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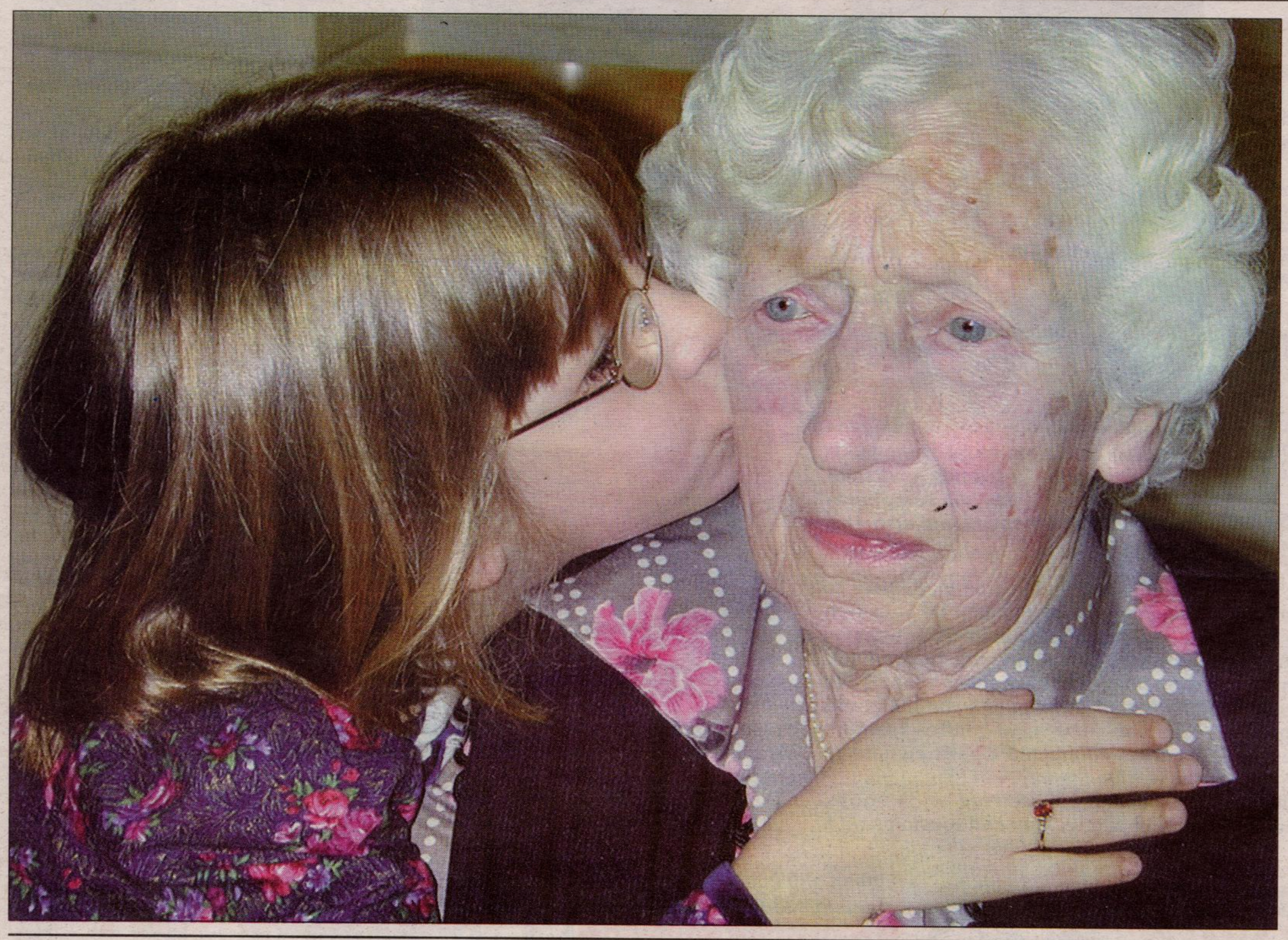

A great big peck for a great grandma

Great granddaughter Sabrina Treviranus, 7, gives her great grandmother Jutta Siefken a birthday kiss during an open house at Hillcrest United Church Sunday to celebrate Siefken's 100th birthday. See story page 9.

Photo by Shawn McAlpine

Council wants province to deal with smoking issue

Any changes to the Halton Hills' smoking bylaw have been put on hold until the town gets a response from the Ontario government on developing a province-wide law.

Council voted 6-3 to defer a report calling for a public meeting on a proposed new smoking bylaw. That bylaw included restrictions on smoking in public places such as bars, billiard and bowling halls, and restaurants before 9 p.m. for one year until a complete ban on smoking in all workplaces and all public places came into effect July 1, 2003.

The current bylaw— which still calls for a complete ban by June 30, 2003— states Halton Hills restaurants must be 75 per cent non-smoking and 50 per cent non smoking after 10 p.m. and bars are 50 per cent non smoking until 10 p.m. when unrestricted smoking kicks in.

But Councillor Rick Bonnette— a non-smoker— opposed the smoking bylaw, suggesting that the issue has become too divisive among residents and the economic impact too great— especially since neighbouring cities have pushed back their proposed bans to 2004 and beyond.

Bonnette proposed a motion— approved unanimously by council and applauded by the packed public gallery— to request the Province of Ontario develop uniform smoking regulations in all public places to "ensure a level playing field and fair competition throughout Ontario."

This resolution will be forwarded to the Premier, the Ontario Opposition leaders, the MPPs representing Halton, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and all provincial towns and cities.

As well, the town will request this issue be placed on the agenda for discussion at the AMO conference to be held in August.

"The time is right for the province to deal with it," said Bonnette. "We have a new Premier (Ernie Eves) coming in and I think it's time for municipalities across Ontario to push provincial leaders to make a decision that will be fair and leave everyone with fair competition."

Bonnette encouraged members of the gallery to write to Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh.

"This is where it starts folks, at the grass-roots level, get involved."

Four members of the public spoke against the proposed smoking bylaw revisions with concerns ranging from loss of business, loss of income or job, and the loss of personal right to choose.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer

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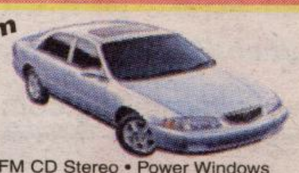

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