

New program protects seniors from telephone fraud

Premier Mike Harris helped to launch SeniorBusters recently, a volunteer service that will help seniors protect themselves against

telemarketing fraud. "SeniorBusters is seniors helping seniors to effectively fight an insidious type of crime," said Harris. "It's

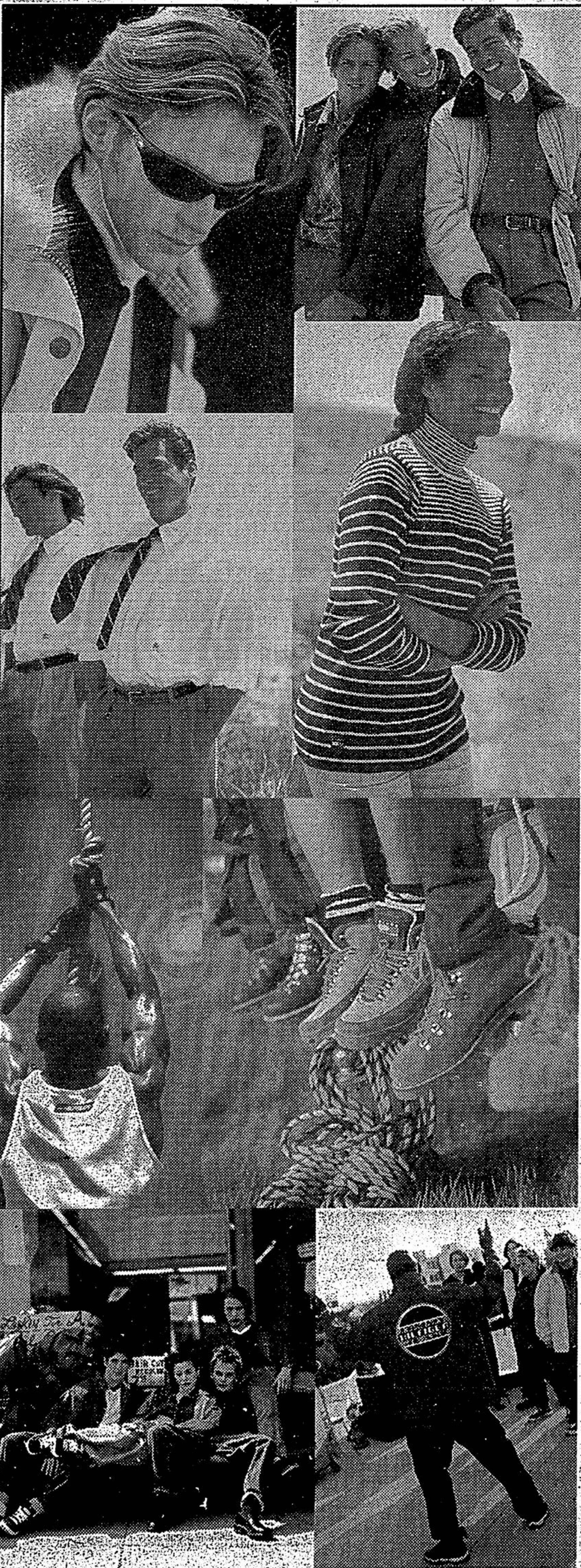
an innovative program in which crime prevention solutions are shared with those most vulnerable to help prevent the ruined family

lives and financial losses that have resulted from this brutal crime and against our seniors." This type of fraud cost Ontario

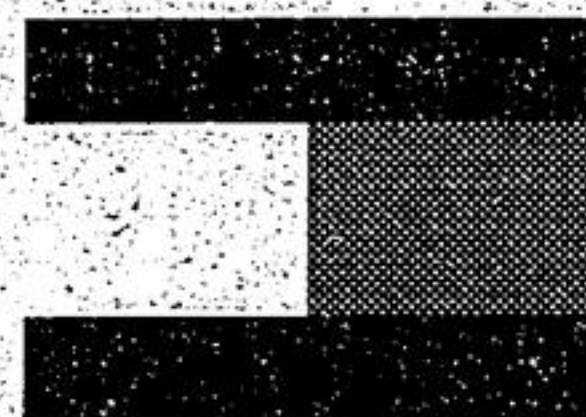
seniors more than \$3.5 million in 1997. Coordinated by the Ontario Provincial Police, the program is part of Project PhoneBusters, the national task force to combat telemarketing fraud that was developed cooperatively by federal and provincial police services and crime prevention experts in 1993.

