

School's In

BY BERNADETTE WARD

There's no money in the kitty, but trustees at Halton District School Board have voted to go forward with the building of at least two new schools in an effort to avert what staff are calling an accommodation crisis.

"It's very clear that Halton has a situation that has not been addressed," said Gerry Cullen, superintendent of facility services.

No longer willing to wait for the province to release details of the new funding formula, the board has decided to forge on ahead in dealing with the tremendous growth pressures.

With 3,500 students currently in portables and another 2,000 expected in enrollment next year, trustees voted to build two new schools by accessing \$9.1 million in education development charge reserves as well as a possible \$8 million in funds designated for a wide-area bandwidth upgrade.

"Just get them built. The consequences are just incredible for the students," said Bruce Jones, trustee, Ward 1 and 2 Oakville.

The two schools, one in Burlington and one in Milton are slated to be built for September 2006, but another two schools are needed - one in Oakville and another in Georgetown.

As one of the province's growth boards, accommodations have been problematic for

some time and although the Halton board is not the only growth board out of 72 provincially, it is one of the fastest growing.

Up until last winter, closing schools in order to create eligibility for new ones was one of the only strategies available to growing boards. In February of 2005, the Ministry of Education released its Good Places to Learn report which indicates this practice will no longer work.

It was never a popular practice with residents who were often not pleased to give up a school in one area so that one could be opened in another and it was a divisive practice that left trustees in a difficult position.

Unfortunately, the current situation is not much better.

"If we don't build we'll be lynched by the public, but if we do, we could be hung out to dry by the ministry," said Jones.

Despite the clear need, not all trustees were comfortable with the proposed plan.

Debbie Downs pointed out that the board was contemplating the use of \$9.1 million that they don't really have as approval to use this money must still come from the Ministry of Education. She also felt that using the \$8 million slated for technology upgrades was tantamount to raiding the classroom.

"This is so far removed from fiduciary responsibility that I just cannot fathom it," she said.

