

Look Inside for Volunteer Special Section

Tories set ambitious environmental goals

April 22 is Earth Day. Celebrated by more than 500 million people in 164 countries, it is a chance to focus awareness on environmental issues and teach people what they can do every day to make a difference.

In Ontario, Earth Day has grown into Earth Weeks with events running from April 14 - 29.

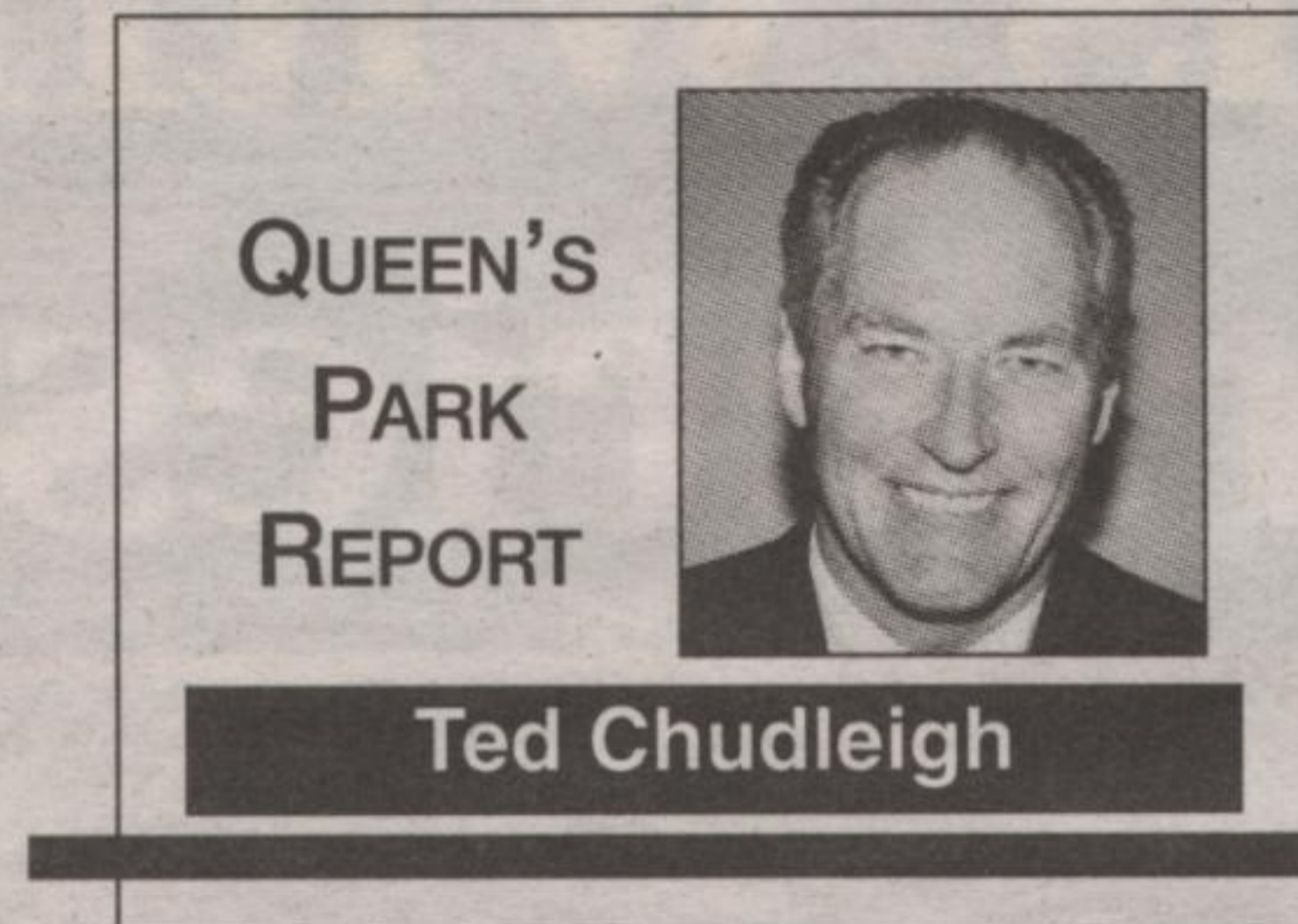
Of course, protecting our natural resources, maintaining a clean environment and ultimately improving the quality of life in Halton is a year-round task. Reducing household waste, consuming less energy and walking or biking instead of driving are just a few examples of how we can contribute to a cleaner community and a healthier province.

Our government is engaged in a never-ending battle to improve the environment. We launched Drive Clean to get dirty cars off the road. We put stringent new drinking water standards in place and introduced tough rules against polluters.

We also recently enlarged the protected land in Ontario by 2.4 million hectares through our Living Legacy program. Ontario now has 378 parks and protected areas that cover an area about three-quarters the size of England.

In the last year I spearheaded an initiative to look closely at the north shore of Lake Huron and Lake Superior with regard to provincial parks, protected lands, business development and tourism opportunities. The plan for managing this vast area, will be part of the Living Legacy program once it is fully developed.

Premier Mike Harris has set an ambitious goal for Ontario—the safest water, the highest standards, with frequent testing, prompt reporting and tough penalties. We have launched a \$200 million Provincial Water



QUEEN'S
PARK
REPORT

Ted Chudleigh

Protection Fund to help municipalities experiencing health or environmental problems related to water or sewer services.

Ontario has also launched several programs to address air pollution including emission limits on power plants and a Smog Patrol spot check of trucks and buses under the Drive Clean program. There is also a proposed regulation requiring mandatory tracking of 358 airborne pollutants from all industrial sectors, a regulation requiring gas refiners and blenders to reduce fumes from summer grade gasoline, and stringent new landfill standards addressing the capture of methane.

We created an organization to help find ways to reduce by 50 per cent the solid waste going to landfills and we restructured Ontario's pesticide licensing system to provide more education, and training for the safe and responsible use of pesticides.

We have backed all this up with tough enforcement. We hiked fines and instituted the longest jail terms in the country for major environmental offenders. We closed loopholes in legislation and created a highly mobile and focused compliance, inspection and enforcement unit, dedicated to catching deliberate and repeat offenders.

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Cancellation cannot be accepted after 12:00 noon on April 26th

Contact:
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