

Milton Schools
Halton District School Board

Celebration erupts as Percy Merry School spared the axe

By BRAD REAUME
The Champion

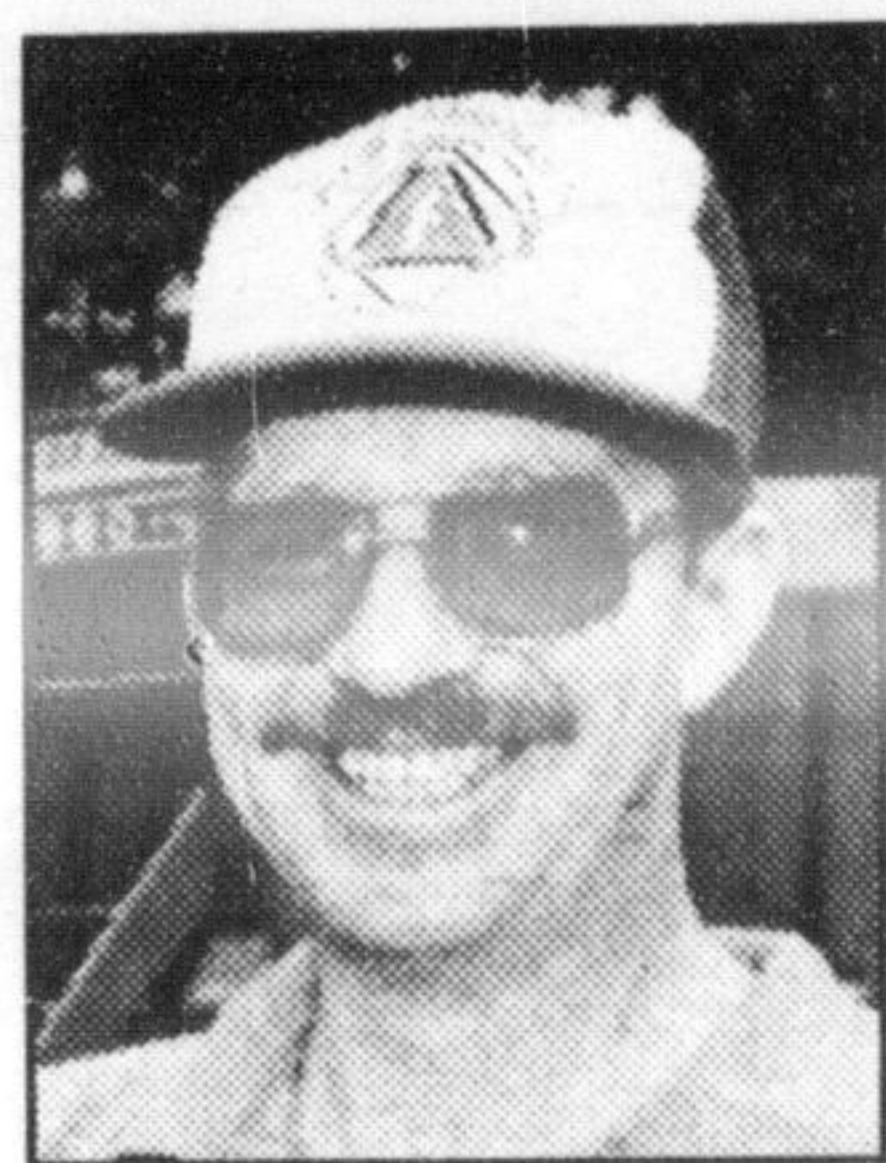
Percy Merry lives. Fearing the worst, students, staff, and parents were unaware of the decision reached late Tuesday night. "Yippee," said a disbelieving Cecil

Patterson, a member of the Percy Merry Parents Council. "We're going to have a party." Initially the Halton Board of Education had estimated it would save about \$2 million if six schools, including Milton's Percy Merry, were closed. The schools got a temporary reprieve

last fall while the matter was put off for more study following an outcry from affected communities. Tuesday night the board chose to close three of the six: Lakeshore and Fairfield schools in Burlington and Woodside in Oakville. Woodside has been mothballed for 10 years, according to Milton Trustee

Tim Kingsbury. Percy Merry, as well as Mohawk Gardens and Mountain Gardens schools in Burlington, were spared the axe. The others will be sold. Mr. Kingsbury said the vote on Percy Merry was 12-5 in favour of keeping it

