

Scherer vows tax watchdog citizen's group here to stay

By BRAD REAUME
The Champion

Milton Ratepayers' Association president Paul Scherer says his organization is not political. However, he did not rule out a future move in that direction.

The association has members who represent a broad political spectrum and many candidates in recent municipal elections, he explained.

He did acknowledge that his ties to mayoral hopeful Colin Best could have served to paint the organization as pro-Best in the recent election.

"Maybe as president I shouldn't have been so public with my support. I'm personally against the 'big pipe'," said Mr. Scherer. "We'll bring my credibility up at the next meeting of the association and see how the membership feels."

May back slate

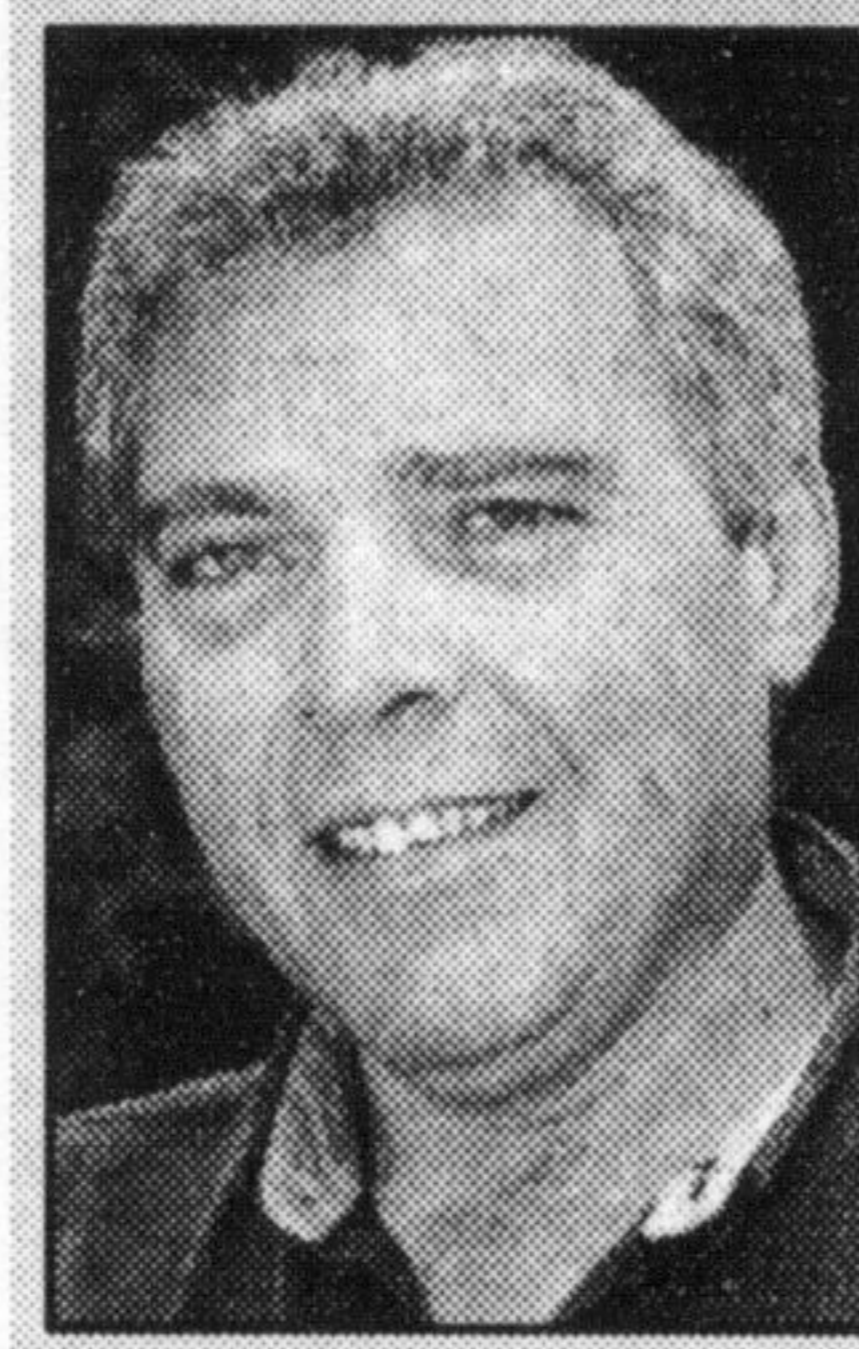
Mr. Scherer said his group will remain active in local issues. In fact, the association would definitely consider backing a slate of candidates in the next municipal election, he said.

"Anyone on local council who thinks we are going to go away is crazy," he warned. "If anything we'll be more vigilant than ever."

Mr. Scherer said the ratepayers group is looking for fiscal accountability. He pointed out that the past council voted against a reduction in their numbers, and that they did budgets by relying on year to year comparisons, rather than starting from scratch.

Burlington now has a council of seven while Milton continues to require a council of 11 members to manage its affairs, he said.

Mr. Scherer said now that the group has spent two years gaining credibility by seeking to understand issues and processes, they are prepared to take a more public approach.



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The association will make more presentations on issues to council both locally and at Halton Region, he said.

He explained the Milton Ratepayers' Association tried to encourage potential candidates for municipal office to come forward. They were largely unsuccessful.

As well, "I'm disappointed with voter turnout. There were serious issues on the table, and alternatives particularly in growth and development."

Why vote for change?

If people were happy with the way Milton and Halton Region were being managed, he asked, why did more than 40 per cent of those who cast ballots in the mayor's race vote for change?

