



Technical difficulty

Henry Lefebvre, 63, makes some minor adjustments to his custom-built tricycle before heading out into the wild blue yonder. Mr. Lefebvre, a Buckingham Manor resident in Stouffville, made the bike to his own specifications. The dual headlights provide more visibility for the elderly easy rider.

Clan Gilderdale's journeys into the wilds can be ugly

Of all the reasons cited as grounds for divorce, perhaps the most overlooked is that annual struggle for autonomy known as the summer vacation.

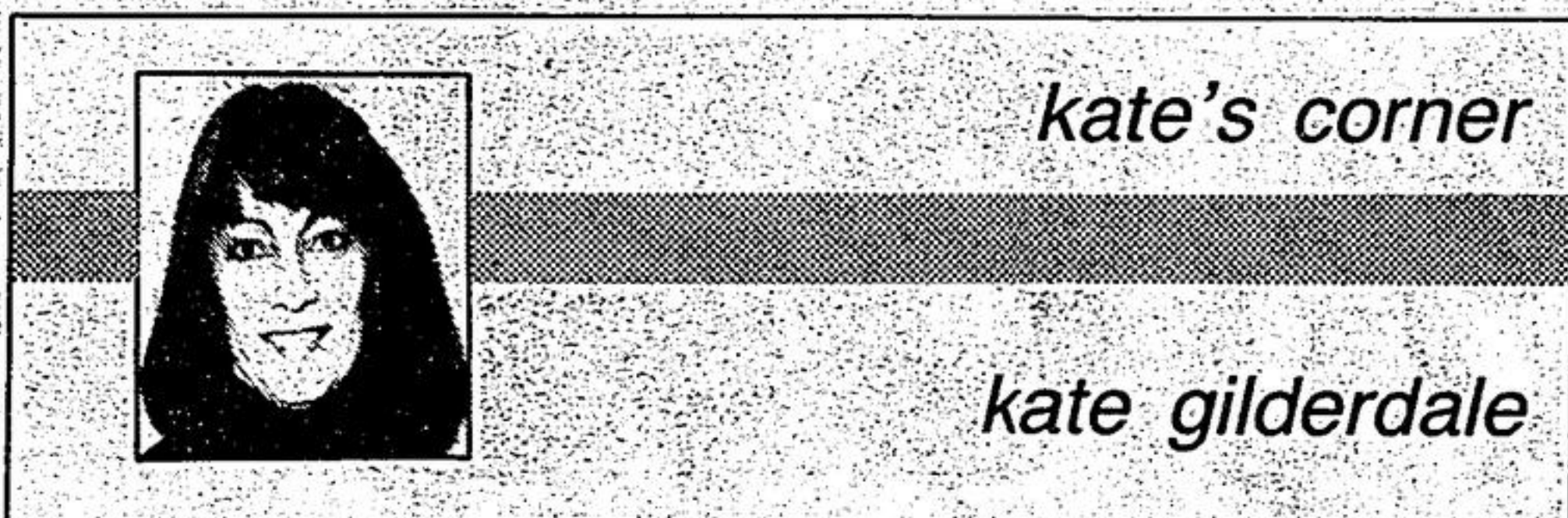
If one partner suggests a holiday at the family cottage, the potential for conflict is rife. This dwelling may consist of a glorified hut without plumbing, or a lakeside version of Casa Loma.

Extensive research on the part of the first-time visitor is therefore strongly advised before any kind of commitment to spending a summer holiday there is entered into.

If your partner is an avid do-it-yourselfer, only happy when he or she is stripping paint or re-insulating the attic, there's considerable danger you may end up in one of those handyman's specials which has about as much likelihood of being completed as a royal commission.

Charming views of the lake don't justify trekking to an outhouse, boiling water to wash in or being eaten alive by mosquitoes.

I'll never forget the first cottage we rented, sight unseen, when the children were babies. The porch, which boasted an occasional shred of screening, was crawling with flies, and none of the "good-sized" bedrooms could



kate's corner

kate gilderdale

accommodate our daughter's crib.

There was neither bath nor shower and, although it was in the heart of the country, we had the misfortune to be situated on the hairpin bend of a major highway, around which the entire population of southern Ontario seemed to be travelling day and night.

The accommodation itself, however, is but one potential pitfall. Another bone of contention is how you spend your time once you get there.

Your idea of paradise may be to lounge about by the lake, book in hand, vaguely aware of the haunting call of the loon, but beware the spouse who insists on keeping tabs on what's happening at the office.

Fortunately, we of the clan Gilderdale are all closet layabouts whose idea of a holiday consists of swimming, walking, reading and playing the occasional game of Slang Teasers.

