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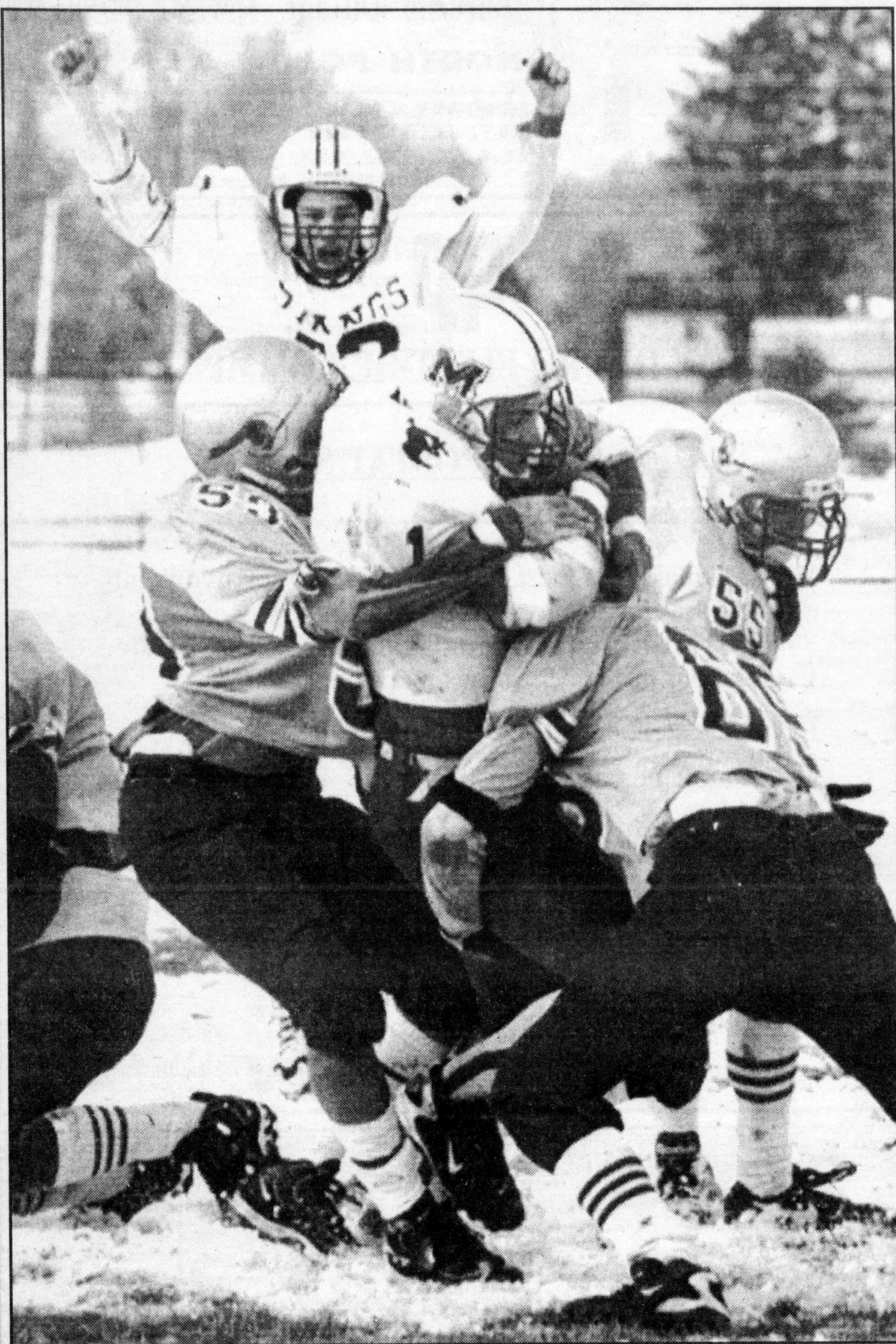


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Touchdown

Milton District High School Mustang fullback Jason McGuffe bulls over the goal line while quarterback Adam Gertzbein raises his arms triumphantly during Milton's playoff victory against Burlington's Lord Elgin Lancers Tuesday. Milton plays for the championship today in Burlington. See page 16 for the story on Tuesday's game.

It's a sigh of relief from hospital board

By **KAREN SMITH**
The Champion

What was feared by citizens as a ferocious lion threatening to devour Milton District Hospital alive turned out to be more like a pussycat.

The Health Services Restructuring Commission, which released its much-anticipated interim report Tuesday, announced that Milton's hospital will remain open and continue to provide its three main services — in-patient, out-patient and emergency care.

But it won't do it alone. The commission, a group of health professionals appointed by the Harris government to redesign the Ontario health system, called for an amalgamation between Milton and Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial hospitals.

Milton hospital's administration and the board of directors breathed sighs of relief after learning the news.

"While we never envisioned closure as a possibility, we did have concerns that the commission would reduce services more drastically," said hospital executive director Allan Halls, who met with staff, physicians and the board immediately following the commission's announcement.

"The commission's report certainly supports the continued provision of these services here in Milton. By working co-operatively with Oakville under a new corporate structure, we also hope to take benefit from the major re-investments being made in health services here in Halton."

The commission has recognized that Milton residents deserve local access to key services, said Milton hospital board



"We did have concerns that the commission would reduce services more drastically."
ALLAN HALLS

chair Norm Flemington.

"This is a good result for our community. We will be well-positioned to accommodate local hospital needs as our community's population grows in the future."

Mr. Hall added that Milton and Oakville already share services and have somewhat of a partnership, however the amalgamation will make it official and put more emphasis on improving relations.

Still, Mr. Halls and Mr. Flemington agreed a lot of work is in store for both facilities.

The commission instructed the hospitals' boards of directors to plan the amalgamation on their own and submit a report by May 31, 1998.

"This commission report will clearly involve a great deal of discussion, planning and negotiations over the next few months," Mr. Flemington said.

• see **FEARED** on page 3

NEWSLINES

Donations rolling in for Xmas fund

Initial donations have started rolling in for The Champion's Christmas Bureau Fund.

The community newspaper has accepted \$369 so far for the Salvation Army fundraiser, which ensures local citizens have all the trimmings for Christmas dinner and toys for the kids. The goal has been set at \$20,000.

To contribute, drop off donations by cash or cheque (payable to Christmas

Bureau Fund) at The Champion office, 191 Main St. E.

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