

Fire department launches safety campaign to 'Name the Mascot'

By Stephanie Hounsell
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

With the number of fatal fires that take place across Ontario each year, it's clear the importance of working smoke alarms is a message that still isn't getting through.

Barry Kory, fire prevention inspector with the Milton Fire Department, wants to help ensure it's one that's engrained in the mind of every Miltonian, young and old.

And he's using a couple of plush mascots to do it.

Kory is the mastermind behind a campaign to have two mascots join the already existing Sparky the fire safety dog.

One of the mascots is a smoke alarm, while his sidekick is a nine-volt battery.

From now until Friday, Sept. 12, kids, their moms and dads are invited to send in name suggestions for the two new mascots as part of the Milton Fire Department's Name the Mascot campaign.

The winning names — which must relate to the theme of smoke alarm safety — will be selected by a committee and announced at an open house Saturday, Sept. 27 at Central Station, 405 Steeles Ave. E., from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The winner will receive some fire department goodies, plus a tour of the fire station and — the real highlight — a ride in a fire truck.

Ballots, as well as a drop box, can be found at Central Station, as well as at Station No. 2 at 2665 Reid Sideroad in Campbellville and Station No. 3 at 2800 Derry Rd.

They can also be e-mailed to fireservices@milton.ca.

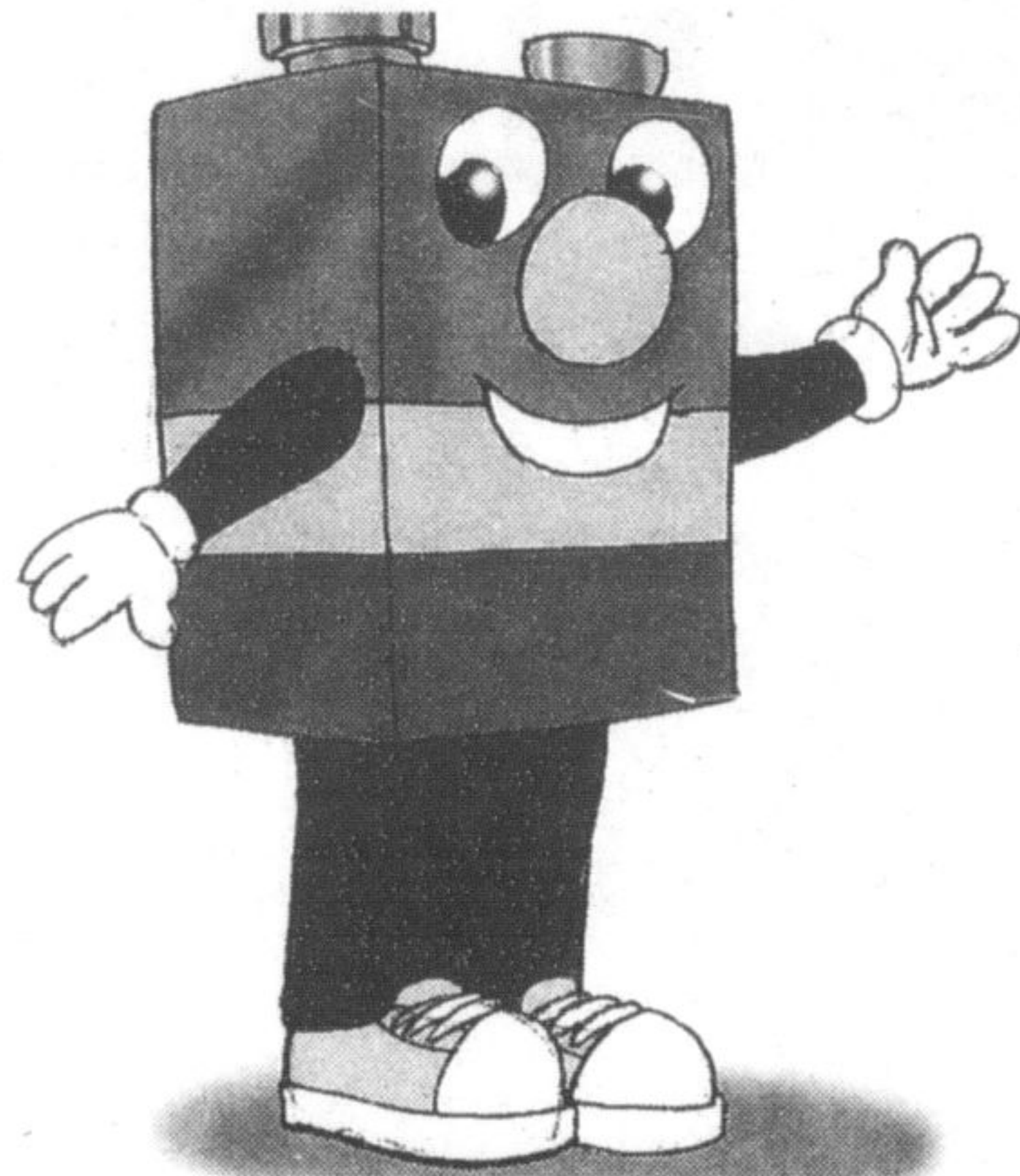
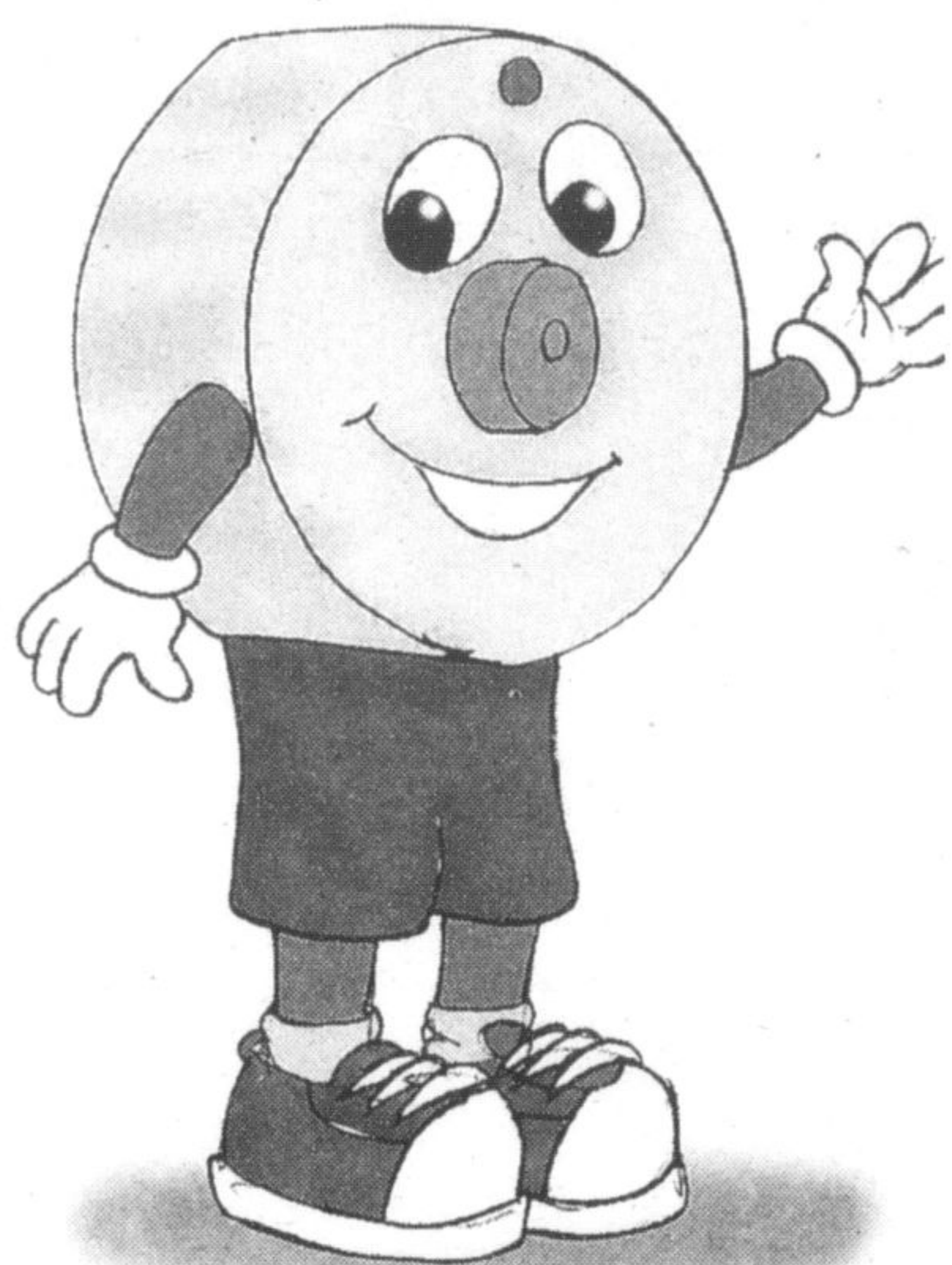
In addition, kids can enter through their schools, where forms will be made available.

