

Cathy Sweet comes home

By Linda Kirby
Fifteen-year-old Cathy Erica Sweet has come home to her family and Milton.

The attractive brunette teenager who disappeared during a family vacation in San Miguel, Mexico, 13 months ago arrived at Toronto International Airport Thursday evening.

Her reappearance put to rest fears that she was dead or the victim of white slavery.

Cathy's exit from hiding came about last Monday (Mar. 6) when she telephoned her parents, Frances and Conrad Sweet in Milton to tell them she wanted to come home.

The telephone call by Cathy was sparked by a front-page story in a Mexico City daily newspaper which ran earlier that day and asked if she was "dead or alive."

Little is still known concerning her survival and living arrangements of the past year.

Cathy has given few answers and no explanation as to why she left her parents and 14-year-old brother David on Feb. 4, 1980.

Full coverage Pg. C1

Replying to reporters' questions at a Friday morning press conference at CTV's Charles St. studios, she said her existence "was not easy."

She admitted she was held against her will by a man for two weeks. She apparently knew the man, but said she was not kidnapped nor threatened.

The former Milton District High School student spent part of the time hitchhiking across Mexico, but in the past few months worked as a cook in a Mexico City discotheque.

"I'm very happy to be home," she told reporters. Fluent in Spanish, she speaks English with a slight accent.

She later added she would like to return to Mexico for a holiday.

Cathy has not only left behind some

memories in Mexico, but an 18-year-old Mexican boyfriend, Genaro Lopez Vargas.

She denied earlier reports the couple were engaged to be married, but said there are plans that he will visit the Sweet family in August.

Mrs. Sweet attributed her daughter's reluctance to speak and answer questions during the press conference to the fact that "she is a very private person."

Mrs. Sweet opened the press conference with a written statement which she read aloud, thanking police, government officials in both Canada and Mexico and the media for their efforts to locate her only daughter.

Several times she stopped, fighting back tears, as she said, "not all cases have such happy endings" adding she hopes other

parents in similar situations would not despair but continue to have hope.

There are no plans for Cathy to return to school. Instead, she will take correspondence courses at home, she said.

She added she is particularly keen on pursuing lessons in Spanish and French.

Of the next few months, Mrs. Sweet said the family just wants to go ahead with their lives and "get to know each other again."

During much of the interview Cathy relied upon the help and advice of Mexican newspaper editor Gabriel Parra, who had accompanied Cathy on her flight home from Mexico, and CTV reporter Jim Reed, responsible for a special investigation by W5 into the case.

Although she sat beside her parents, she rarely glanced at them and never said a word.

It was Mr. Parras who after receiving a phone call in response to his newspaper story, located the young teen.

(Continued on Pg. 2)



Cathy Sweet. Shown as she returned home.

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Reed by 518 votes



Victor again. Julian Reed has his hand raised after the 518-vote election pleurality which put Mr. Reed back in Queen's Park for the third time.

The official March 19 election results show incumbent Julian Reed with a narrow 518 vote margin over Progressive Conservative candidate Fran Baines.

The victory, which Mr. Reed himself called a "personal" one over a province-wide Bill Davis sweep, left him exhausted Thursday evening, but happy that he was able to hold on to the Halton-Burlington provincial riding for the third time in a row.

The plurality of 518 votes is nothing near the 3,698 votes he beat PC candidate George Grey with in 1977. The big loser of the night was NDP rookie Chris Cutler who got only 3,500 votes, far less than the 5,598 NDP candidate Bill Johnson had in 1977.

PC candidate Fran Baines pulled in the support of 12,877 Halton-Burlington voters which was more than the 10,287 mark set in 1977 by Mr. Grey.

But even though there were almost 11,000 more voters in this election than in 1977, the turnout, according to Returning Officer Mrs. Audrey Boron was 56.4 per cent, or 12.6 per cent less than the 69.1 per cent of the 1977 total of 42,736 enumerated voters who went to the polls.

During election evening there was much discussion in the Progressive Conservative camp about the narrow loss in the unofficial vote tally of about 494 votes, which was close to the number of voting members allegedly held back by Brian Penman forces during the nomination squabble which left Mrs. Baines partially in election limbo during the first three weeks of the campaign.

