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Michelle Huisman (left) and sister Monique (right) enjoy some ice cream while promoting Milton's Neighbourhood Party at Victoria Park on Sunday, June 14. Similar parties will be held across the country and around the world this Sunday as part of Canada 125 celebrations. Milton's version will feature free hotdogs, cake and drinks as well as entertainment for the whole family.

Photo by GRAHAM PARRIE

Town invited to Neighbourhood Party

Senior citizens in Milton are throwing a party this Sunday for the entire town while others around the world join in the celebration as well.

Milton will have its own version of the National Neighbourhood Party, a project of Canada 125, at Victoria Park in front of town hall from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event is being tied in with Seniors Awareness Week in Halton.

The National Neighbourhood Party is a "party with a purpose," according to its originator Joannie Halas. She admits neighbourhood parties aren't new but the one she held last year was unique enough to get the attention of national media.

Through a network of friends across Canada and in other countries, she orchestrated a simultaneous party. Each group was asked to send a postcard to her expressing their sentiments about the country. They were also asked to propose a toast to Canada at 2 p.m. on party day.

Publicity of the event reached Claude Dupras, co-president of Canada 125, who travelled to Winnipeg to convince Ms Halas to promote an even bigger event this year.

She took a leave of absence from her teaching career to plant the seeds of this grassroots national anniversary celebration. Since the end of February she has been travelling the country. Ontario was the seventh province she visited and Milton was one of the hundreds of communities along the way.

"I've spoken to everyone from taxi drivers to people in laundromats," the National Neighbourhood Party person says.

Last year she received 250 post cards. This year she says, "I have no idea how big it will be."

Parties of all sizes are encouraged. Ms Halas says the idea is to "put the neighbour back into neighbourhood."

"A lot of our problems stem from not knowing each other," she says.

She organized her own neighbourhood party last year after her home was broken into. While others decided to pack up and leave the area, Ms Halas decided to get to know her neighbours.

The Neighbourhood Party is "only an idea," she says, and is meant to be adapted to suit individuals. Along with Milton's picnic, Halton will also be the location of a lakeshore festival in Oakville. About 100,000 people are expected to join hands along the lakeshore to link together the communities of Oakville and Burlington during Sunday's festivities.

The neighbourhood party concept has been promoted around the world through Canadian embassies. The 2 p.m. toasts on July 14 will start with Canadians in Australia. In Canada, residents of St. John's Newfoundland will be the first to raise a glass and those on the west coast will be the last of the National Neighbourhood Party participants to take part.



Letter alleges police cover-up

By ROB KELLY
The Champion

The Halton Regional Police Services Board will meet next week to consider its options regarding anonymous charges of a cover-up in an alleged wife assault case involving a police officer about a decade ago.

The charges are outlined in a letter that was distributed at last Wednesday's Halton regional council meeting. The document, signed "a caring and loyal cop", states that senior officers scuttled an investigation into the assault and that files on the matter later disappeared. The assault was alleged to have taken place "sometime between 1981-83."

Subsequent to that, the officer accused of beating his wife has been promoted twice, and now holds the rank of staff sergeant on the Halton force, the letter says.

"The board is looking into its options," said police services board member Karen Thompson. "We're working on this right now. We're in the middle of determining information, gathering information. When we decide what we're going to do, we'll issue a press release."

When the document was passed around just prior to last week's regional council meeting, it obviously caught elected officials by surprise. Not many appeared to know who brought it to the council table, or why.

Oakville councillor Fred Oliver was not only surprised, he was angry.

He said Halton Hills councillor Pam Johnston circulated the letter, five minutes before the meeting started. "I don't know what the purpose is, but I can guess. I suggest each of us turn these into the clerk's office to be shredded." Councillors quickly approved that idea, and the documents were gathered to be destroyed.

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Milton man bound for space

A childhood dream has come true for Milton's Chris Hadfield who is now an astronaut.

A 32-year-old captain in the Royal Canadian Air Force, the pilot has been chosen from among more than 5,000 people to serve in the Canadian Astronaut Program.

The Canadian Space Agency (CSA) announced the captain, who grew up in Milton, as one of four successful applicants in the program Monday. He will eventually become a crew member for the International Space Station Freedom.

When the station becomes operative at the end of the 1990s, one Canadian astronaut will be on board

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NEWSLINES

Girl survives near drowning

A 10-year-old Milton girl pulled unconscious from a pool at the Milton Leisure Centre Thursday afternoon was revived by lifeguards.

The girl, swimming with her classmates on a school trip, failed to emerge above water after jumping off a diving board, Halton police said.

She was spotted underwater by pool staff at about 1:40 p.m. Lifeguards pulled her from the water and began performing CPR.

The lifeguards successfully breathed life back into the girl who was taken by ambulance to Milton District Hospital for observation. She's expected to make a full recovery, said police.

The girl was underwater for about 30 seconds, according to Jennifer Reynolds, the Town's director of leisure services.

She praised pool staff for their "prompt reaction" and "efficiency" in handling the situation.

The cause of the accident is uncertain. The girl has denied the possibility she may have hit her head, said Ms Reynolds.

INSIDE



Gold was struck twice by Milton District High School track teams members at OFSAA. Rob Wands set a hurdle record with his gold medal performance.

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