In fact, our recent trip to a friend's cottage was so successful that I told myself smugly ours was the sort of marriage which could rise above the petty squabbles so common to others.

An hour and a half from home, hurrying to arrive so that my husband could get to a vital meeting, we stopped to minister our ailing child and yours truly somehow managed to shut the single set of keys in the trunk. "Never mind," I said cheerfully, "all the doors are open."

From the thunderous expression on my husband's face and my own research, I quickly gathered that the trunk of the car could only be reached from outside, with the keys.

With some creative help however, we dismantled the back of the car and retrieved the keys from the inside. While the car survived, our happy marriage was under considerable strain during the drive home.

Next year, we're spending our vacation in the back yard.

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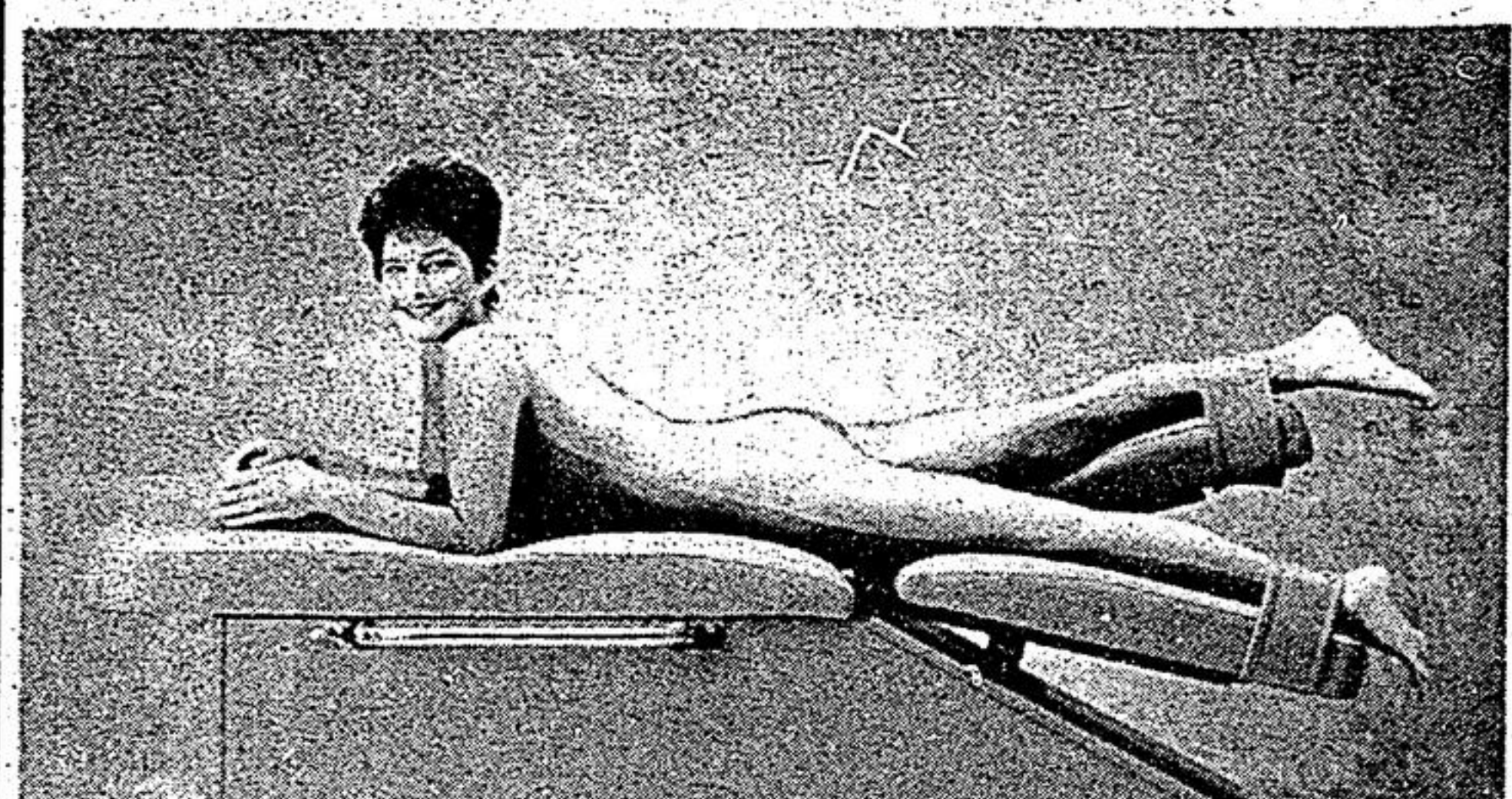
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