

One good shot motivates you

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about competing with yourself, playing against your emotions and having some fun."

It's amazing how important the little things are in golf. How you hold your club, for example. You're not supposed to clutch it until your hand cramps. Oh. You're supposed to hold it loosely.

Also, it helps to wear gloves. I found this out when my club went flying from my sweaty hands in 30-degree heat. No one laughed (except me) and that was nice.

You must follow through on your swing, not only with your arms, but with your hips, too.

"Try to look like a golf professional at the end of your swing," advised Mr. Spyllo. "Even if you don't hit a good shot, it will appear like you did." Now that's a good tip.

Remember, even people who have golfed for years have bad habits, many of them so ingrained

improvement is not easy. Mr. Spyllo said lessons at any stage of your golf career can improve your game.

"Even the professionals take lessons. It's easier for a second pair of eyes to see what you're doing right and what you're doing wrong."

The longest shot I hit was 120 yards. Awesome, eh? The shortest was about one yard. Hit the rubber tee into the air a few times, too. Well, I am a beginner after all.

Here are Mr. Spyllo's tips on improving your swing:

- Learn the proper grip: "That's why a lot of people don't get better after a certain level — they don't have the proper grip."

- Start from a well-balanced position: Ball placed in front of you at the mid-point between your feet, outside foot facing slightly outward and buttocks sticking out (no problem there).

- Practise your short game as much as possible. Putting — that's what you do on the green when you

get close to the hole. Chipping — shots that are low to the ground, with a bit of a bounce to get on the green. Pitching — shooting high and landing softly to get out of sand traps or the rough on the sides of the fairway.

Most common mistakes?

- Holding your club too tight.
- Buttocks not sticking out enough.
- Swinging too much with your arms and not enough with your lower body.

"It only takes one good shot to motivate you," Mr. Spyllo said.

And how many shots does it take before the club is in the pond in frustration? I guess that's different for everyone.

For information on lessons at Angus Glen, call 905-887-5157.



PHOTO/CHRISSE O'BRIEN

Staff writer Kathleen Griffin gets some tips on the finer points of golf with Angus Glen Golf Club pro David Spyllo.

Been There, Done That is a regular feature following the exploits of staff who try to keep up with experts in a wide variety of sports and recreation activities.

Ramp Rage 3 event wildly popular

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"If you want to be a good snowboarder, you're a skater in the summer," said Newmarket resident Adam McLaughlin, 19, who quit the winter sport after suffering a couple of concussions and a broken elbow. "It's almost exactly like snowboarding, but I wasn't enjoying it."

Not unlike its snow-based cousin, skateboarding is viewed by many as an activity high on intimidation and low on the respect of others. Sort of a lifestyle unto itself. Often misunderstood.

"I think a big part of it is the style of dress," said Mr. Scenna. "It's a lot of punk and rap music and both styles of dress are extreme. It's an extension of an extreme aspect of the life."

Mr. McLaughlin understands the image portrayed by skateboarders can leave people wary. Like any other segment of society, he agrees skateboarders have their negative element.

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"Our reputation is that all we do is destroy stuff, but it's a stereotype people have to get past," he said.

"The truth is if you skate in certain spots, security guards will kick you out. But you have to have a good attitude when that happens."

Mr. McLaughlin is by no means remotely close to being a professional. He is, however, one of the lucky few with a productive relationship with a board company.

Friends of the five-year veteran frequently film his rides, often on Toronto streets, and he forwards the tapes to companies that reward him with product. Presently, he receives one board per month and T-shirts from Zion Skateboards, a British Columbia-based company that receives inexpensive

advertising in return.

"I just want to get my name out there as much and as fast as possible," Mr. McLaughlin said, claiming he goes through a skateboard per month and skates three or four times weekly, up to five hours each time.

Often his friends film his missions for corporate viewing purposes.

Name-brand boards endorsed by the best boarders in the business can go for up to \$90. Blank boards can be had for \$40 to \$50. But getting a regular supply is key to being permanently boarded.

"Usually, I'll skate big stuff like handrails or big stairs. If I land wrong, I'll get chips in the front or back and keep getting messed up," said Mr. McLaughlin. "That's how injuries occur, when you're not comfortable on your board."

Just as ski hills reluctantly made room for the new generation, so, too, are communities, which are conceding space for skateboard parks and facilities. They are money-makers, after all.

Enthusiasts in Newmarket hope to be next in line for a facility. One rink at the Ray Twinney Complex will house an indoor park starting in early to mid-July as the ice pad is transformed into a skateboarding facility.

