

Farrow admits it's a new level of politics

By BRAD REAUME
The Champion

Milt Farrow tried to waltz with his words but he eventually admitted the proposed Greater Toronto Services Board (GTSB) is another level of government.

Mr. Farrow, special advisor to Minister of Municipal Affairs Al Leach, was at Halton Region last week to defend his report 'Getting Together' which calls for the formation of a services board to coordinate major municipal services such as water, transit and waste management across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Oakville Councillor Kevin Flynn pushed the issue that the GTSB would be another level of government. Mr. Farrow admitted the board would have the powers of a level of government but he said it would be responsible for coordinating services rather than actually delivering them.

"It sounds like a level of government that you can't phone," said Mr. Flynn, who noted it was nice to finally hear an admission of what he considers the obvious but unspoken.

Halton officials said they were pleased Mr. Farrow wrote to Mr. Leach requesting that the Halton landfill site be removed from consideration by the services board. However, Mr. Farrow made it clear his position on the landfill, as well as his whole report, is only his suggestion to the minister. Mr. Leach can choose to accept the proposals, modify them or reject them outright.

"I firmly believe that over the long haul there are millions and millions and millions of dollars to be saved," said Mr. Farrow.

Halton officials raised concerns with representation, rural issues, as well as the idea that the GTSB would eventually grow into another level of municipal government, likely taking the place of one of the two existing levels.

"I don't know which level of government will disappear," said Mr. Farrow. "It could be either/or. There are different levels of maturity between regions. Some regions could go and some municipalities could go. In the next few years there will be structural changes in the GTA. We won't continue to have 28 municipalities."

In his report Mr. Farrow called for a 28 member board based on representation by population. Toronto would get 14 members, matching the number from 905 municipalities in York, Peel, Durham and



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KEVIN FLYNN

Halton. The smallest region, Halton would have only two representatives.

Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale pointed out that Peel's five board members insures the mayor of Caledon, a small, largely rural, municipality, would be on the board, while only one mayor of Halton's two major urban areas could be given a seat.