In 1997, PhoneBusters estimates that 56 per cent of the total number of telemarketing prize pitch victims have been over age 60, with an average dollar loss of \$12,000 each. Of all victims, seniors represent 85 per cent of those who have lost more than \$5,000.

In SeniorBusters, more than 40 volunteers over the age of 50 help to reduce the level of fraudulent telemarketing against seniors by educating seniors, providing emotional and moral support and ensuring seniors have a place to turn if they need assistance. Volunteers will contact family members, local police agencies, elder abuse committees and other support agencies to provide seniors with the necessary tools to effectively fight this crime and aid seniors in regaining their dignity. Anyone who has been the victim of telemarketing fraud or is currently being targeted, should call 1-888-495-8501.



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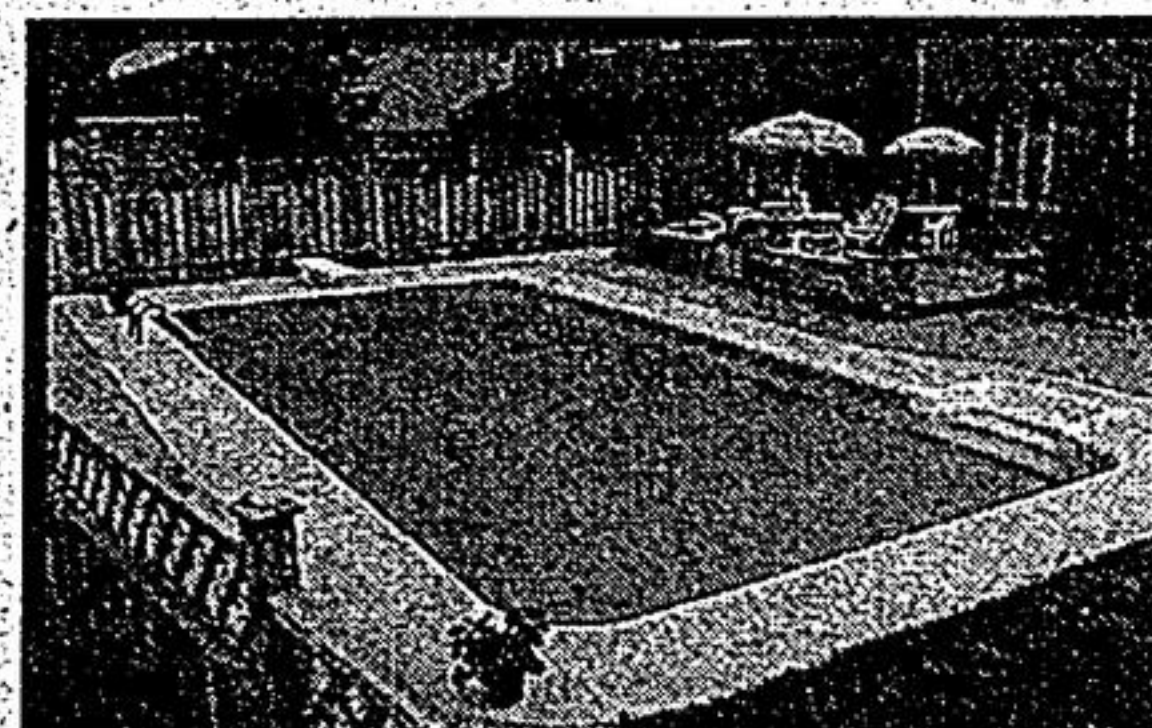
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