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Cecil Patterson

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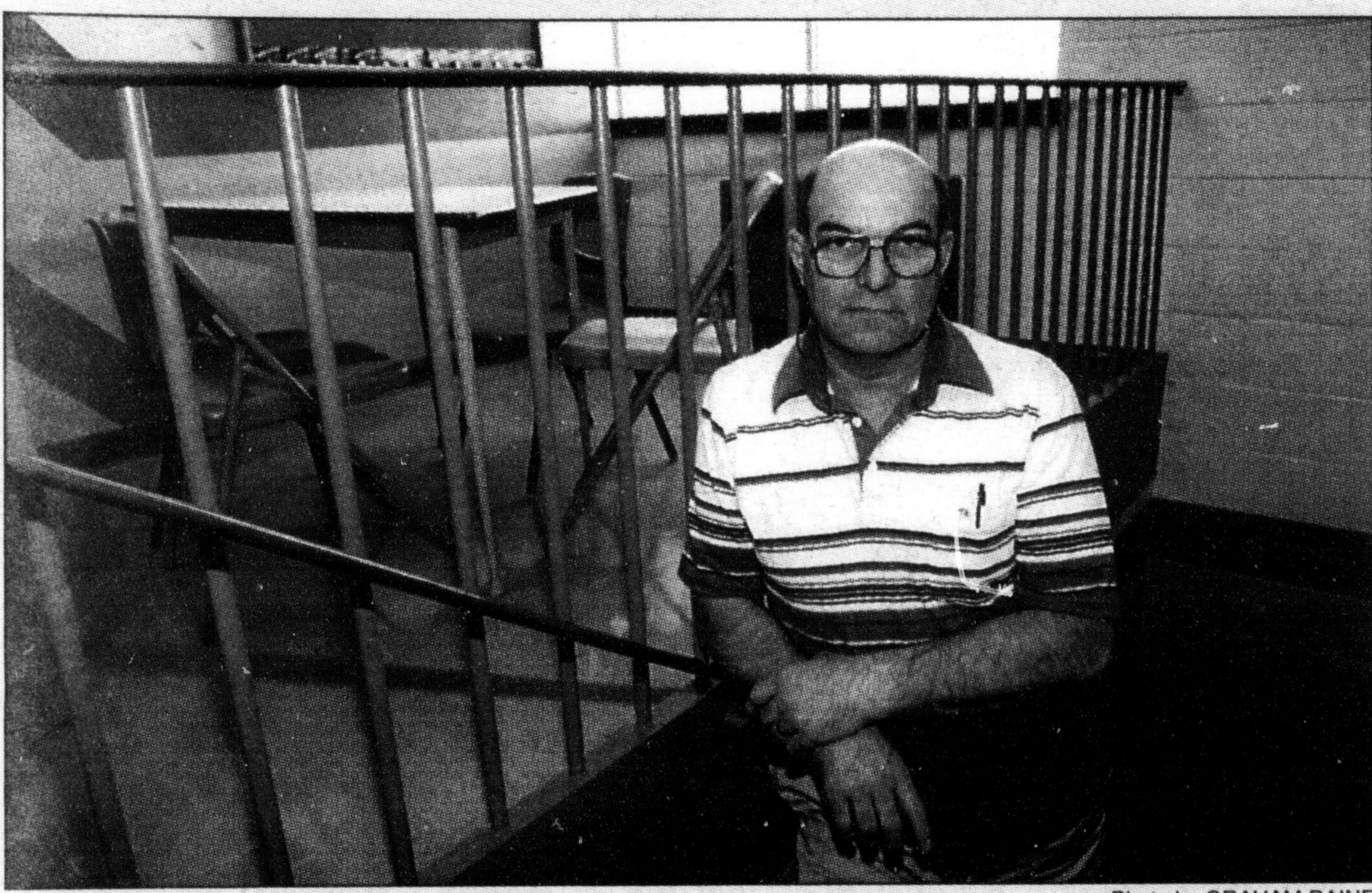


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Separate school trustee Joe Deoni is concerned about structural defects and overcrowding at Martin Street's Holy Rosary school. A French class is held in this stairwell. Trustees recently approved the construction of a new Holy Rosary but there are still several hurdles to overcome before ground is broken.

They refuse to give up

Fighting to rebuild Holy Rosary

By BRAD REAUME
The Champion

The world has changed since 1954 when Holy Rosary opened as a simple four-room Catholic schoolhouse. Perhaps most seriously in a wired world, Holy Rosary is not wired. That and a number of other deficiencies are behind a \$4.8 million plan by parents and trustees to rebuild it. The plan cleared two hurdles this week, first being approved by the separate school board's property committee and then receiving support from the whole board. According to Milton Trustee Joe

Deoni the push is to fund a new school through a combination of borrowed money and board reserve funds. Meanwhile, parents and trustees are worried that Holy Rosary will have to wait behind two other Burlington schools — Ascension and St. Patrick's — despite a study that clearly points to the urgent need for a new Milton facility. There are still several barriers to pass before ground will be broken. The idea must pass scrutiny of the provincial Education Improvement Commission and then survive board approval of a specific tender. Mr.

Deoni said it is possible work will begin as early as this fall. According to Milton Trustee Mary Lou Loughlin, all she and school parents want is for Holy Rosary students to have the same opportunities and facilities as other kids in Halton. Refurbishing the school to modern standards has been estimated at \$4.2 million. Holy Rosary parent council president Michael O'Gorman said he did not want to pit one school against another in the race for funding. All three schools have been identified as having serious problems so they

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Opponents say:

Liberal health money just ploy to buy more votes

By BRAD REAUME / The Champion

A Liberal promise to put back \$1.5 billion in federal health care transfers to provinces is an election ploy, according to some local candidates. Only one day after calling a June 2 federal election Prime Minister Jean Chretien announced that the re-investment in health care was possible because deficit reduction targets are ahead of schedule.

The government had previously said health care transfers to provinces would be reduced to \$11 billion for 1998. This measure raises the transfer to \$12.5 billion. "We're eliminating the final set of cuts because we are about 18 months ahead of our deficit cutting targets," said Liberal MPP Julian Reed. "Canadians by and large look at health care as their number one concern." Mr. Reed said despite the increased spending the deficit should still disappear next year. He agreed the next thing to tackle is the national debt, a battle which he said should begin by paying back money borrowed from foreign markets. "Paying back off-shore debt started last year in a small way," Mr. Reed said. "The feeling is we are far enough ahead of the game to put a little money back into health care. It's purely a political decision based on our ability to do it." However, Progressive Conservative candidate Ralph Scholtens and Reform candidate Rick Malboeuf slammed the move, calling it opportunistic.

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NEWSLINES

Springride helps cut drunk driving

A fun family event will help take drunk drivers off the road. Springride Farm will host the Mother's Day Festival in support of Mothers Against Drunk Driving the weekend of May 10 and 11. Activities for the whole family will include trout fishing, sheep shearing, sheep dog demonstrations, pony and wagon rides, a puppet show, children's crafts, barbecue and entertainment. Admission is free.

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