The September 27 open house is one of two, and is designed to kick off Fire Prevention Week, which will run from October 5 to 12 across Ontario.

The second open house will take place Saturday, Oct. 4 at Station No. 2 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

A third new mascot — a 10-foot, inflatable firefighter already named Milty the Fire Dude — is also being created, thanks to funding from Roxul.

"Kids are going to go nuts when they see this guy," Kory said.



The fire department looks to the public to name its new fire safety mascots, a smoke alarm (left) and a nine-volt battery.

The Name the Mascot campaign is designed to help families take ownership of the mascots and embrace their message.

Although Sparky is great at promoting general fire safety, Kory thought something more specific was needed.

"I thought this was the perfect way to get the message out on smoke alarm safety itself," he said.

By law, smoke alarms must be

installed on every storey and outside all sleeping areas, he said.

Total costs for the mascot project are estimated at \$15,000, and enough funding from local businesses has already come in for the construction of the smoke alarm character.

More funds still need to be raised before the battery can be made.

Stephanie Hounsell can be reached at sthiesse@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

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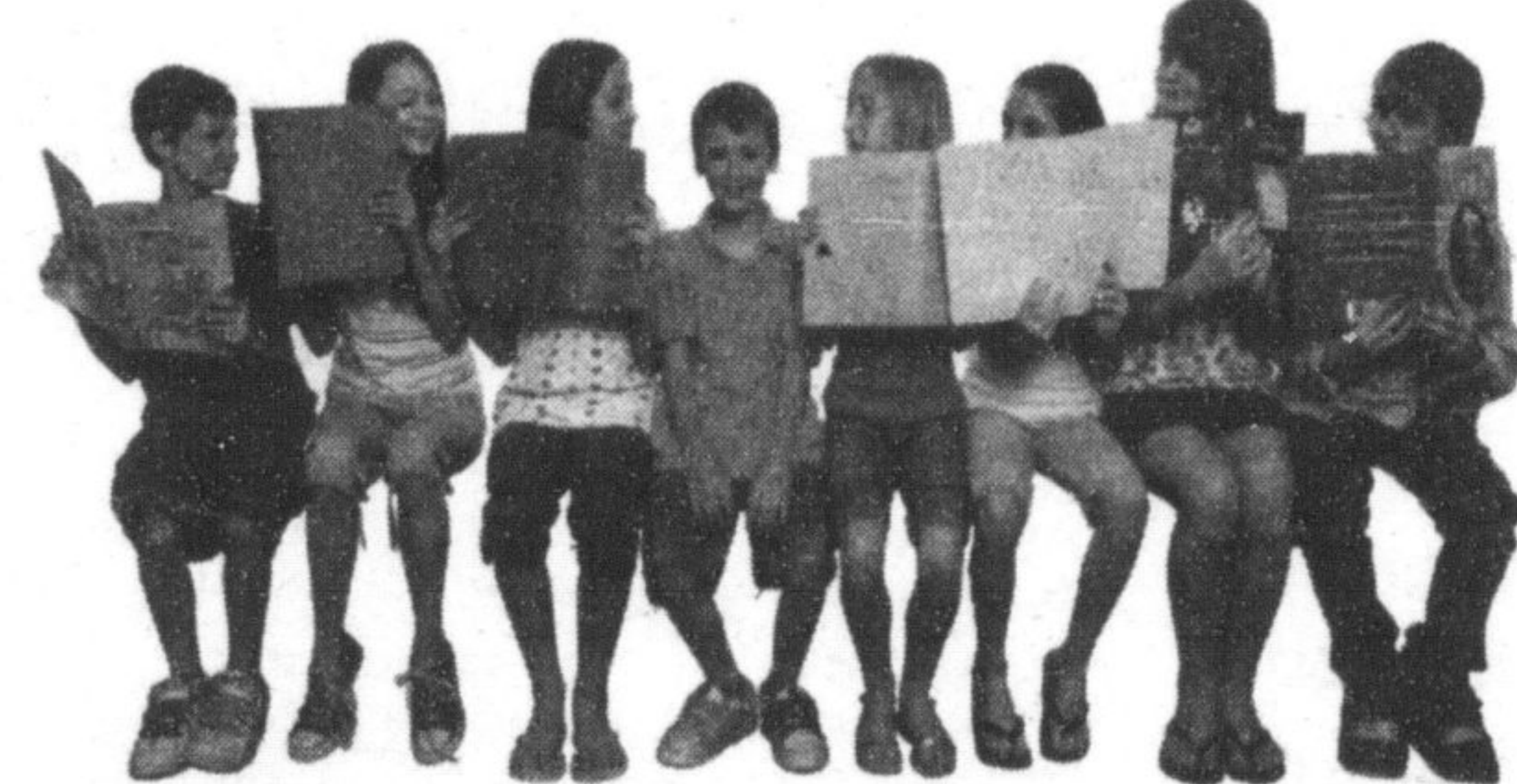
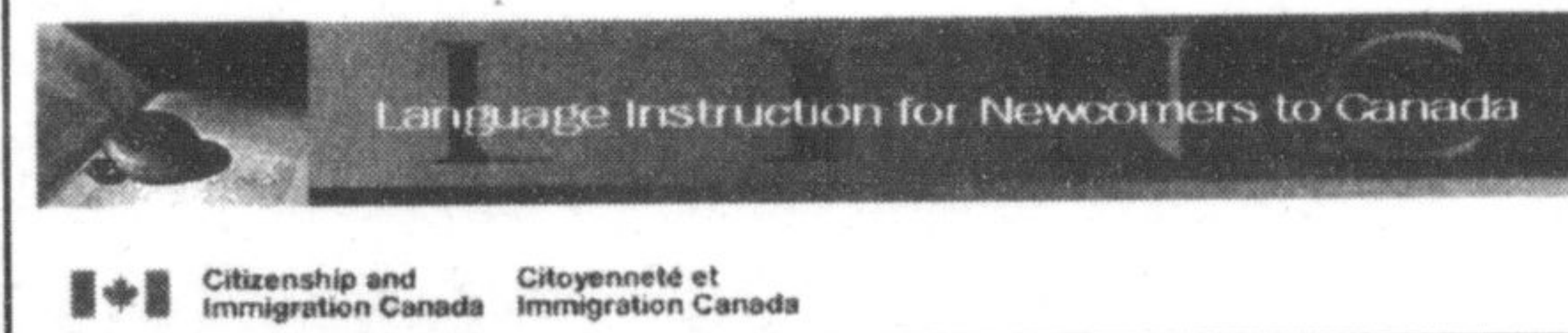
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