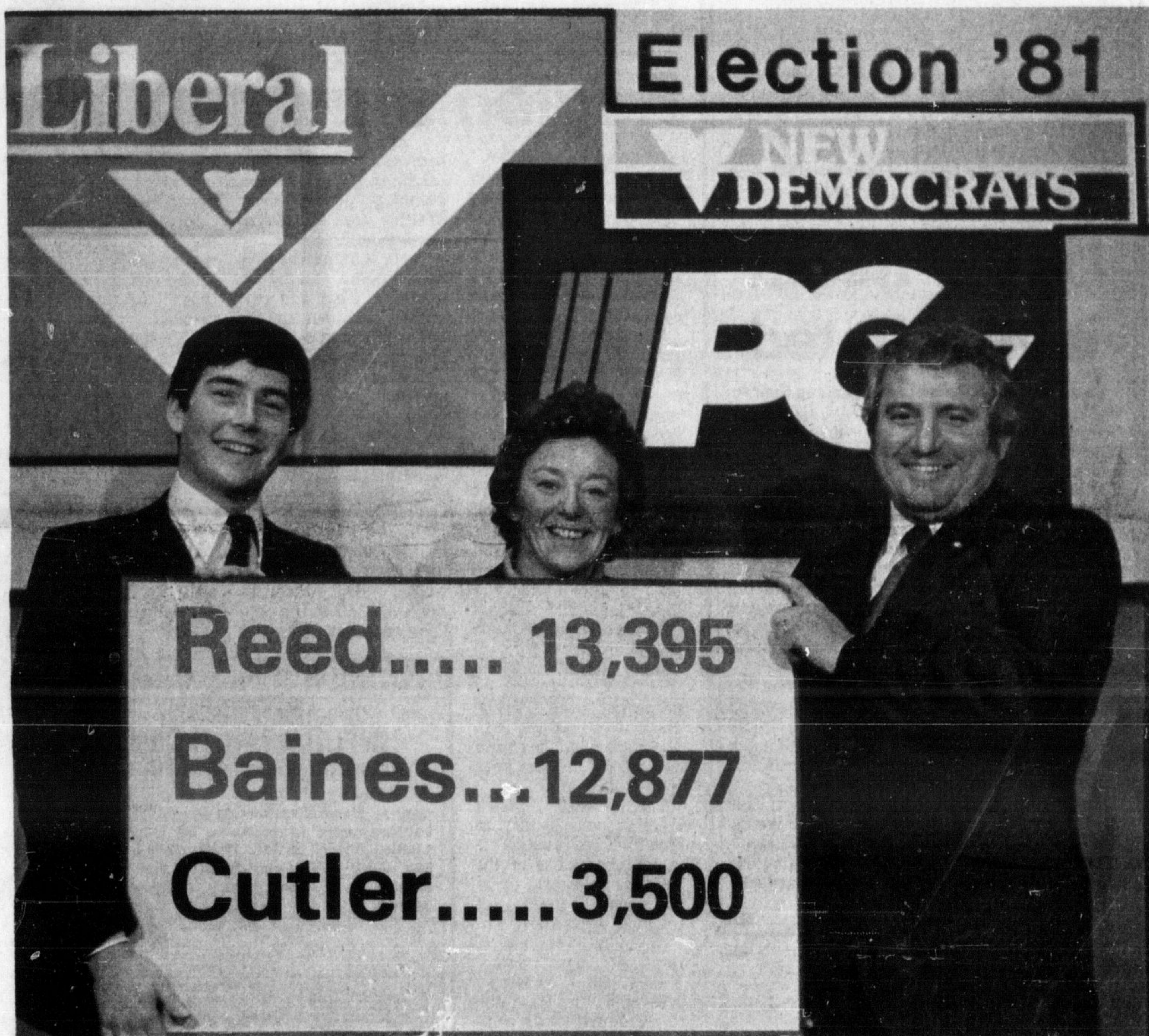
Mr. Reed termed Mrs. Baines "the toughest opponent I've yet had."

But in the PC camp one party member said "I hope they're happy now" with specific reference to the Penman group of party members.

As for NDP candidate Chris Cutler, he said he would be back on the election trail this week. He says he will be knocking on doors and continuing to push NDP platforms until the next provincial election rolls around.

In other ridings, Jim Snow was returned as the MPP for Oakville along with George Kerr who remains MPP for Burlington.

Full coverage Pg. 3



How they finished. The numbers on the board best summarize the 32nd Ontario election. The March 19 election candidates from left are; Chris Cutler for the

New Democrats; Fran Baines for the Progressive Conservatives; and Julian Reed, the winner in Halton-Burlington for the Liberals.

