

# Beaver Fever and water supplies

Giardiasis, or Beaver Fever, is a parasitic disease which can be transmitted through water supplies as well as by contact with humans or animals. Because beavers were suspected as the source of the first outbreaks detected in Colorado, Giardiasis became known as Beaver Fever. However, the organism has also been isolated from other animals including dogs, cats, horses, deer, sheep, coyotes and muskrats. While there have been no known outbreaks of Giardiasis from municipal drinking water supplies in Ontario, water-related epidemics have been identified in Alberta and several U.S. states.

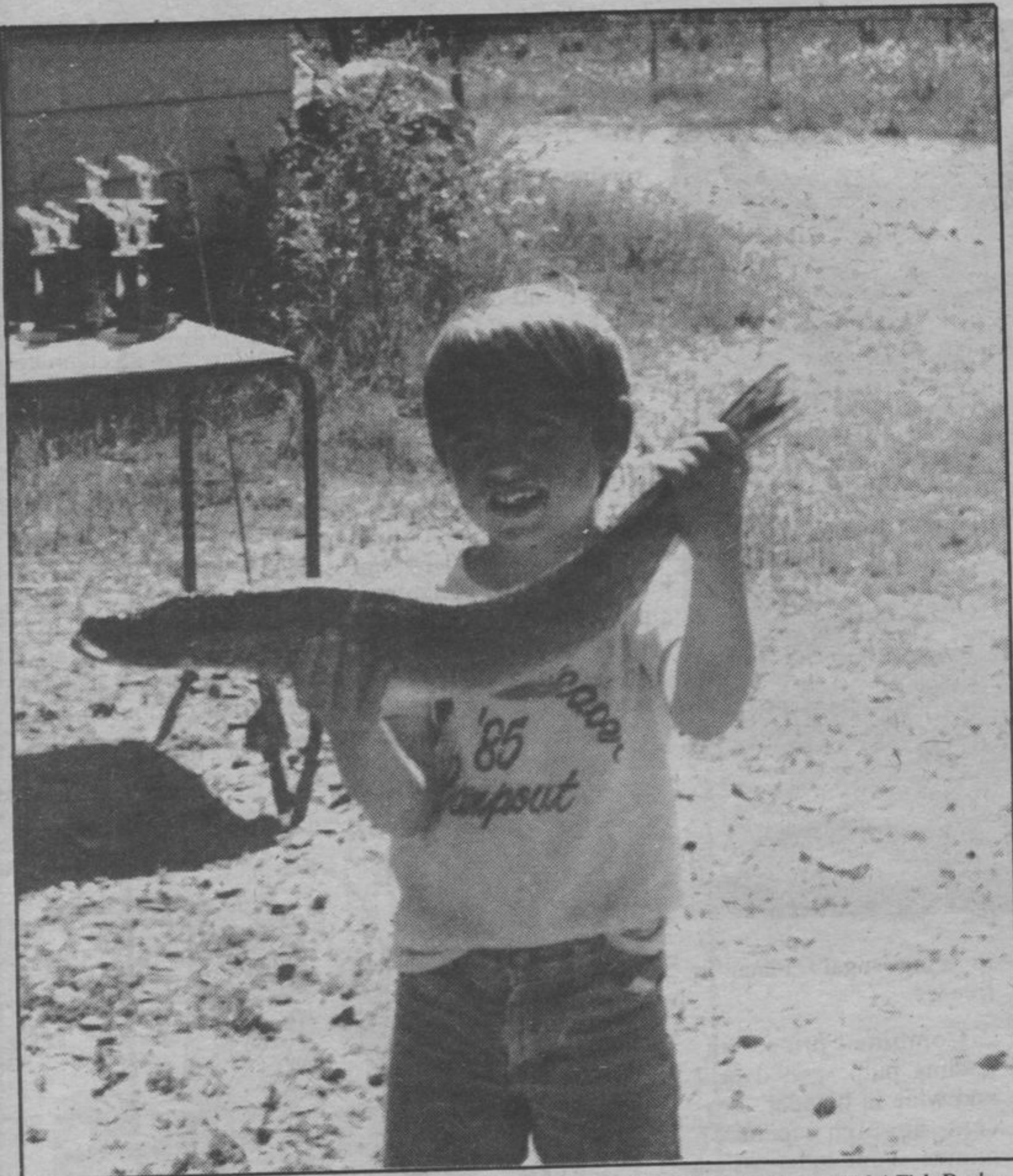
Scientists feel it is unlikely that the disease has spread dramatically in the short period it has been identified. It is more probable that modern medicine can now identify Giardiasis infections which previously were misdiagnosed as other gastric ailments.