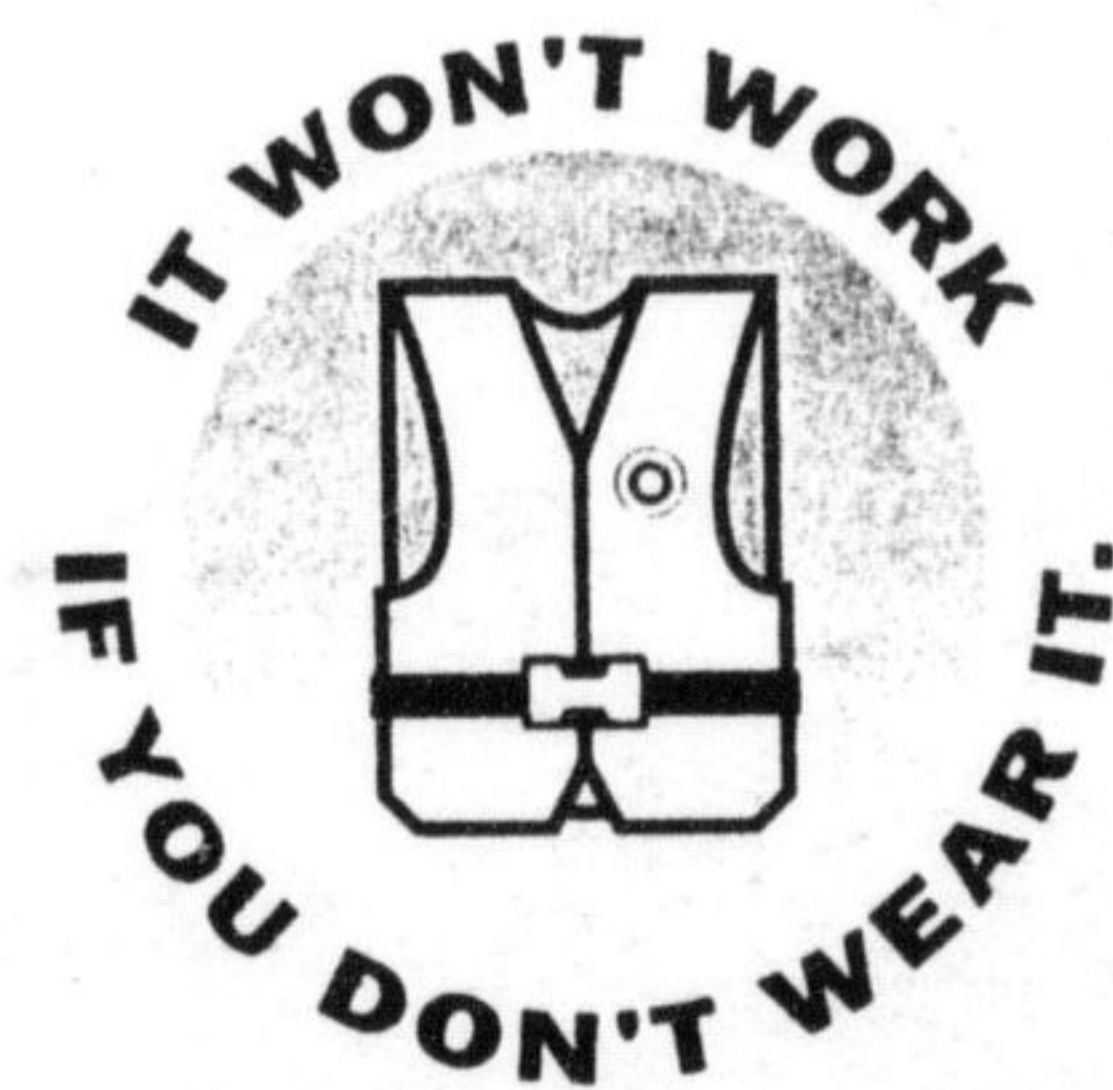
It is expected that one Halton seat would go to the regional chair. The other remains to be determined among Halton's four municipalities.

Halton officials said they were more comfortable with each municipality having equal representation. Mr. Farrow dismissed that position, saying a majority of municipalities, even in areas outside of Toronto, agreed with representation by population.

There was substantial discussion on the rural versus urban issue. Mr. Farrow said that virtually all concerns of the services board are urban in nature.

Burlington Councillor Ralph Scholtens said his municipality could be considered rural by people in Toronto. Halton Hills Mayor Marilyn Serjeantson wondered if her municipality would be considered rural, even though they have a need for every service the board could potentially offer.

Representatives of the rural community said they felt their voices would be lost in the services board. However Mr. Farrow said the board would have little to do with them, and not jeopardize their relationships with current governments, because only urban services would be coordinated.



Cops crack down on insurance

Ontario Provincial Police plan to turn up the heat this summer on Greater Toronto Area highways.

To promote the importance of auto insurance, the OPP and Ministry of Transportation have co-ordinated the "Partners in Road Safety" program.

The effort will see a variety of agencies working hand-in-hand. These include the Insurance Bureau of Canada, the Transportation Safety Association of Ontario and the Ontario Trucking Association.

The Insurance Bureau has provided insurance industry directories and cell phones to assist OPP officers in nabbing uninsured drivers by calling

industry staff, who will be on standby to verify insurance slips.

OPP and Ministry of Transport officers can also access this system to weed out uninsured commercial motor vehicle drivers.

A direct line to the Ontario Trucking Association will help officers communicate quickly with relevant trucking companies.

In the past, OPP investigating officers were limited to dealing with company authorities by phone or letter only after they had returned to their respective detachments.

