

Leaf players, school children back boy with leukemia

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Kids, they worked as a team, covering every segment of Jack's problem."

For the nine days Jack was at the Toronto hospital, his parents were present at his bedside. Each night, one would come home to be with daughter Claire, 5, and sons Grady, 3, and Ian, 1.

"(Jack) was a wonderful patient," Meagan says proudly.

Proof of this is evidenced by strings of bravery beads earned during his stay.

Equally important, they say, has been support received from a cross-section of our town and beyond.

Officials with the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association, where Paul is a referee, purchased back-stop netting for an outdoor rink at the Lynch family home. Hockey is Jack's favourite sport. He plays centre with the Canadian Tire tyke team. The referees also bought Jack a scooter, the top item on his Christmas wish-list.

But the kindness hasn't ended there.

Three humongous get-well cards, all appropriately signed, have been received from sister Claire's kindergarten class and Jack's former Grade 1 class at St. Mark Catholic School and from French immersion boys and girls at Glad

Park Public School where Jack now attends.

In addition, St. Mark provided a multitude of books and games as well as ongoing prayers.

The firm of RBC Dominion Securities, where Paul's employed, also provided toys and funds.

Neighbours have been wonderful, too, Paul says. And so has the Tot Spot organization at Stouffville United Church. They've delivered meals.

"With every knock at the door, there stood another blessing," Paul said.

On occasions, these "blessings" Paul described, would come in twos and threes including former Toronto Maple Leaf star Gary Roberts, accompanied by brother Greg and Greg's brother-in-law Darrin Moss. They paid Jack a personal visit just before Christmas.

If anything could top this, something did. Word of Jack's medical problem reached the heart of Canada's hockey world — the Leaf dressing room. Team captain Dion Phaneuf and winger Phil Kessel pooled their helpfulness and presented the plucky Stouffville tyke centre with a Maple Leaf jersey, complete with the captain's C, plus a Maple Leaf cap. Also included was a reserved seat at the Air Canada Centre for a future Leaf game.

"That's what community is all about," Meagan said.

"One doesn't appreciate it until one experiences it."



Stouffville hockey referees with Jack Lynch and family after they dropped off netting for his outdoor rink.

agreed Paul. "The kindness of family and friends has made our concerns easier to endure."

Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 60 years.

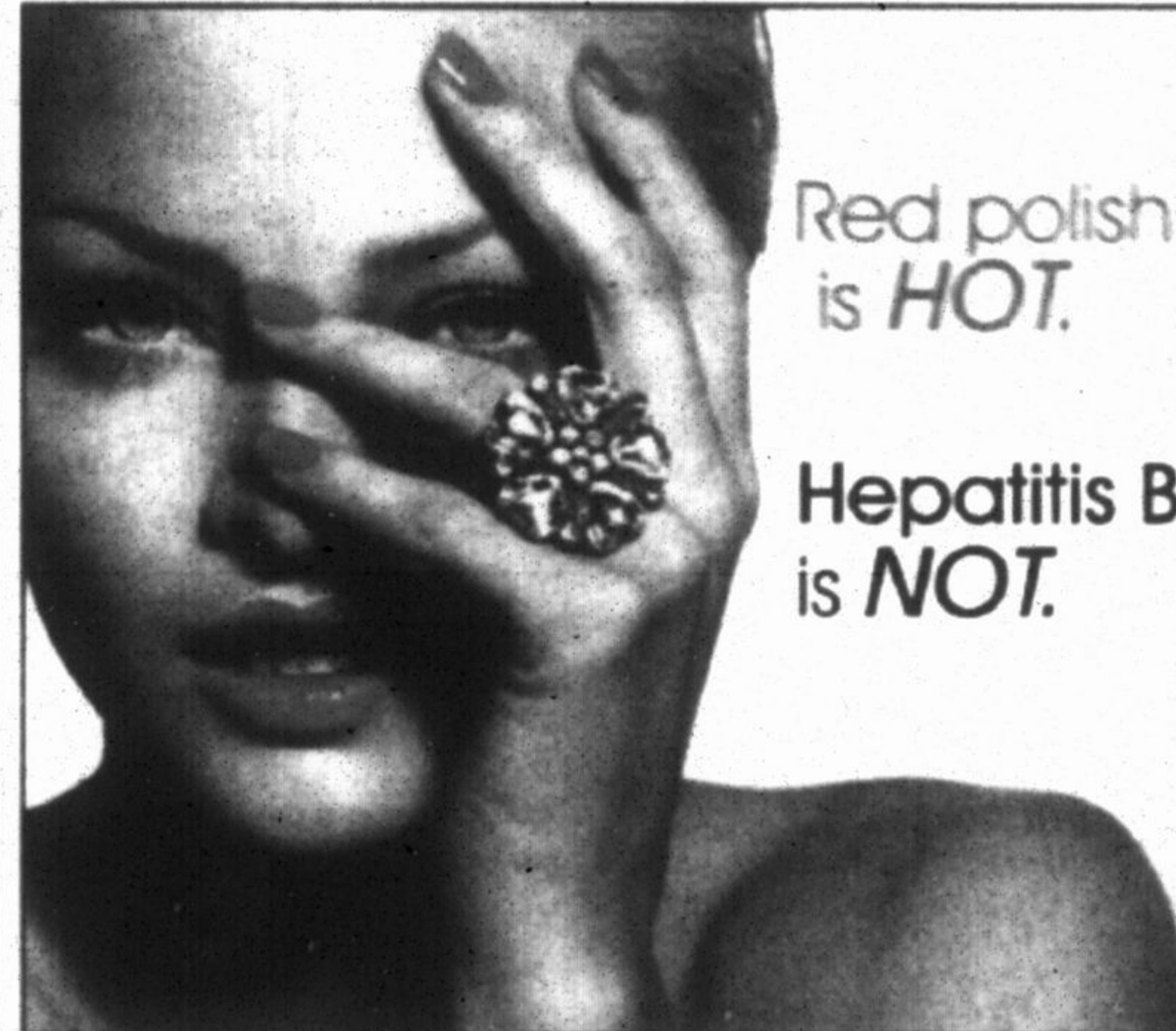
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