Inside today



To plug a leak. Halton Region is Studying a new information by-law to plug leaks of sensitive materials and documents to the press and the public.

Had to love labor

A Milton couple found out it takes a lot of hard work to build a rustic dream home from logs. Story and picture Pg. C2.

Burning the mortgage

March marked the month when the Trinity Baptist Church was able to burn the mortgage on their building. Story and picture Pg. C10

SECTION ONE

In the Courts 2
Full election coverage 3
Editorials, Columns 4
Record Board budget set 5
Blind woman helps understanding 6
Be a friend to retarded 8
New Anglican Minister 9
No dough for HWP 12

SECTION TWO

Sports news and views B1 to B4
Council, Region roundup B5
Classified advertising B7 to B9
Home of the Week, Real Estate B10 to B12

SECTION THREE

Cathy Sweet in Perspective C1
Recipe, Junior Farmers C2
Entertainment C3
Anne anniversary held C5
Omagh, Drumquinn C10
Special supplements: Woolco, K-Mart, Food City, The Bay, The Economist, Oakville Place.

Council will trim \$1,250,000 . . .

Milton 1981 levy may rise 20 mills — Lougheed

By Jane Muller
Milton council reviewed the 1981 budget Tuesday night but the bottom line will not be decided until the final meeting April 7.

Director of Finance Don Lougheed recommended a reduction of \$1,250,000 for the 1981 proposed figure which means \$4,854,115 would be raised by taxes.

Last year's figure was

nearly half that amount at \$2,640,430.

Mr. Lougheed in his report to council, assured members he does not recommend the adoption of the budget as it stands now.

Further meetings to familiarize council with the budget will be held then priorities can be set and areas of budget cuts can be decided.

As the budget now stands, the preliminary

levy rate for the town will increase approximately 20 mills.

Halton Region is not expected to establish its rate until the end of April.

Halton Board of Education which requires \$451,685 more from the Town of Milton than last year, will increase the mill rate to 5.16 mills which would represent an actual increase of \$30.96 based on

an average home assessed at \$6,000 for the year.

The elementary mill rate at 2.78 mills represents a 6.66 per cent increase while secondary education rate is up 7.61 per cent at 2.38 mills.

The final mill rate is based on a combination of the Board of Education, Halton Region and town of Milton's established rate.

"The budget reflects major increases in the level of expenditures for the town and the major increases of service," Mr. Lougheed said.

In some instances the level of service has not increased but the population has increased leaving a greater number of residents to be serviced.

In his budget preview, Mr. Lougheed introduced a plan to discontinue the Senior Citizen Tax Rebate Program which saw those eligible receiving up to \$100 rebates from the town last year.

Mr. Lougheed points to the provincial government which subsidizes municipal taxes for seniors up to \$550 compared to a \$500 ceiling last year.

Federal Income Tax benefits allow for taxes over the \$550 mark.

Various departments require additional staff and equipment and council will hear each department's requests throughout budget deliberations.

A new sub-fire hall and staff as well as a new dispatch unit and additional man power for its operation have been requested by the fire

