

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Rosemary Brown to speak on March 21

Rosemary Brown, an internationally recognized educator, social activist and current head of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, will be the keynote speaker at this year's local celebration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

This March 21 marks the 30th anniversary of the United Nations' first proclamation which followed a peaceful demonstration against apartheid in Sharpeville, South Africa, that ended with 69 black people killed.

South Africa might seem like a long way from Halton Hills, but in January 1993, seven members of the Ku Klux Klan, dressed in full white regalia, showed up on the main streets of Georgetown and Acton, to promote their message of white supremacy. Subsequently, a number of local citizens rallied together to form the North Halton Cultural

Awareness Council, a group aimed at promoting cultural and racial harmony and tolerance in the communities of Georgetown, Acton and Milton.

The council is marking Thursday, March 21 with a special open house at Hugh Foster Hall, Milton Town Hall, from 1 to 4 p.m. (last year's event took place in Georgetown).

In her address, Rosemary Brown will be able to draw on her own experiences as a member of the B.C. legislature for 14 years, and as a special ambassador for an organization working with women in the Third World.

As Chief Commissioner for the Ontario Human Rights Commission, she is responsible for administering the province's Human Rights Code, which was enacted to protect people from discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation or other grounds.

Over the past three years, the North Halton Cultural Awareness Council has been actively establishing its presence in the three communities. With the help of provincial grants, the council has held workshops for high school students, provided information and resources at several open houses, and formed working relationships with police, schools and other community groups. As a result of the council's work, students at area high schools are in the process of establishing equity committees, and for the second year in a row a Special Citizenship Court was held in the Georgetown Civic Centre.

The March 21 celebration will be attended by the mayors of Halton Hills and Milton, by provincial and federal representatives and by members of Halton Regional Police. The event is open to the public. Anyone interested in learning more about the council can call 853-2911.

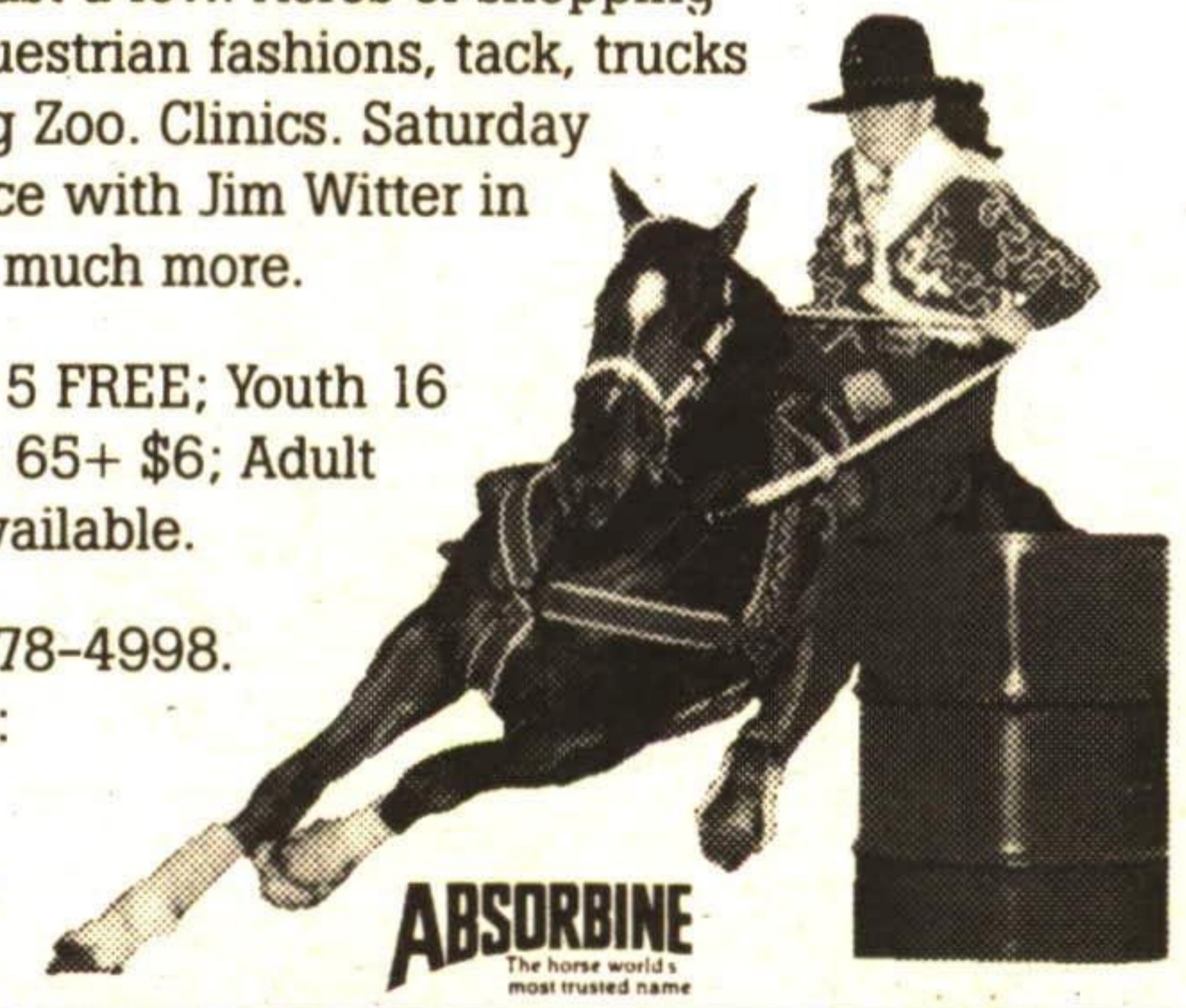
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