

Water critical to summer survival

From page 18.

Really, anyone can play this game.

My lesson starts with a few stretches, which he insists is the most important thing to do before participating in any sport. It's very important, especially, to stretch the neck, legs and groin, since they're the areas most vulnerable to injury.

The words "groin" and "vulnerable" are not two I care to hear in the same sentence, so I pay very close attention. (Note to self: Ask employer if groin surgery is covered in current benefits package.)

After running through a few dribbling drills, we get down to the real deal — learning how to use your head to get ahead.

The main thing, Mr. Babiolakis says, is to keep in control of the ball. You do that by hitting the ball with your forehead, not the top of your head, as most people are tempted to do.

We lob a few balls back and forth and, after a few tries I'm actually sending the ball in the general direction that it's supposed to go.

I hit the ball with my eye only once and I'm really, really glad George brought a softer ball specifically for this drill. (Note to self: Ask employer if "shiner concealer" is covered in current benefits package.)

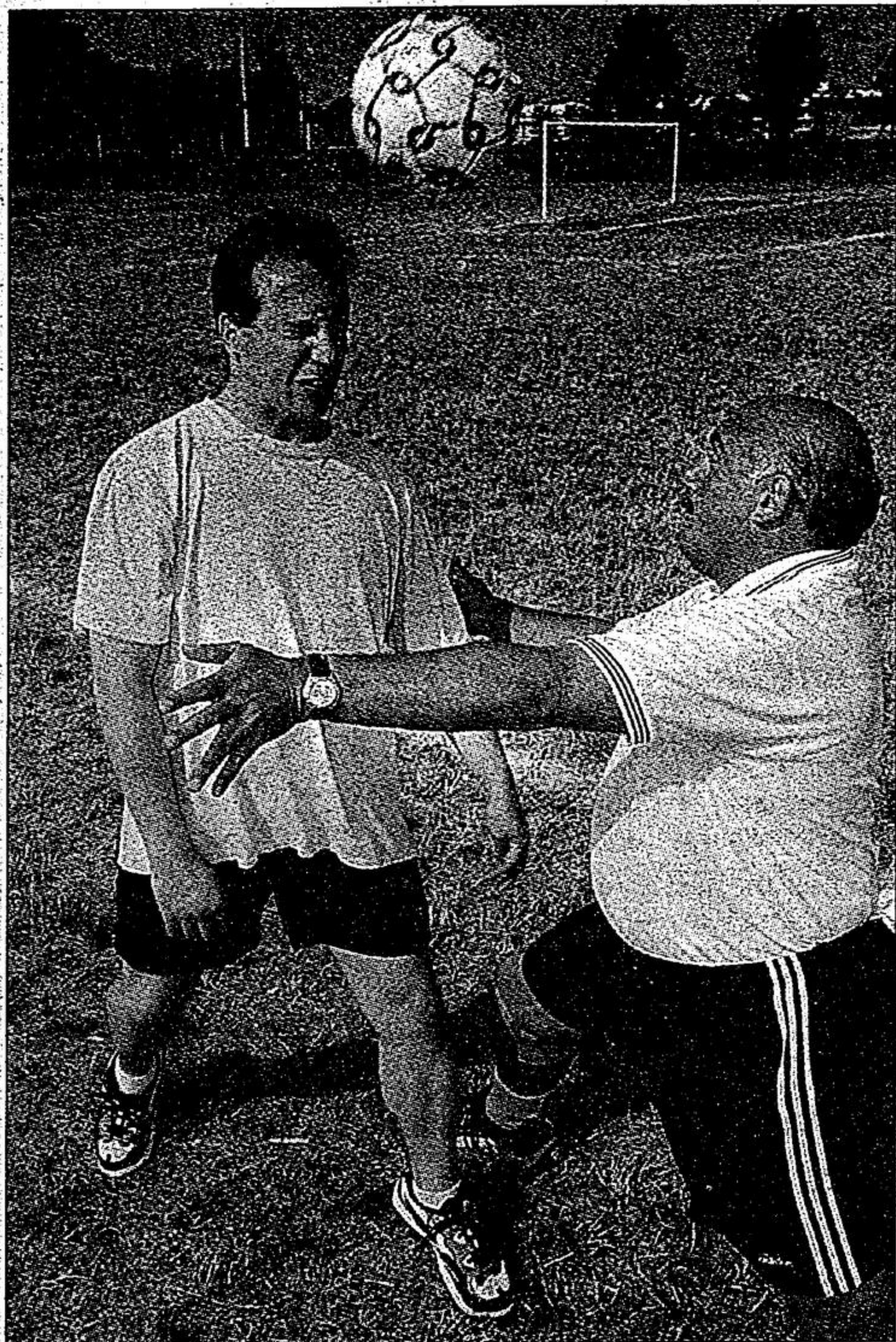
Then, we approach the net. No big surprise, the feet are the most important part of a soccer player's body and they have to be in the proper place to execute a proper kick.

