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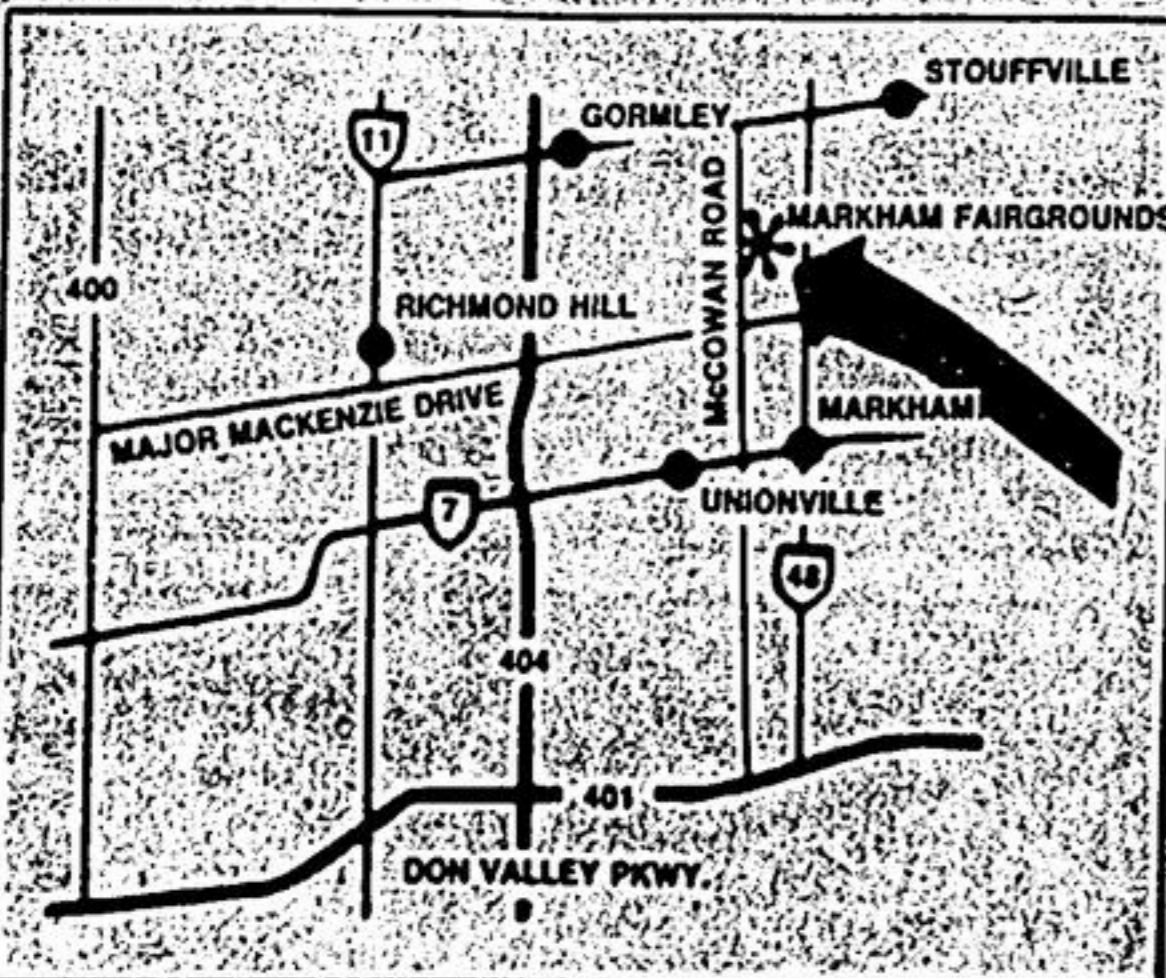
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The sporting life is not for Kate

It's just as well for me they don't have athletic ability requirements for immigrants to Canada, or I'd still be across the pond, trying to tune out the weekend soccer results.

My aversion to this sporting life goes back to some incident in my childhood; most likely the time when my sarcastic gym teacher screamed "kipper yourself!" at me when I launched myself at the dreaded horse in a feeble attempt to vault it, only to land in a heap on the side from which I'd approached it.

Whether it was rounders (a game similar to baseball), where I never got to first base, or netball (basketball), where my opponent would intercept the ball effortlessly and deposit it in the net, easily resisting my not terribly rigorous attempts to win it back; I was clearly not destined for glory in the great ball diamond of life.

The only thing worse than not being picked for a team was being picked for one, by someone who didn't know any better, but who never made that particular mistake twice.

It was the same with childhood party games; the mere thought of someone's grimly determined mother, rounding up her children's hapless guests for a spot of humiliation in the guise of organized fun, was enough to make me hide in a closet until all danger was past.

As an adult, I thought that all that was behind me but I was wrong; some people still invited me to parties that required all kinds of audience participation and worse still, team efforts, which were guaranteed to destroy burgeoning friendships. When I first got married, my mother-in-law threatened to teach me to play bridge.

"It's too competitive for me," I said firmly. What on earth did I mean, she wondered, she and her friends played just for the fun of it.



KATE'S CORNER
Kate Gilderdale

Two days later she arrived home, steam coming out of her ears; a thunderous expression on her face. "What's the matter?" I enquired innocently. "That Marjorie Blenkinsop," she exploded, "what an idiot! She got it all wrong!"

I could just imagine those cultivated ladies, slugging it out over the cucumber sandwiches, all tight-lipped and full of righteous indignation. The truth is, most card games were beyond the capabilities of one who had majored in "Snap."

I wouldn't want to give the impression I was totally inept, however. It transpired that I had a brainful of useless information when I started to play Trivial Pursuit; for instance, how many people would have an instant recall to the fact that Booker T and the MGs performed the immortal "Green Onions"? Impressive, eh?

And I did have my moments of glory in my youth too, as all-time champion slow bicycle racer at St. Mary's Convent Grammar School.

Slow bicycle racing is a subtle event and absolutely perfect for someone of my disposition; last in (still upright and with feet on the pedals) wins.

So although you won't catch me running the bases at the ball park, or lobbing a ball with accurate grace into a net, just think; if I didn't have a healthy respect for my limitations, I could have been on your team.

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