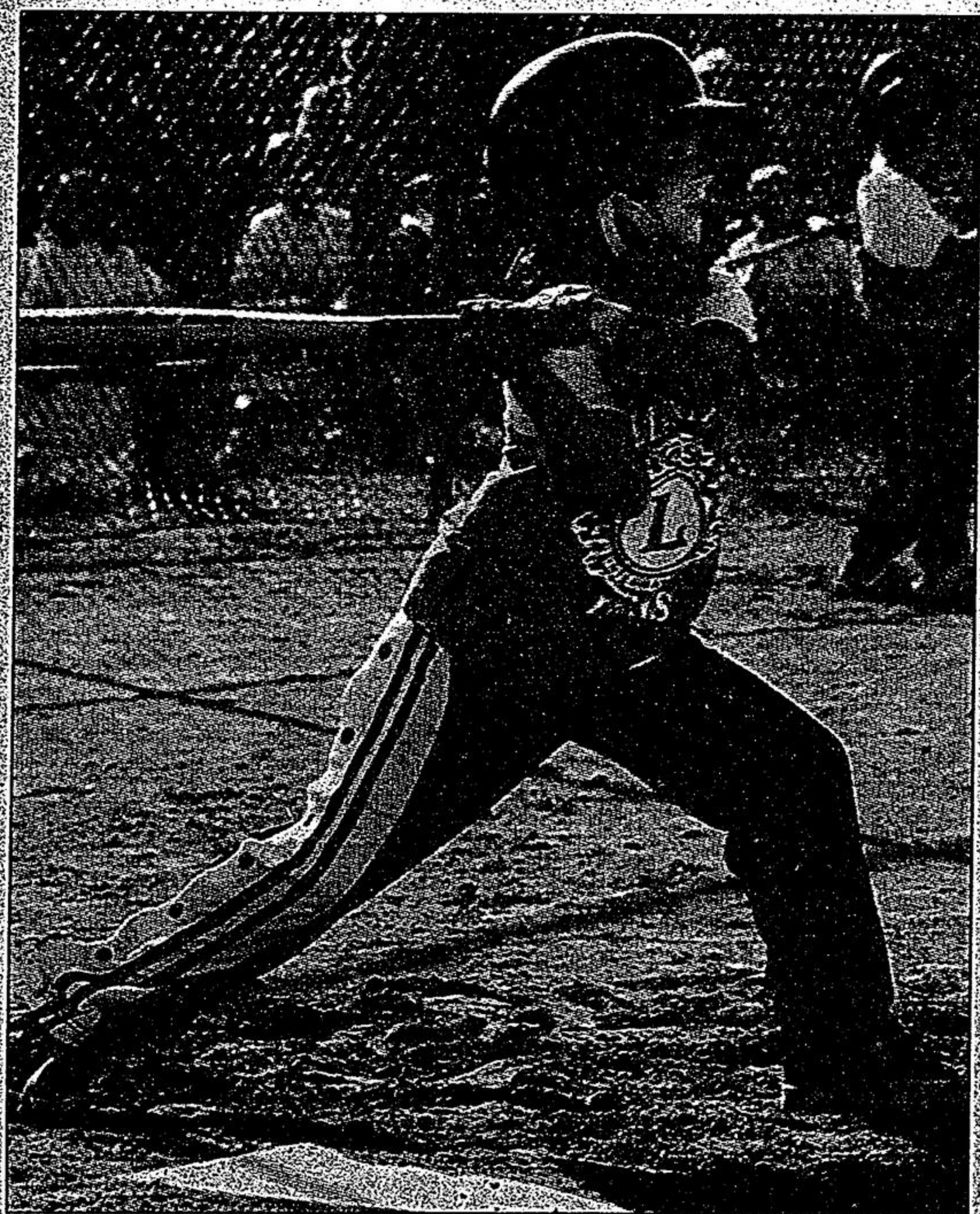


SPORTS

Persistence pays off for Raymer



PHOTO/LORI EMMERSON

SWINGING A HOT BAT

Ballantrae Market batter Jesse Mellor prepares to swing her bat at an offering from an ATC Corral pitcher during action in this five-pitch advanced houseleague game at the town park on Saturday. The contest was a part of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Softball Association's annual houseleague tournament. Ballantrae Market won this game.

Mites win ball tourney

The Simply Caring Birth Class mite selects saved the best until last.

The Stouffville squad won all four games played to sweep to victory at a tournament held Aug. 15, in Woodbridge.

It was the first tournament championship of the season for the mites coming in its final tournament of the campaign.

The mites were finalists in three previous tournaments, and won a consolation championship in another.

