



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

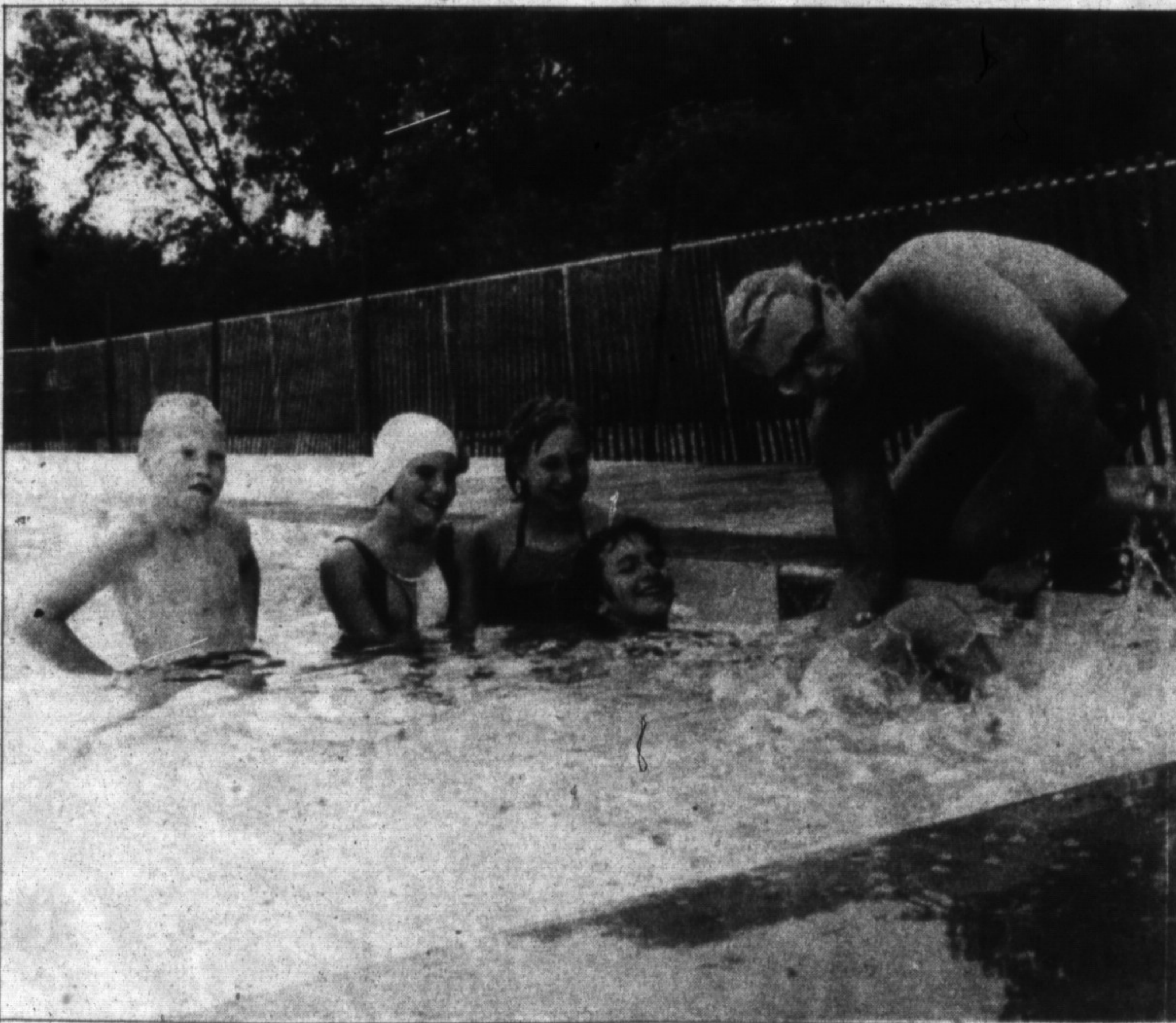
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Looking Back



Swimming lessons at the new community pool in Rotary Park attracted more than 70 students in the first week. On August 15, 1963, Julie Haslam is shown receiving aid from instructor Rick Randell while Peter Ledwith, Joan Clement and Anne Serafini look on.

Somebody's kids

A story elsewhere in today's issue recounts Milton resident Charlie Speck's surprise in stumbling upon two teens apparently camped out in a washroom at the Milton Fair Grounds. Unfortunately this scenario, of teens drifting about in search of shelter and sustenance, is all too common.

Several years ago this newspaper published the story of a Milton teen who, unable to live with his parents, had taken up residence, if it can be called that, in a cave on the Niagara Escarpment.

