard work this season. I know this season has not been without its hiccups, but I believe all players should have the opportunity to play and enjoy the game.

I would like at this time to invite ALL parents to help us make next season even better.

We will be having our Annual General Meeting on Saturday, October 7, 2006 at the Boyne Community Centre.

This meeting is an opportunity for ALL parents to get involved with the running of this organization.

There were only nine full time board members this year and as a result each was asked to perform several different jobs and tasks to make this season happen.

I can assure you they all did a great job.

The fact is, however, that we need more than nine board members to make a season the success it should be.

I would love to see parents from the younger age groups step forward. We had 10 teams between our 2 youngest divisions this season and that is more than the 5 older age groups combined. These players are the base from which this association can and will grow.

We need to have people step up and help to make that happen. I sincerely hope to see you all at the AGM.

Thanks

Richard Creamer  
President, Milton Minor Baseball



## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday August 14th, 7:30pm – 9pm  
Milton Bible Church Auditorium  
200 Main St. E., Milton

**Non-members are welcome to attend.**

**In addition to the business portion of the meeting,  
we will explain progress of the proposed Milton Arts and Entertainment Centre.**

**Doors open at 6:30 pm  
with musical entertainment and member group display tables.**

**Guest speaker will be Pam Eddenden, Executive Director of Performing Arts Burlington.**  
She will outline planning of the Burlington 600 seat theatre,  
as well as PAB's support programs, and their 3-year Trillium grant.

**FOR INFORMATION CALL 905-854-4028 OR 905-854-4226.**

**www.ArtsMilton.com**