The temporary venue is considered by the skating crowd to be a market test, possibly leading to a permanent year-round structure.

"We're going to impress to the town there are a ridiculous amount of skateboarders out there," Mr. Scenna said.

"Kids are just dying for a sport that they can do more. If we can get an indoor facility year-round, it would help keep kids out of trouble and improving their skills. I think if the town is serious, they can find some place."

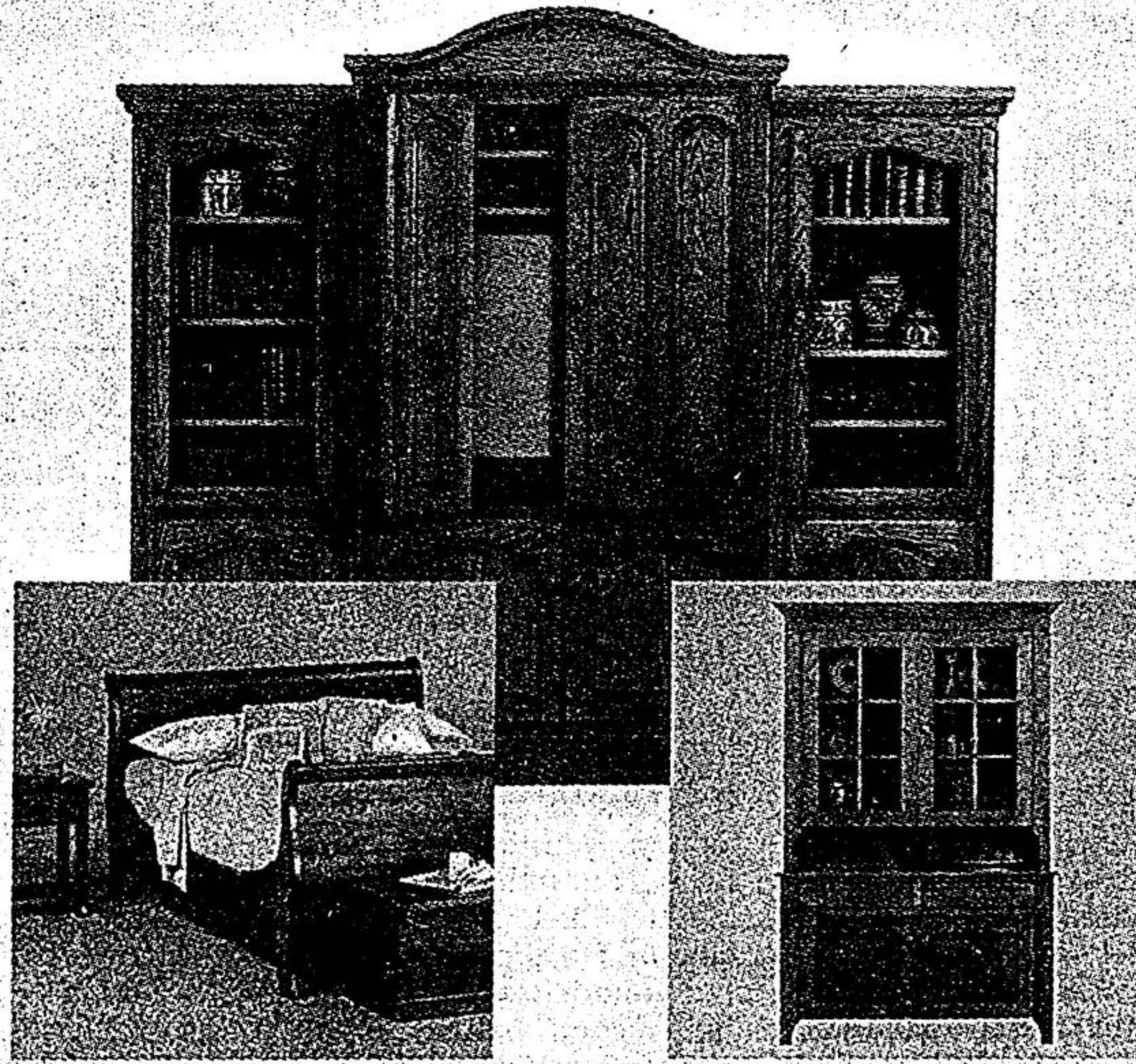
The highlight of the summer season will be Ramp Rage 3, a day-long festival of skateboarding in August, culminating with competitions in several age and skill categories.

The event has been wildly popular the past two years when the Newmarket facility has been transformed for one day into a skateboard setting.

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