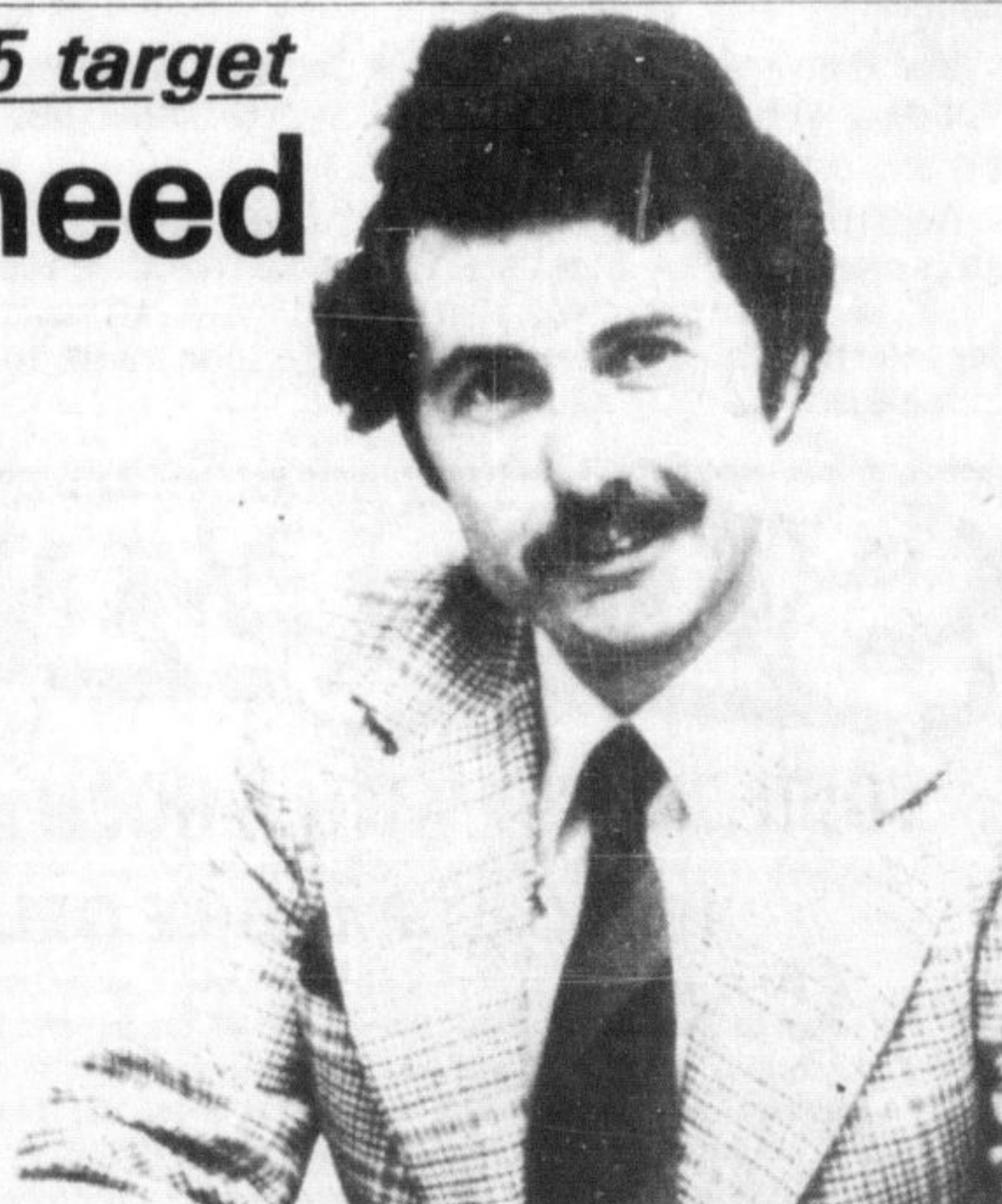
department. Building Department Director Ray Weido is again after more staff and equipment for new staff members. The request was turned down last year.

Milton transit service is requesting more buses despite the addition of two buses last September.

The lengthy list of capital items included in this preliminary draft budget contains items such as \$100,000 for an indoor pool design and \$712,000 for a proposed town hall move to the old courthouse and jail complex.

Two Hamilton men charged with the second degree murder of 25-year-old William Edward Bird of 24 Lang St., Hamilton, will appear in Burlington Provincial Court for a preliminary hearing Thursday, April 2.

The body of Edward Bird was found in a field near Kilbride by two hikers Jan. 25. Police believe they body may have been there for nearly a month. An autopsy revealed Bird died of massive head wounds, the result of a severe beating which is believed to have taken place in the Kilbride field. Scheduled to appear in court are Andrew Charles Walker, 20, and Wayne Barrick, 36.



Ready for the budget. Milton Financial Director Don Lougheed predicts there will be a municipal tax increase this year by the time the town levy is struck.

The Champion wins business award

The Milton Canadian Champion has taken first place in the National Business Writing Awards for 1980.

This Canada-wide competition is open to major financial newspapers, such as the Financial Post and the Financial Times, Canadian dailies with financial sections, professional business writers, and business periodicals from across the country.

The winning story in the weekly newspaper-periodicals sector was The Champion's review of the Milton Downtown Business Improvement Area written by News Editor Jim Robinson.

The story which was selected by a panel of judges reviewed the past history of the Milton DBIA, the present situation, and what is hoped for in the future.

The award, which carries a \$500 cash prize, will be given April 9 at the Hotel Toronto in what is considered the "Oscars" of business writing in this country.

This is the first time an Inland Publishing Co. Limited-Metrospan Printing and Publishing Co. community newspaper has ever won this prestigious award.

The award comes only a month after The Champion took seven Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association awards for community newspapers. The first place awards for writing presented by the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment were also won by Mr. Robinson.



Jim Robinson

Hamilton pair face April 2 murder hearing

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