Fortunately, and with a little help from social service workers, he escaped his circumstances and is today healthy, employed, and not without ambition. But for every happy story involving a young outcast there is probably a sad one, even a tragic one.

These young and desperate people are often preyed upon and enticed by criminals, who solicit them with paper-thin promises of apparent security on the mean streets of Canada's major urban centres, where runaways and outcasts congregate. In prostitution and drug trafficking, the kids take the street-level risks while those they perceive as their benefactors or allies reap the rewards.

The strains on families today may be more pronounced than at any time in recent memory, as economic restructuring exacts its toll on job security for parents and employment prospects for their offspring. A sense of disenfranchisement is a millstone for too many young people, a sense of frustration too commonplace among their parents. Arguments advance to confrontations, confrontations escalate until the teen bolts or is driven out.

There are, of course, safety nets for these teens, but often the teen doesn't know how to access them, or perceives those who run them in the same hostile light as his or her parents — adversarial authority figures.

Nobody is blameless in these altercations, but there is no getting around the fact that having teens living in caves, or washrooms, or on the streets, represents a societal failure at a fundamental level, to say nothing of a family failure.

Those people staying in a Milton washroom were somebody's kids.

Live and let live

Milton town council may be attempting to strike a tough posture with regard to the prospect of Halton Hills opening a bingo hall, but there is little substance or appeal behind the complaints and strategies advanced on the subject so far at Town Hall.

Halton Hills wants to hold fundraising bingos for non-profit groups, just as Milton does, and town council here has reacted by asking the provincial government to review our neighbours' plan, with an eye to determining whether enough demand exists to operate two such modest gambling establishments successfully in dangerous proximity, at least from the perspective of some Milton politicians.

Live and let live. We didn't event bingo and we don't hold exclusive rights to it, although we act as if we did the former and own the latter.

Halton Hills has every right to attempt to glean some charity money from bingo, just as Milton has done. They have similar service clubs which undoubtedly do just as worthy work, after all.

What's next? Asking them to close some retail outlets because we have similar ones in Milton?

Pages of the Past

One Year Ago

From the August 4, 1993 issue

- Halton regional council reluctantly voted to slash \$5 million from its 1993 budget to offset provincial government imposed cutbacks. Councillors made it clear they weren't pleased with the move, saying the provincial NDP had no problem funding its own new programs but preached financial restraint to municipalities.

- Officials at Milton District Hospital advised anyone who may have received a blood transfusion at the hospital between 1978 and 1985 to immediately consult their physician about being tested for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Records indicated 731 people received blood at the hospital during the seven-year period when blood was not tested for the virus.

- The Halton Regional Police Service and its members signed a contract that would reduce policing costs by \$3 million over its three-year term. In doing so, police officials said they didn't sacrifice safety or service levels, but met the demands of the province's social contract legislation. Of the 500-member Halton Regional Police Association, 99 per cent voted in favour of the new three-year contract. The majority of members of the smaller Senior Officers' Association also agreed to the deal.

20 Years Ago

From the August 7, 1974 issue

- A four-year dream for the George McKenzie family fell apart in 10 minutes of smoke and flame. The home they had been building on Steeles Avenue, south of Campbellville, caught fire and burned to the ground along with almost everything they owned.

- Teachers in the Halton Separate School System were

to receive an average increase of 13.9 per cent for the 1974-75 school year. The agreement was reached at a meeting of the school board. The increases were made up of 10 per cent increases for all teachers and 3.9 per cent in increments and fringe benefits.

- Management and labour appeared to be far from settling a contract for workers at Milton Limestone Aggregates. About 30 employees at the quarry went on strike July 18. The quarry was shut down since then and most trucks were honouring the picket line.

50 Years Ago

From the August 3, 1944 issue

- Flying officer James Grant Fraser returned from overseas to his home here. Grant was born in Milton and educated in Milton Public and High Schools here. Before enlistment, he was employed at the Canadian Bank of Commerce in Milton, Ayr and Galt. The community joined with his father and mother, brother George of the R.C.A.F. of Deseronto, and sister Adeline in welcoming the wireless air gunner home on leave.

- Backward weather, heavy crops and shortage of labour resulted in a pile-up of work on the majority of Halton farms, according to agricultural rep J.E. Whitelock. Showery weather during the first three weeks of June coupled with a heavy crop of hay and little help resulted in haying, wheat harvest and the cutting of early-sown, spring grain being on at the same time on a goodly percentage of Halton farms.

- What proved to be the most largely attended, enthusiastic and constructive meeting in many years of the Halton Progressive Conservative Association was held in Milton Town Hall July 27. The occasion marked the first federal organization meeting of the PC Party within the county.

Pud

by Steve Nease

