

# Friend runs to the rescue when strangers wouldn't



## Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas



STAFF PHOTO/NICK IWANYSHYN

Kendall Schofield (left) and Kalyssa McConnell return to Lehman's Pond this week, where Kendall had to be pulled from a mud hole.

**K**alyssa McConnell, 12 and Kendall Schofield, 13, are close friends.

Both are Grade 7 students attending Summitview Public School.

Their friendship, dating back to Grade 1, was further strengthened when Kalyssa had the presence of mind to run for help after her companion became stuck up to her waist in mud and water at Lehman's Pond located at the rear of their Manitoba Street homes.

It was after school. The two girls were playing near the edge of the pond as they'd done many times before. Suddenly, Kalyssa realized she'd ventured too close to an area they call "Dead Man's Pit".

"Don't come over here," she remembers calling to her friend.

But Kendall didn't heed the warning, seeing Kalyssa was already stuck.

"I wanted to help," Kendall said, "but I, too, fell in up past my knees."

"I was starting to sink," she recalled. She cried out to Kalyssa, "go get help".

And Kalyssa, who had freed herself, responded, running as fast as she could to her friend's house, a short distance away.

Fortunately, Kendall's mother was home. She came directly to the site. By this time, her daughter had sunk down to her waist. The mother was unable to pull her free. She then ran back to the house and returned with two shovels.

Using one shovel as a lever, Kendall, assisted by her mother and

with Kalyssa's help, completed the rescue.

Kendall said although several people were walking dogs in the immediate pond area, none responded.

"It was cold and I was frantically waving my arms but people just stared and kept walking," she said.

She remembers Kalyssa using a tree branch in an attempt to pull her free but this didn't work.

Kalyssa also dug with her hands but this didn't work either.

It was close to an hour before she was finally freed.

"At this part of the pond, the water's really deep," Kendall said, "any longer and I would have

gone under."

She says the fire department would likely have been called as a last resort "but I didn't want to cause any more fuss."

*"It was cold and I was frantically waving my arms but people just stared and kept walking."*

"I prayed, please God, don't let her go under," Kalyssa said.

What did Kendall's mother say? She wasn't angry, just glad everything turned out OK, Kend-

all replied.

Although covered with mud, she said a hot shower made her feel "good as new".

Kalyssa says despite the close call, they'll keep returning to their favourite play area.

"But we'll never go back to that spot," she added.

Cynthia McConnell, Kalyssa's mother, thinks the pond area, a popular site for dog-walkers, lacks adequate warning signage.

"Skaters are continually warned about unsafe ice so why not do the same with respect to bog-holes?" she asks.

She said she'd been in touch with the town but as yet no per-

manent safeguards had resulted.

"They laid down a couple of boards over the spot," she noted.

Lehman's Pond was once part of the Gar Lehman farm, immediately north of the old village boundary. Mr. Lehman was a former reeve.

Longtime residents can recall when the site served as a popular outdoor hockey rink. Although spring-fed, it usually freezes during the winter.

Skaters could be spotted on it last winter.

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

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