

# Manager plans to market more aggressively



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Teresa Maguire-Garber, the Halton Region Conservation Authority's new general manager, is hoping to attract more visitors to local conservation areas this summer through expanded programs and more aggressive promotion.

By IRENE GENTLE

Special to the Champion

If you haven't heard about the Halton Region Conservation Authority (HRCA) recently, you're going to soon.

That's the mandate of the HRCA's new general manager Theresa Maguire-Garber.

"The political and business climate has changed and we need to look at emphasizing advertising, and marketing," said Ms Maguire-Garber. "Some of our conservation areas are like well-kept secrets."

The HRCA is a community-based environmental agency with a mandate to protect the natural environment of its watershed. The HRCA currently oversees 8,900 acres of conservation land.

After graduating from McMaster University in Hamilton Ms Maguire-Garber started her career as a chartered accountant. She worked for the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth but soon found herself drawn towards non-profit organizations.

After stints at the Hamilton Teachers Credit Union and St. Joseph's Villa, a home for the aged, she was hired as secretary-treasurer of the HRCA.

### Former treasurer

She served eight years in that position before her May 11 appointment as general manager of the authority.

She was there during the lean years when the provincial government pulled the plug on the majority of its funding for the authority.

In fact, provincial funding has gone from \$2.6 million in 1992 to the 1998 figure of \$320,000.

To cope, the authority went through a massive restructuring process, trimming 10 per cent of HRCA staff and scrambling for ways to recoup the costs.

User fees were one way. Today, 56 per cent of the HRCA's \$7.9 million budget is financed through user fees.

In her position as general manager, Ms Maguire-Garber wants to see that percentage rise even higher. She has a plan to see that it does.

### More programs

"We don't want to just soak people with increasing user fees," said Ms Maguire-Garber. "We want to provide more programs and attract people on our slower days."

One way to do that is to provide more indoor activities. "We're going to be looking at some rainy day activities so we're not so dependent on good weather," said Ms Maguire-Garber. "It's not going to be a place just to be outside at, so when it rains you don't have to go to a mall."

The HRCA's new direction will also focus on welcoming the not-so-fleet of foot to conservation areas.

That could mean anything from letting people know about the all-terrain wheelchairs available at some conservation areas, to adding programs that seniors and anyone else who wouldn't dream of hiking or off-road biking could enjoy.

The idea is to attract more people to conservation areas rather than increase existing user fees.

### Self sufficiency

"We're looking to make our conservation areas either self-sufficient or revenue neutral," said Ms Maguire-Garber. Other revenue ideas include looking at potential partnerships in the community and offering conservation areas up as corporate retreats.

"The new wave in business is wellness programs, like getting exercise and getting back to nature," said Ms Maguire-Garber. "We're hoping to be able to offer to corporations a kind of well-

• see CHANGES on page 5

# This Little Piggy went to the Milton Farmers' Market

& came home with...  
Fruit & Vegetables, Baked Goods,  
Crafts, Cheeses, Meat & Poultry  
Fish, Flowers, And ...

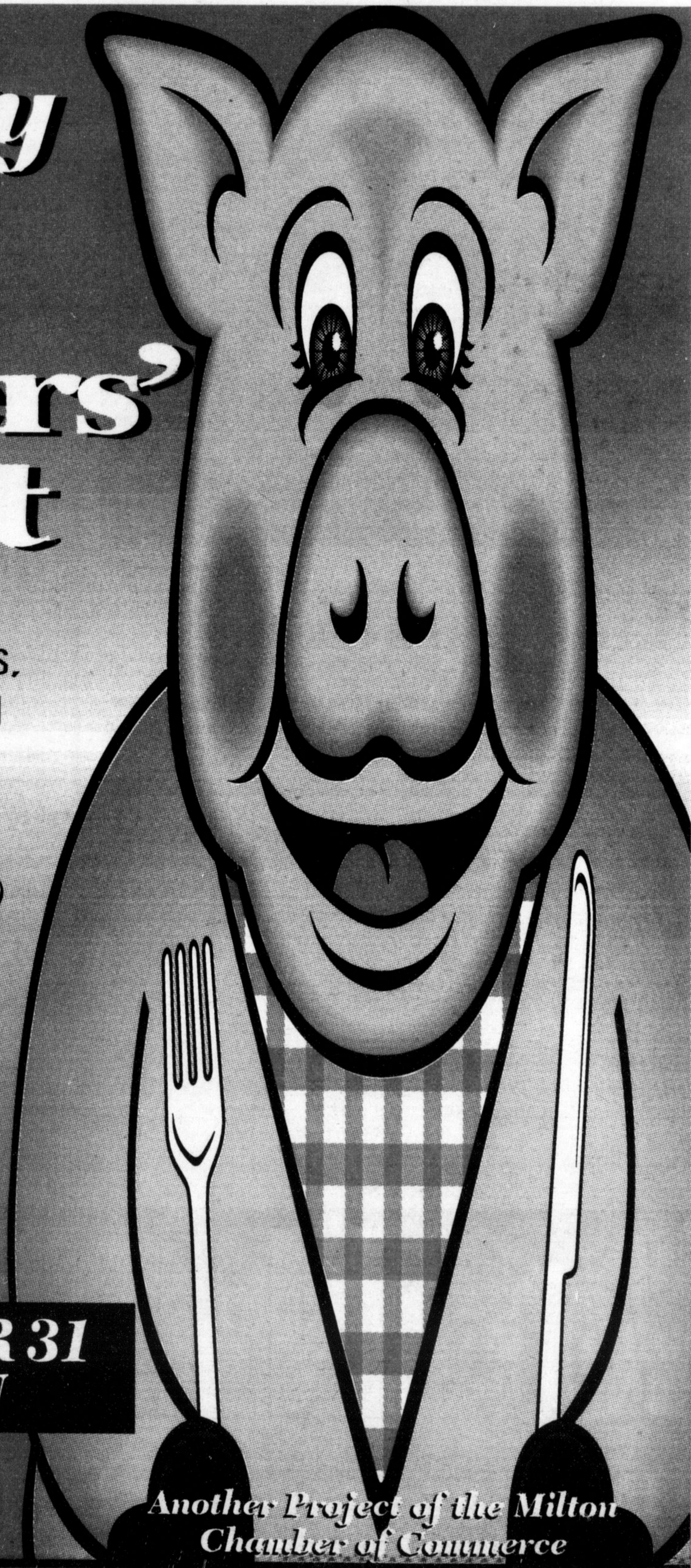
## "Bacon On-A-Bun"

(from the Scholarship Cafe)

Join this Little Piggy & the vendors at the  
**Milton Farmers' Market**  
Every Saturday

**MAY 23 - OCTOBER 31**  
**7 AM - 12 NOON**

**Main Street, Milton**  
Between Martin & James Sts.



Another Project of the Milton Chamber of Commerce

## Singers Wanted

Do you like to sing?  
Are you between the ages of 8 and 16 years?

If you answered yes to these two questions,  
**MILTON CHILDREN'S CHORUS**  
wants you!

ANNUAL AUDITIONS ARE BEING  
HELD JUNE 1<sup>st</sup>



For more information about an audition or the choir, please contact Sandra Kenzie at 878-4732