One, two, three, kick. Utter simplicity. It doesn't take a genius to figure out why more kids play soccer than hockey and football combined.

One, two, threeeee.... OK, I landed my left foot too far from the ball.

One, two, thr— wha? It's back there?

Third time's a charm and my powerful kick, with some practice, is sure to make me the scourge of any goalie-less soccer field. (Court? Pitch? What do you



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Staff writer Mitchell Brown learns to use his head at the game of soccer with coach George Babiolakis.

call this big grassy thing, anyway?)

I'm ready to move on to goal-tending, but George doesn't want to work me too hard, especially on such a hot day.

Heat he knows. He lived in Zimbabwe until 1992, when he moved to Canada to give his family a more stable future. While he says he loves his adopted country, he has found most sporty people in our part of the world don't remember to follow the most basic rule of summer survival: water and lots of it.

"They (the coaches) don't keep the young kids well hydrat-

ed," he said. "Also, it's not just the fluids they drink today; it's the fluids they drank last night or the night before that helps them win the game."

Wise words and rest assured I will heed them for the rest of this summer, especially when I relax in the shade with a good book and a tall glass of my favourite beverage.

Nope, no more goofing off for me — from now on, I'm hydrating.

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

Not all walking paths on conservation lands

From page 18.

Industry Street near the intersection of Industrial Parkway South and Aurora Road.

Famous for its maple syrup program in spring, when it becomes a hive of activity, Sheppard's Bush is all too often ignored the remainder of the year. That's unfortunate, because while relatively small, the sight of sunlight filtering through the forest canopy is truly refreshing.

And, of course, the very trees that sustain the maple syrup in the spring come alive with a vibrant display of colour in autumn.

Kortright Centre for Conservation forms part of an impressive tract of natural habitat running through Vaughan, just north of Woodbridge.

Perhaps best known for its educational facilities, which are top notch, it also boasts some 16 km of trails over 162 hectares of mixed terrain — forest, meadows, river valleys and swamps. Bring the children for an educational walk guided by knowledgeable staff, with themes ranging from bird watching to pond life.

Not all walking paths in the region are on conservation lands. An example of private property extending a warm welcome to hikers is Seneca College's King Campus on Dufferin Street just

north of King Road. Originally the home of Flora Eaton, daughter-in-law of Timothy Eaton of department store fame, the home was sold to Seneca in 1961. The grounds contain seven km of trails that lead through a maple sugar bush and reforested pine woodlot, past two small lakes and over fields and rolling hills. A gazebo beside one of the lakes offers respite and a platform from which to view waterfowl. Parking is \$2.

My personal favourite? That's easy. Whitchurch Conservation Area, 10 km east of Aurora along Aurora Road in Whitchurch-Stouffville. It's nowhere near as well known as the others mentioned here, but it's far more primordial.

