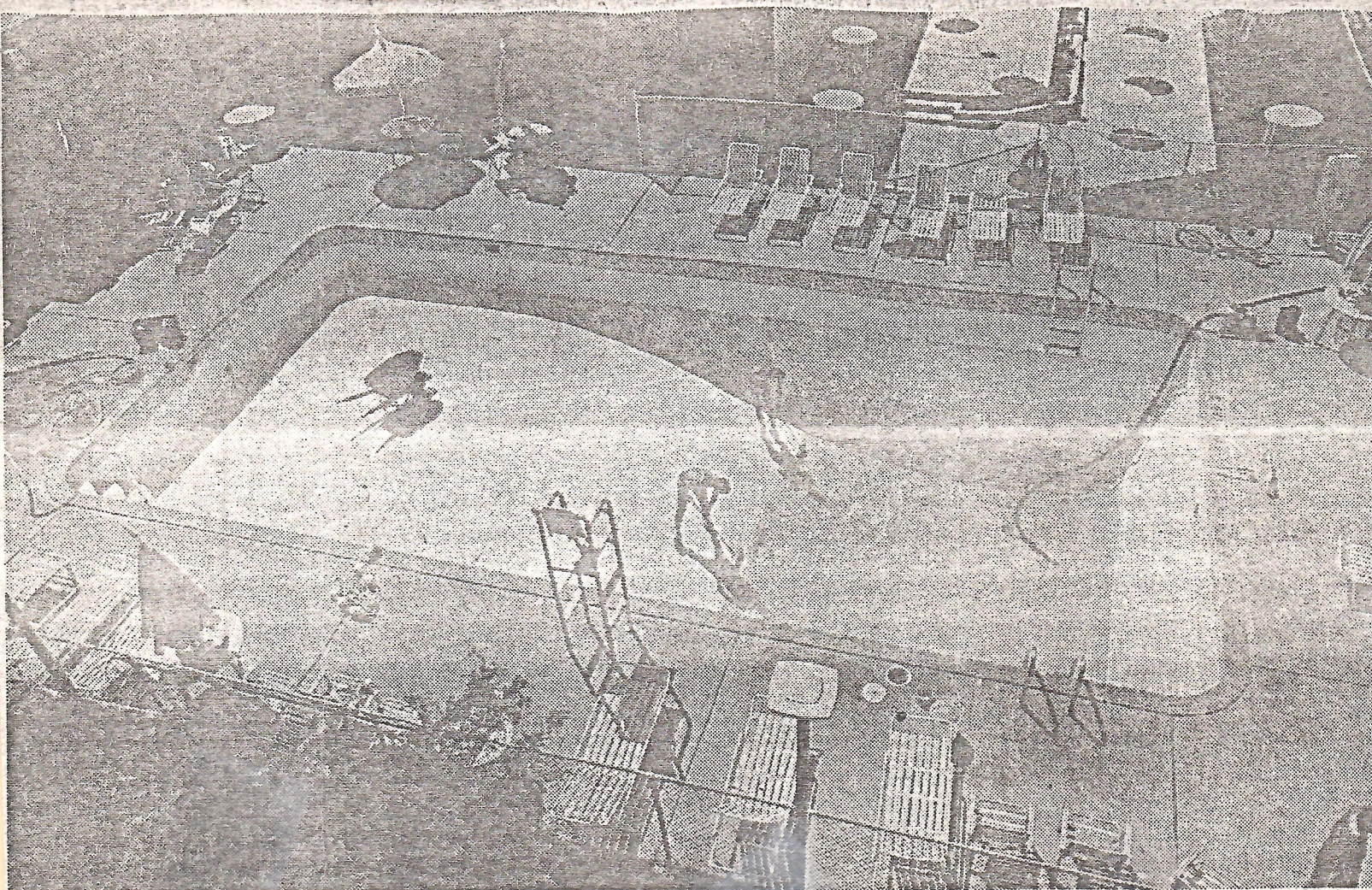




WORKERS SWEEP BROKEN BEER BOTTLES FROM POOL AT
HOWARD JOHNSON'S HOTEL YESTERDAY

'Partying' players trashed hotel

By KEVIN McMAHON
Standard Staff

Al Sawatsky was trying to be a nice guy and what did he get for it? Burns in the bedsheets, beer bottles in the pool, a whole bunch of rooms cast into oblivion and trouble with the boss.

