

Hockey player paralyzed in diving accident

BY PATRICK CASEY
Staff Writer

An ill-fated dive into a Kingston lake has robbed Simon Jones of his freedom. The 21-year-old, Aurora resident crushed his spinal cord late Saturday night when he jumped into shallow water at a friend's cottage.

The top of Jones' head hit a log, leaving the young, muscular athlete a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the top of the chest down.

Although a wheelchair will replace the mobility his arms and legs once provided, Jones' family and friends said the graduating member of the Aurora Tigers Jr. A hockey club will undoubtedly rebound from the weekend tragedy, thanks to a keen sense of humour and his deep appreciation of others.

Many fans of the Markham Waxers and Spirit of Stouffville teams may remember seeing Jones play.

He also played briefly for the Waxers early in his junior career.

On Tuesday, Tigers general manager and head coach Brad Selwood spoke with Jones' mother Carol, who told him the family remains positive, especially with new medical breakthroughs constantly on the horizon.

Teammate Sean Murphy followed Jones into the water Saturday and helped pull his best friend from the bottom of the lake, before colleague Kevin Boyle administered CPR to resuscitate him and save his life.

With Murphy and several friends set to visit Jones in Kingston, he understands they must remain positive in a difficult situation.

"We know we have to give him a glimmer of hope because I know he would do that for me," explained Murphy, the eldest son of former Toronto Maple Leafs head coach Mike Murphy, and Jones' chum for the past seven years.

"As much as we want to break down, we have to stay strong for Simon."

It's tough not having him around, but Simon has been asking the nurses how we are doing. He is really defensive about his friends and family, and is not a selfish person. Simon's not even thinking about himself right now, and he has always been that way.

Murphy said the past five days have been difficult to comprehend, although a therapy session with a psychologist and a police officer has helped the group to move past the stage where they blame themselves for the accident.

Jones, who underwent six hours of surgery at Kingston General Hospital last weekend, will spend the next four weeks in Kingston before he can be transferred to Sunnybrook hospital in Toronto.



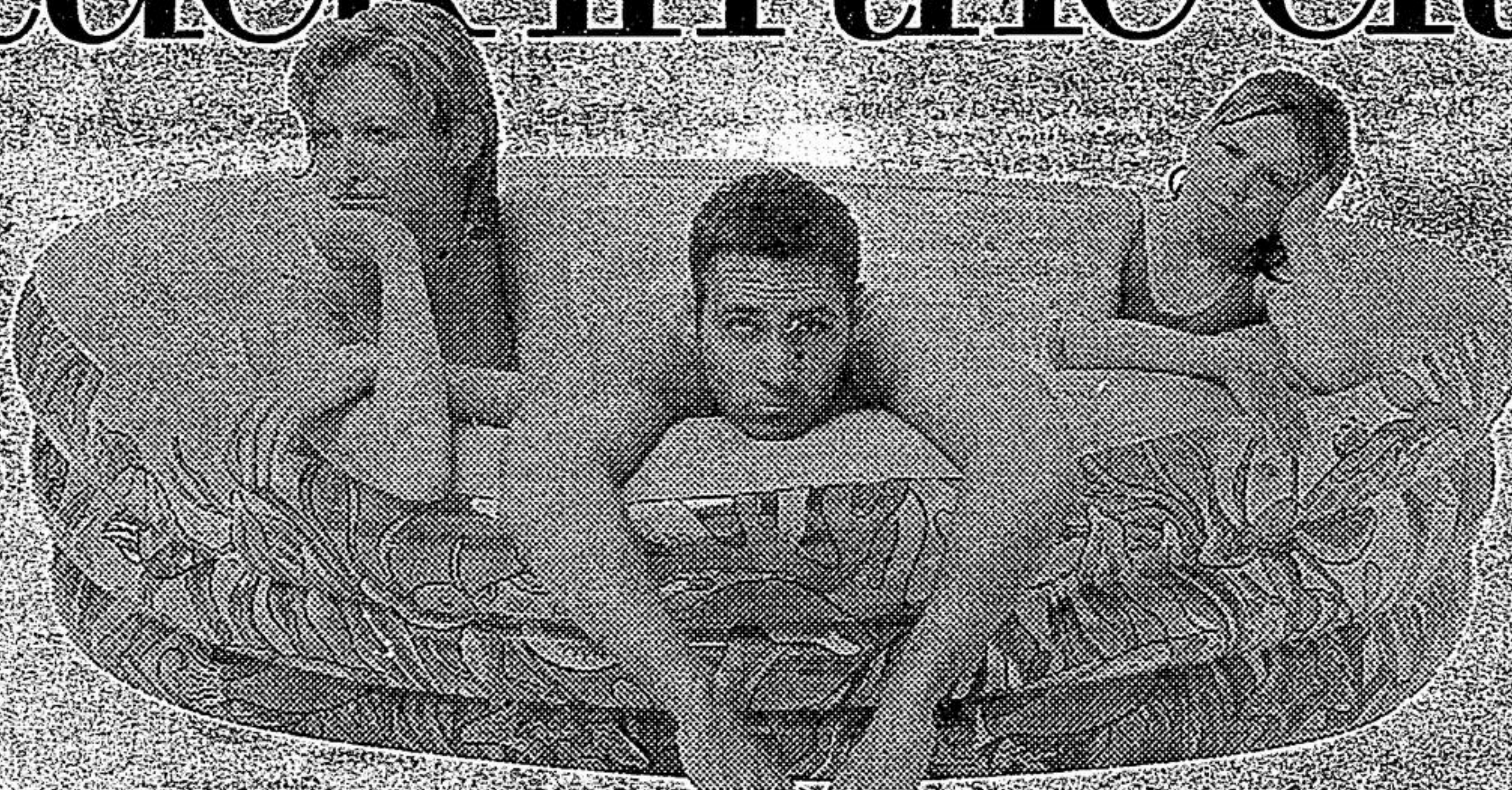
SIMON JONES
Aurora junior hockey player paralyzed

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