

# Bright light at end of tunnel, says Chudleigh

By BRAD REAUME  
The Champion

It's getting better all the time, according to Halton North MPP Ted Chudleigh.

In a "where we've been, where we're going" address to members of the Milton Chamber of Commerce on Thursday morning, Mr. Chudleigh said the multitude of changes in Ontario, instituted by the provincial government, are beginning to pay off with more jobs, reduced taxes and better financial conditions.

"Every trip has a destination", he said. "We want Ontario to become the best jurisdiction in

North America in which to live, work and raise a family."

Ontario's education and health care systems are not sustainable, according to Mr. Chudleigh, who explained other governments recognized the problems but were unable to tackle solutions. He acknowledged that changes in these sensitive areas are politically unpopular with Ontarians.

"Health care costs are 34 per cent of the entire provincial budget, and it's 41 per cent of the budget if the cost of debt is removed," said Mr. Chudleigh. "Hospitals were operating with more than 9,000 closed beds. Restructuring was need-

ed badly."

He acknowledged that the care of the aged is a top priority and outlined several projects for more long-term care beds in Halton. Mr. Chudleigh said despite the changes in the health system the government has added more than \$500 million to bring health care spending up to \$18.5 billion.

"It's important to remember, we don't run hospitals we simply fund them," he said. "They are run by boards of directors and the boards make the decisions."

He explained that hospital boards are largely

"buying in" to the provincial initiatives, which in turn helps to smooth the changes. However, difficulties in workfare programs have occurred because many municipalities in Ontario have not "bought in" to social service reforms.

Mr. Chudleigh also spoke about education, saying that under the former school board system, local trustees functioned as a board of directors for education. However, he said, the education system provided no mechanism for responsibility, adding that changes have addressed the problem.

• see ALL'S on page 12

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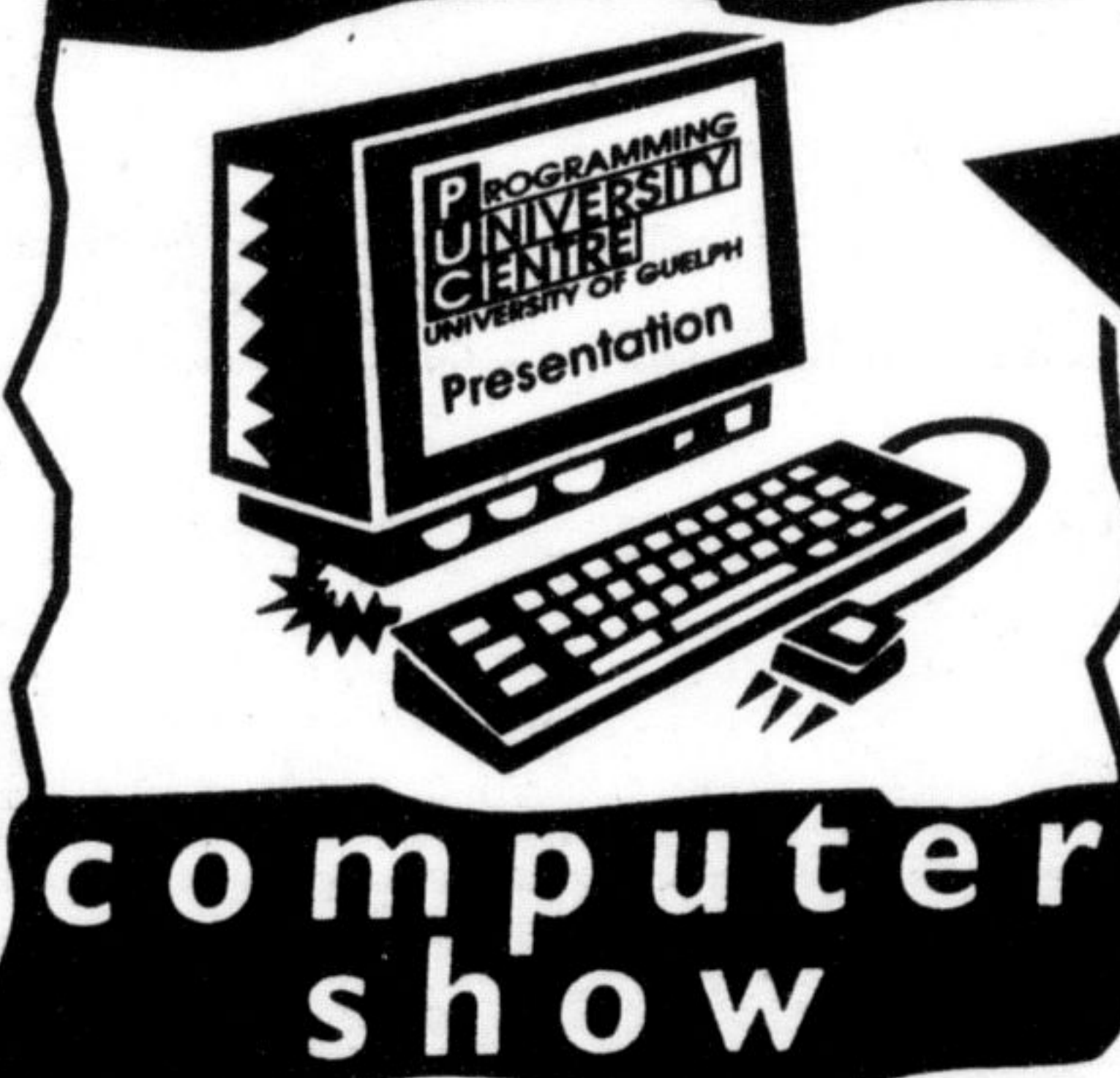


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