Mr. Sawatsky, front desk manager of the St. Catharines

by making enough noise to attract police several times, pushing a female hotel employee around, burning holes in about 30 new bedspreads, removing the numbers from the rooms on two floors and throwing more than five cases of beer bottles into the swimming pool.

As a result, the hotel, one of the few in town willing to house

represented Alberta, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and the Northwest Territories — began arriving at the hotel early last week and were given 30 rooms at \$51 each for quadruple occupancy — normally worth \$89 each.

Mrs. Carella said the discount was given after Mr. Sawatsky insisted it would be for the good of the community and the

rates on both Thursday and Friday after being kept up all night by the players' carousing. On Saturday and Sunday the fun hit such heights that several customers received free rooms in recompense for their suffering.

Mr. Sawatsky said the discounts cost the hotel about \$600 "not to mention the company image that has been damaged

Mr. Sawatsky, front desk manager of the St. Catharines Howard Johnson's Hotel, was helping with clean-up operations and eating a bit of crow yesterday after he convinced the establishment's manager to give four out-of-town softball teams rooms at reduced rates, only to have them trash the place, doing thousands of dollars worth of damage.

"We had chalked the discount rate up to helping out the community and helping out the teams." But the players, in town last week for the Canadian Junior Men's Softball Championship, repaid the favor

As a result, the hotel, one of the few in town willing to house the ball players in the first place, is now considering banning athletics groups.

Betty Carella, general manager of Howard Johnson's, said the damage done by the over-active 18 to 20-year-olds has added up to at least a few thousand dollars and there is no one the hotel can send the bill.

"They just deny it," she said of players accused of taking part in the extended rampage, "and when you talk to the coaches, they're the same way."

The 120 ball players — who

insisted it would be for the good of the community and the company image. But, as her staff mopped up yesterday, she said "It makes you think twice if you want to be a part of this community."

With brewing companies "wheeling (beer) in by the case for them," Mr. Sawatsky said the players began partying as soon as they hit town and did so throughout the week — long, late and loud — much to the annoyance of other customers in the establishment, which was more than fully booked.

As a result, about a half dozen customers were given half-price

counts cost the hotel about \$600 "not to mention the company image that has been damaged because of the complaints," three of which have already reached Howard Johnson's head office in Toronto.

On three consecutive nights the hotel had to call police to settle the players down; the first after a woman staff member, ordering players out of the swimming pool at 4 a.m., was shoved around by one of them. Mrs. Carella said the hotel decided not to press charges because it was hoped that the incident, early in the week, was an isolated one caused by too much drink.

It was far from it and the parties got progressively more expensive as the players turned from simple stupidity and rudeness to vandalism.

About 30 sheets that Mrs. Carella said the hotel "just bought" for almost \$60 each were filled with burn holes and all the room numbers from two floors were swiped.

"No one could find their rooms and we had to mark the numbers on with chalk," said Mr. Sawatsky. "It may sound like a funny prank but it's going to cost more than \$800 to replace the numbers."

Finally, on their last night in town, the ball players began tossing beer bottles from their third and fourth floor balconies into the pool, filling it with more than five cases of broken glass. Mrs. Carella said hotel staff tried to clean the pool Sunday but there was so much broken glass the pool finally had to be drained and swept — a job worth about \$1,000.

While not wanting "to point any fingers," Mr. Sawatsky said the Alberta players "were partiers all the time they were

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