Pitcher Jeff Bassett was virtually unhittable, logging 41 strikeouts in his 15 innings pitched to lead the way.

The mites won all three of its preliminary games by one-sided scores, with

the mercy ruling used to cut short matches with Cedar Hill, Milliken Mills and Woodbridge.

Stouffville outscored its opponents 53-5 in the three outings.

The mites were given a challenge by Unionville in the championship match, but managed to prevail 4-3 in a game that had to be called in the fifth inning due to rain.

The team lineup also includes: Matt Easter, Simon Kennedy, Alan McGrath, Mitch Raithby, David Knaz, Kit McDowell, Damien Kudelski, Adam Marshall, Matt Fockler, Jason Wield, Matt Sewerynek and Lenny Wood. Coaches are: Ted Wood, Blair Bassett, Ted Sewerynek and Brad Raithby.

When Nicky Raymer completed her Bronze Medallion at the town pool as an emerging teen back in the mid-1970's, she would have been the last one to envision herself returning to the local watering hole in 1998 in an attempt to earn a Bronze Cross.

But 23 years, two kids and one backyard pool later, that's exactly what this game Lloyd St. resident has done.

And it wasn't without its challenges to be sure. In particular, it was the part that required her to swim

24 laps of the Town Pool in 14 minutes that caused her more than a few anxious moments not to mention the hours of time she spent exhausting herself in a gallant effort to overcome that hurdle.

For three weeks she tried every day, including weekends.

Nicky's friend and neighbour Marilyn Heydon, said the timed swim became like an albatross around her neck. But Nicky persevered.

"Some days Nicky would do the swim twice a day, finding herself totally exhausted in the evenings but still having to do her every day chores," relates Marilyn.

She practiced at the town pool, her family's backyard pool, and even went to Bobcaygeon to try it at a relative's pool. Her persistence finally paid off and



Bruce Stapley

she made the grade on Aug. 10.

Nicky said it wasn't just the timed swim that required her to push herself to the limits of her stamina. Another component called for her to tread water for a full five minutes with her hands on her head.

"It was very intense," she said of the course. I asked her if it isn't usually teenagers who take the Bronze Cross course down at the pool.

"They were all teens except for me," she acknowledged. But that didn't stop the instructor from flattering her by asking her to show her birth certificate to prove she was the mandatory 16 years of age!

Rather than shun her as an adult outsider, however, the teenaged instructors, as well as the young people taking the course, proved more than supportive.

"The kids at the pool were great," she said. "And the others in the class were really encouraging."

Nicky said she returned to the pool of her youth for lifeguard training after all these years for two reasons. First, she would like to begin teaching swimming lessons, both at her own home and elsewhere.

"When we get an indoor pool in Stouffville, I wouldn't mind a

part time job teaching swimming," she said. "This is a start."

The second reason is based on practicality.

"We always have kids swimming in our pool in the backyard. It's nice to know I'm qualified if something should happen."

What's next for Nicky as she sets her sights on the lifeguard's tower?

"I'll take my NLS Bronze Cross in lifeguarding in Markham this fall."

And while she expects the course to be rigorous, it is without the primary obstacle that caused her such hardship in Stouffville this summer.

"There's no time limit swim," she said with relief.

However, she understands the course won't be without its challenges.

"You have to retrieve a 20 pound brick from the bottom of the pool and put it on the edge of the pool."

Nicky and her firefighter husband Rick's two children both take regular lessons at the town pool. Krista, eight, completed her level eight this week. Kyle, five, has his level four. "That's what got me interested (in taking a life guarding course), watching them taking their lessons," said Nicky, who also does aerobics to stay in shape.

The last word goes to Marilyn Heydon, who is full of praise for her friend's determination in completing her Bronze Cross.

"I think it is a wonderful accomplishment and I am so proud of my friend. I feel your paper should interview her and print her story."

Marilyn, your wish is our command.

Local girls help Wildcats claw ball title

A quartet of Stouffville minor softball products played a key role as the Markham Wildcats brought home the title from the Eastern Canadian Novice Girls' Softball Championship on Sunday.

Joanne Crymble, Andrea Meyer and Megan Bomberry, along with Christie Brailey of

Claremont, are members of the Wildcats squad that swept all seven games played at the 12-team competition, which was held Friday through Sunday in Fredericton, N.B.

The Wildcats defeated Chinguacousy in Sunday's championship match 3-1.

A tempting profile of some of the finest chefs and restaurants in and around Markham and Stouffville.

Thursday, September 17th

Inside this special, process colour supplement, you will find some of the area's most distinguished chefs, their restaurants and a collection of menus and recipes that make them famous.

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