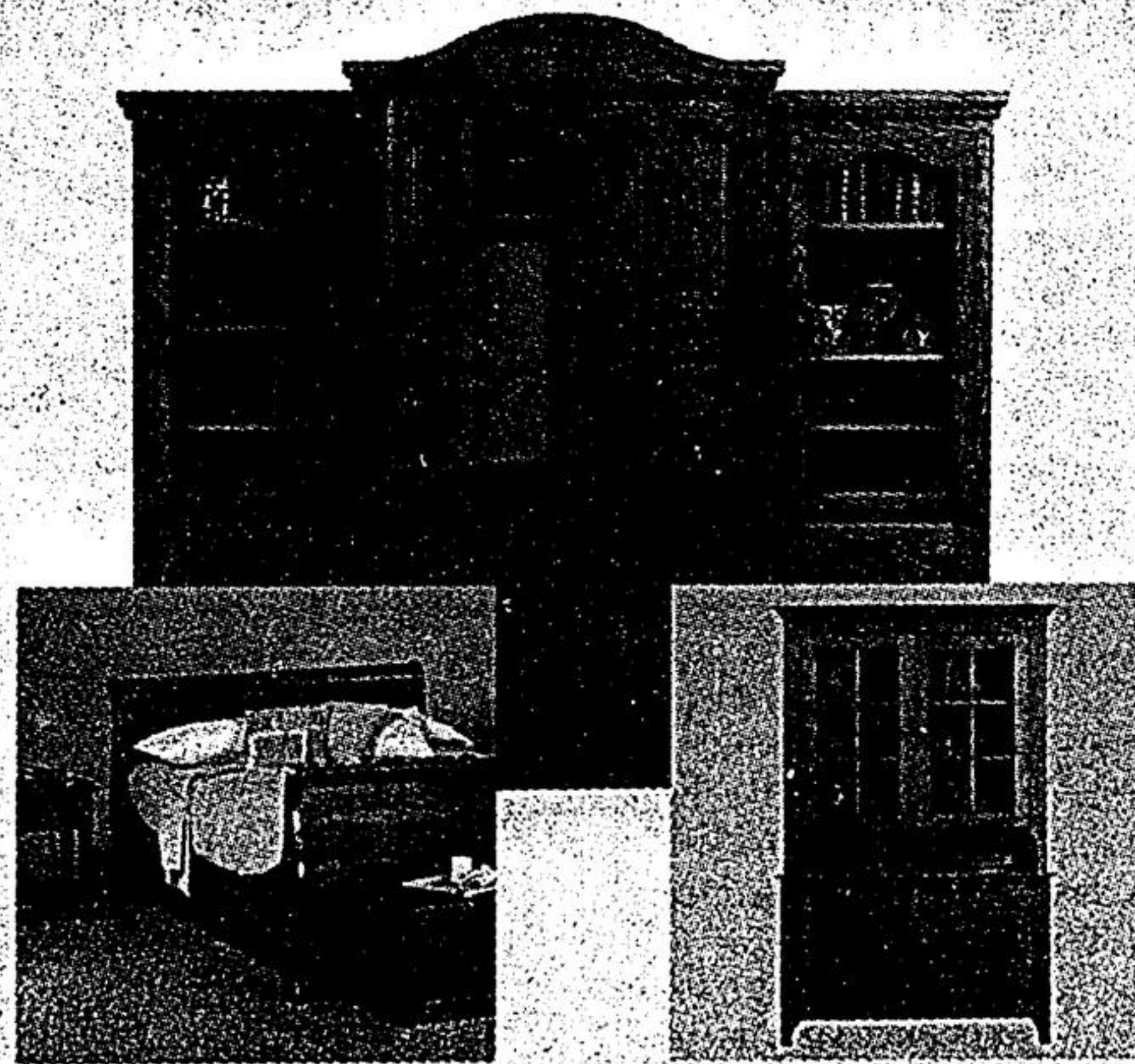
Majestic tamaracks, the only conifers to change colour in the fall, shadow the looped trails, allowing little foliage to grow on the forest floor. It's a dark, almost eerie wood, the kind you would expect to find in cottage country, not a mere hour from the city. Spooky? A little. Unique? Definitely.

As you walk the trails of York Region, the great beauty that is the natural world will strike you and along the way you might gain a greater appreciation for your community, for it is more than just subdivisions and mega malls. The delicate balance between humanity and nature has been carefully maintained in York Region for your enjoyment and that of future generations.

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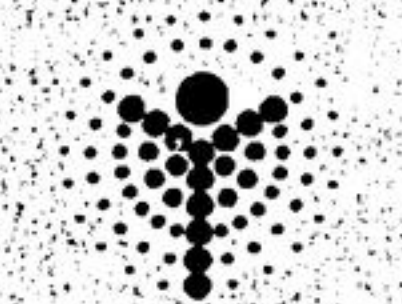
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