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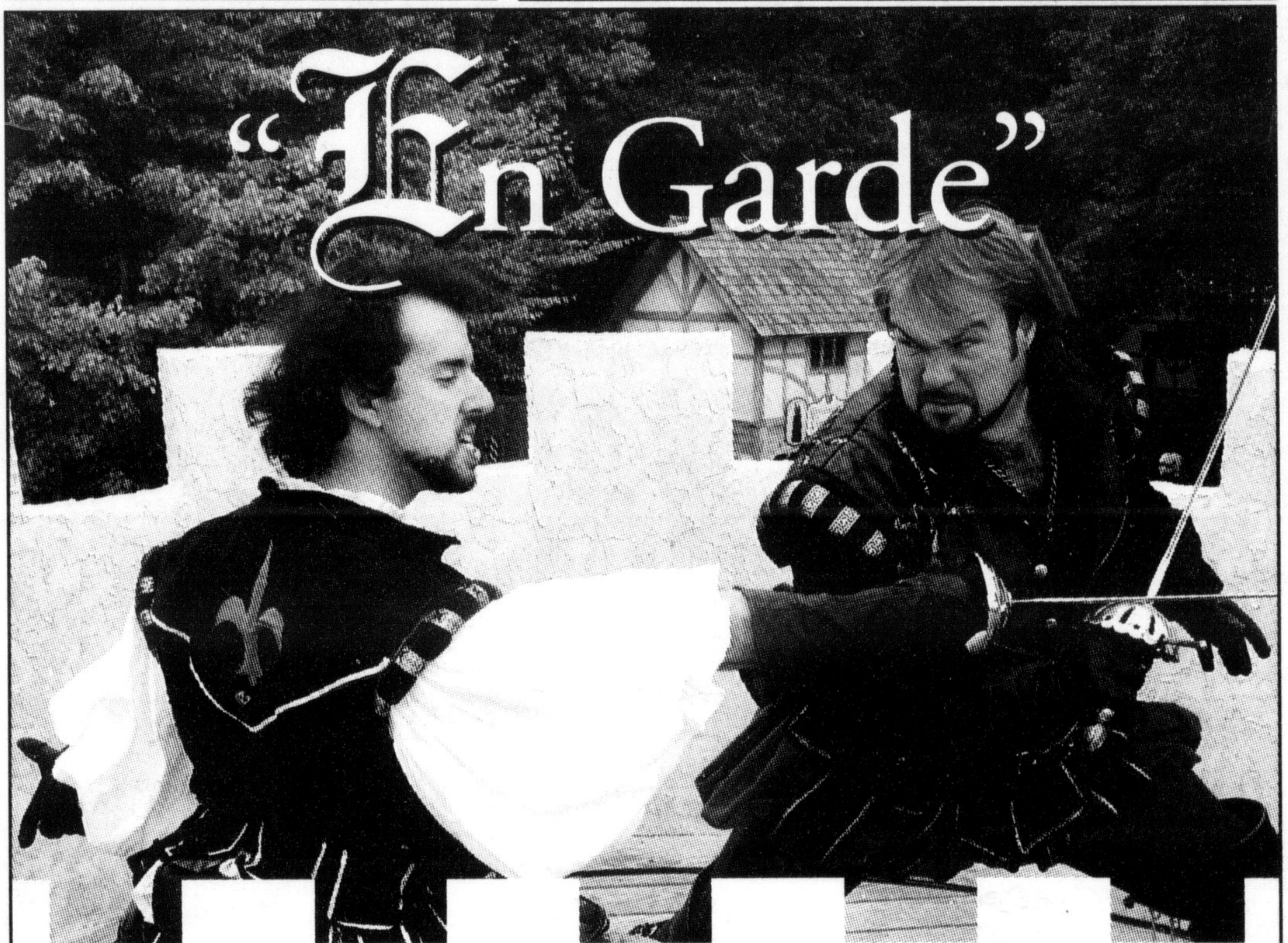