Mr. Scherer says he thinks the Milton Ratepayers' Association can function as an information conduit to residents. As an example, they will sponsor an information night on the Ontario Health Restructuring Commission recommendations.

"People need to understand the process of how decisions will be made and what they can do to affect those decisions," he said.

Mr. Scherer said hosting such events will help increase the association's public profile, something he sees as imperative.

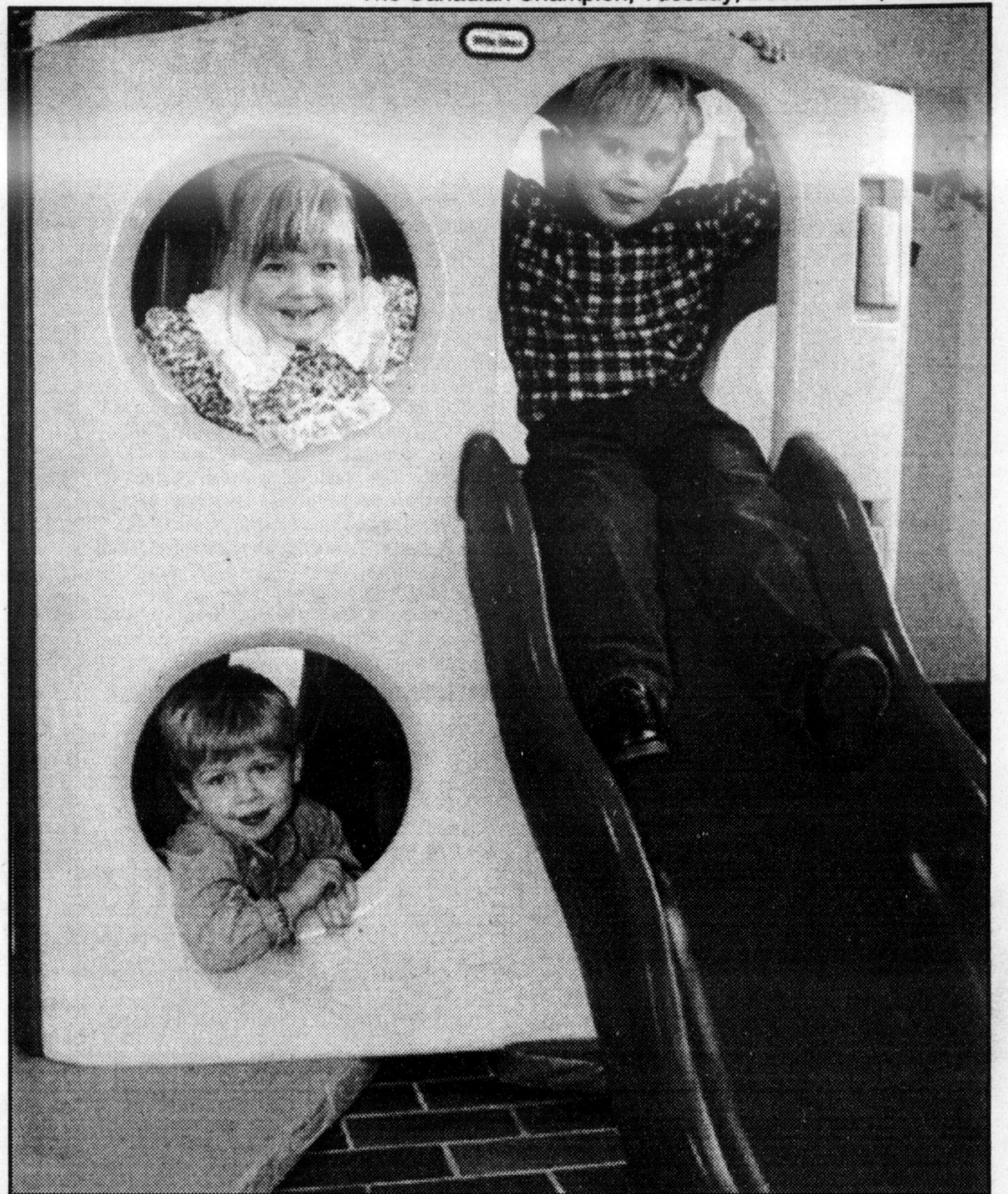


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

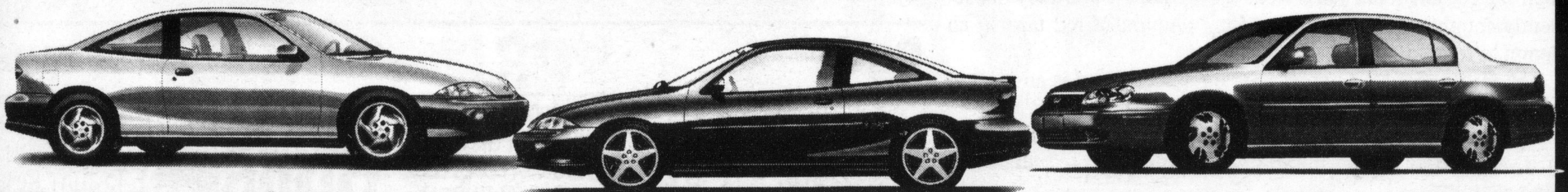
Colour them winners

These Milton youngsters were among the winners of the Week of the Child colouring contest sponsored by the Halton Child Care Registry. Pictured here are (clockwise from bottom) Teddy Liptay, Ainsley Robertson and Kody Pearson.

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