Beaver Fever can be characterized by nausea, anorexia, cramps, diarrhea and flatulence. None of these things are pleasant, but scientists stress that Giardiasis is not regarded as a life-threatening infection. Researchers say it is a "well-adjusted parasite, which does not want to kill the host it feeds on." Mental institutions, because of the possibility of lower levels of personal hygiene, are high-risk situations for Giardiasis infections. The disease is caused by the organism *Giardia lamblia*, a protozoan parasite of the Order Protomonadina. In spite of its formidable scientific name, it is not at all a life-threatening disease. At least half the infections of *Giardia lamblia* may produce no symptoms. Chronic, subacute and acute symptoms do occur with infections which, if persistent, can cause serious fatigue and weight loss. The disease can last for as long as three months, after which, the body either

eliminates the parasite, or it comes to terms with it, often with a little negative effect. *Giardia lamblia* has two stages in its life cycle: a trophozoite, and a cyst. Trophozoites appear as pear-shaped cells with sucking disks on their ventral surface by which they attach themselves to their host's intestines. They range in size from 9 to 21 microns long, (a micron is a thousandth of a millimetre) by 6 to 12 microns wide. Quite fragile, the trophozoites cannot survive outside their hosts. The egg-shaped cysts are approximately the same size but have smooth walls and are much tougher than the trophozoites. These cysts can survive in quite hostile environments for long periods, especial-

ly in cold water. They have been known to survive as long as 77 days in water at eight degrees C, but survival time drops to between five to 24 days in water at 20 degrees C. They can also resist levels of free chlorine which would kill most bacteria and viruses present in water during normal water treatment. The disease in humans begins when the parasite is ingested as a cyst and passes into the stomach where the acid triggers a change in the cyst, releasing what are now trophozoites. These attach themselves to the intestine walls. There they absorb food, reproduce and release their offspring into the digestive tract, where they once more encyst. The

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Randy Langford shows off his second place pike which he caught during the Moose Kids' Fish Derby.

## Smoking decreases

Health and Welfare Minister Jake Epp recently released a report on smoking which shows the proportion of regular smokers in the Canadian adult population at its lowest level in 18 years. The report -- Smoking Behaviour of Canadians

1983 -- shows that in December of 1983, the proportion of regular adult smokers dropped to 31 per cent.

In 1981, one in three adult Canadians smoked.

Approximately 34 per cent of men aged 15 and over (an estimated 3.1

million) and 28 per cent of women (2.1 million) smoked cigarettes regularly. Quebec had the highest proportion of smokers -- 35.5 per cent -- and British Columbia the lowest at 25.3 per cent.

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COE -- Graham and Marcia are thrilled to announce the safe arrival of their first child - STEVEN JAMES. Born in the Port Arthur General Hospital on July 17, 1985 at 10:42 a.m., weighing 6 lbs. 1 oz. Proud grandparents are Mrs. Irene Nicol of Terrace Bay and Mr. Harry Coe of Thunder Bay. Special thanks to Dr. Wilkes and the Nursing Staff at the McCausland Hospital, also to Dr. Malloy, Dr. Park and the Nursing Staff of the fifth floor of the Port Arthur General.

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