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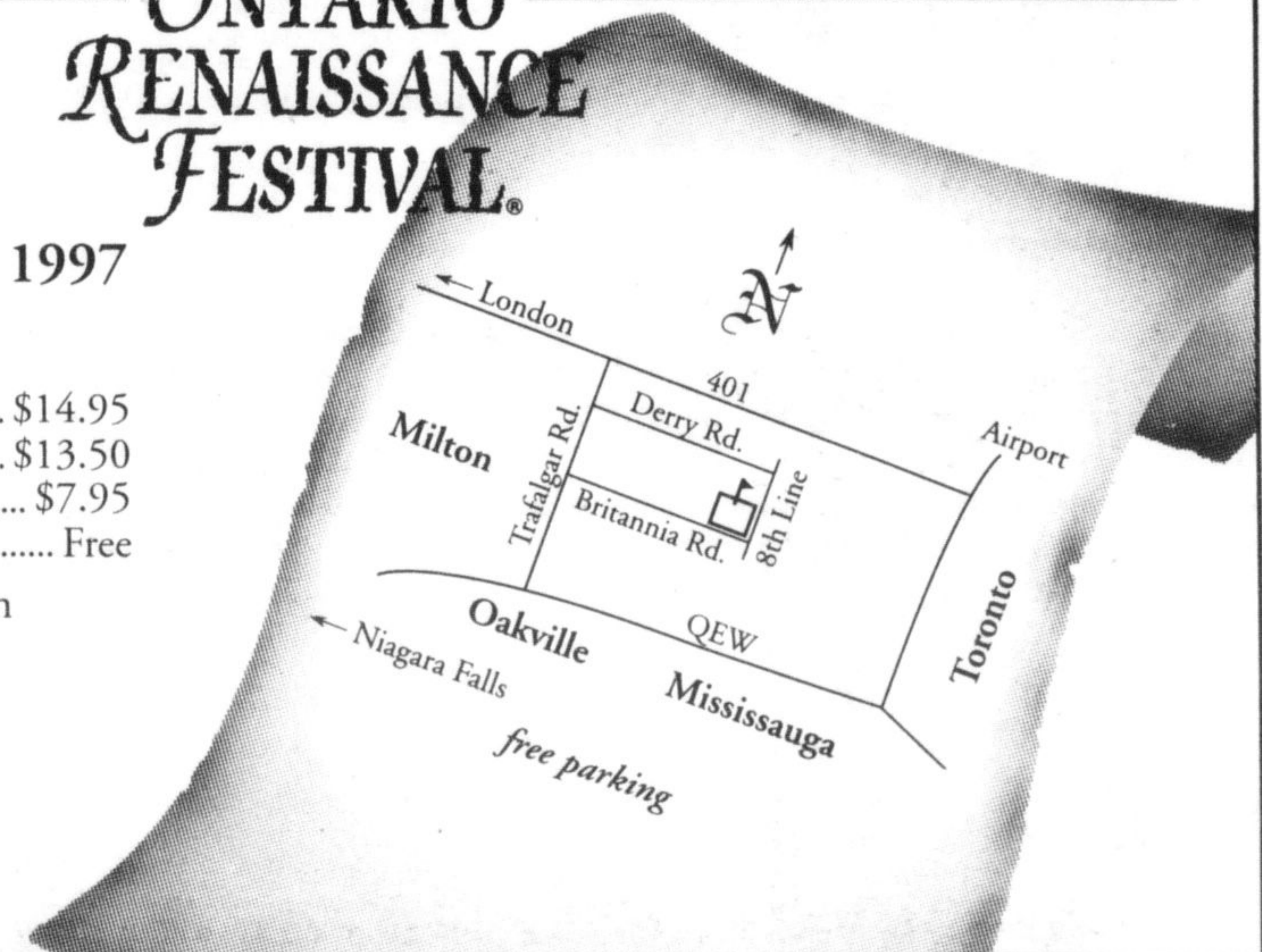
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