Pink rosettes for cancer

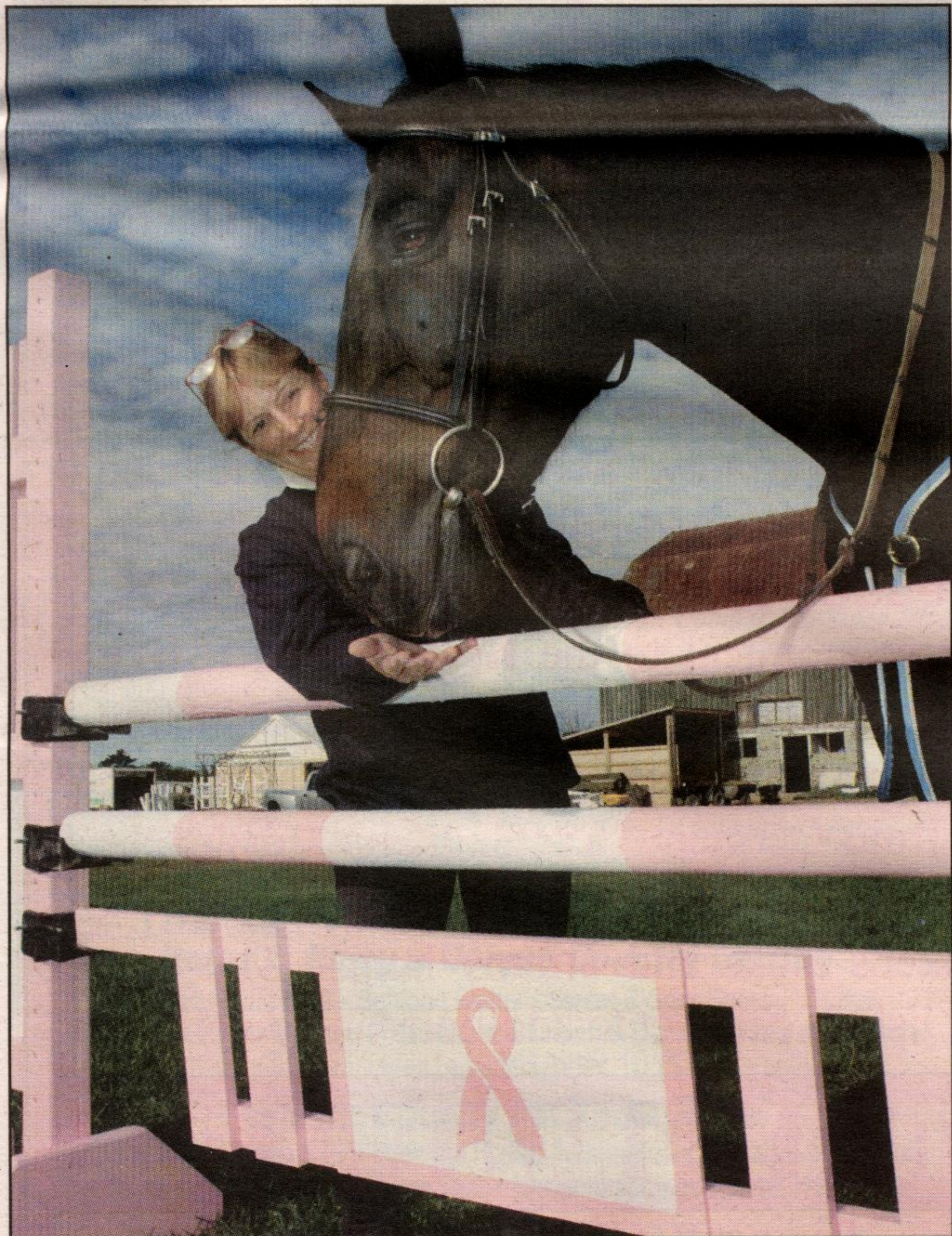


PHOTO BY PETER C. MCCUSKER

Wolf, an Irish Warmblood, wears the champions blanket in preparation for the first annual Oakbridge Stables Classic Equestrian event with \$2500 prize money in support of Breast Cancer Research. Competition in 16 classes in six divisions with a miniprix in the afternoon sponsored by "A Bit Equine" of Burlington. The farm is located on Burnhamthorpe Rd. west of Neyagaweya Blvd, Oakville. The event is being held on Saturday, October 15 not the 14th as reported previously.



Have a Safe & Happy Thanksgiving Weekend!

Fuel Prices Got You Down?



Book Your **Tune-Up Now to Improve Your Vehicle's Fuel Efficiency**

Brian's

Auto Repairs & Tire Centre

For all Your Auto Needs!

390 Ontario St. N., Unit # 1, Milton

HRS: Mon. - Fri. 7 - 5:30
Sat. 8 - 12
(Except long weekends)

875-1522



*Accredited Test & Repair Facility



9 Buyer Traps to be Aware of BEFORE Buying a Home

MILTON - Buying a home is a major investment no matter which way you look at it. But for many homebuyers, it's an even more expensive process than it needs to be because many fall prey to at least a few of many common and costly mistakes which trap them into either paying too much for the home they want, or losing their dream home to another buyer or, worse, buying the wrong home for their needs.

A systemized approach to the homebuying process can help you steer clear of these common traps, allowing you to not only cut costs, but also buy the home that's best for you.

An industry report has just been released entitled "Nine Buyer Traps and How to Avoid Them". This important report discusses the 9 most common and costly of these homebuyer traps, how to identify them, and what you can do to avoid them.

To hear a brief recorded message about how to order your free copy of this report, call 1-877-617-1275 and enter ID# 4018. You can call anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Call NOW to learn how to avoid costly buyer mistakes before you purchase your next home.

www.haltonbuyertraps.com

How to Avoid 13 Extra Costs When Buying a Home

MILTON - Whether you're looking to buy your first home, or trading up to a larger one, there are many costs - on top of the purchase price - that you must figure into your calculations of affordability. These extra fees, such as taxes and other additional costs, could surprise you with an unwanted financial nightmare on closing day if you're not informed and prepared.

Some of these costs are one-time fixed payments, while others represent an ongoing monthly or yearly commitment. While not all of these costs will apply in every situation, it's better to know about them ahead of time so you can budget properly.

Remember, buying a home is a major milestone, and whether it's your first, second or tenth, there are many small but important details, not to mention stress and excitement, to deal with during the process. The last thing you need are unbudgeted financial obligations in the hours before you take possession of your new home.

To help homebuyers understand what these extra costs are, and in what situations they may apply, a free industry report has been prepared called "13 Extra Costs to Be Aware of Before Buying a Home".

To hear a brief recorded message about how to order your free copy of this report, call 1-877-617-1275 and enter ID# 4008. You can call anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call now to make sure you're budgeting properly for your next move.

www.halton13extracosts.com