

Landfill could last 10 years longer thanks to recycling

By **HOWARD MOZEL**
Special to *The Champion*

As proud as the Region of Halton is of its waste diversion and recycling, officials are the first to focus credit on those residents who have made the programs successful.

After all, without the people who actively participate in these initiatives, Halton would be unable to boast a 37 per cent diversion rate.

And now, with homeowners fully backing the Region's new Solid Waste Management Strategy, this figure is expected to jump to 58 per cent. (The provincial guideline is 50 per cent.)

By doing so, the life expectancy of Halton's landfill site is projected to grow from 37 years to 47.

"Residents of Halton are very keen about saving their landfill site," said planning and public works spokesman John Smith.

"We're talking about generations from now before we have to worry about what we're going to do with our waste."

The current Waste Management System reduces and recovers approximately 37 per cent of waste that usually requires disposal and as such it is the most successful program in the Greater Toronto Area.

Mr. Smith explained the main reasons for that are recycling (broadened 10 years ago to include apartments and townhouses) and the yard waste diversion program.

House hazardous waste diversion accounts for 1 per cent of the total.

To help formulate the Solid Waste Management Strategy, the region hosted community meetings and distributed a strategy overview and survey to residents asking for their ideas and comments.

The "phenomenal" response, said regional spokesperson Lynn Johns, was that 92 per cent of

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JOHN SMITH

respondents supported the new plan.

"Residents can feel very proud that they're the ones making this happen," she said.

Added regional Chair Joyce Savoline, "I'm overwhelmed how many people buy into things when they understand it and the legacy it leaves for the future."

The new strategy, approved by regional council in October, builds on the current system by providing residents with the tools and information necessary to reduce the waste they generate and maximize the efficiencies of current reduction programs such as Blue Box and Household Hazardous Waste.

The new strategy's initiatives include the WasteLess program to minimize the waste people generate before it's placed curbside for collection.

'BlueMax' will investigate ways to maximize existing recycling programs. The Region is also examining the effectiveness of collecting and composting household organics (kitchen scraps, etc.) as a third waste stream.

For the time being, the strategy rejects applying user fees for garbage or developing an 'Energy From Waste' incinerator. These options will be considered only if proposed methods fail to meet intended targets.



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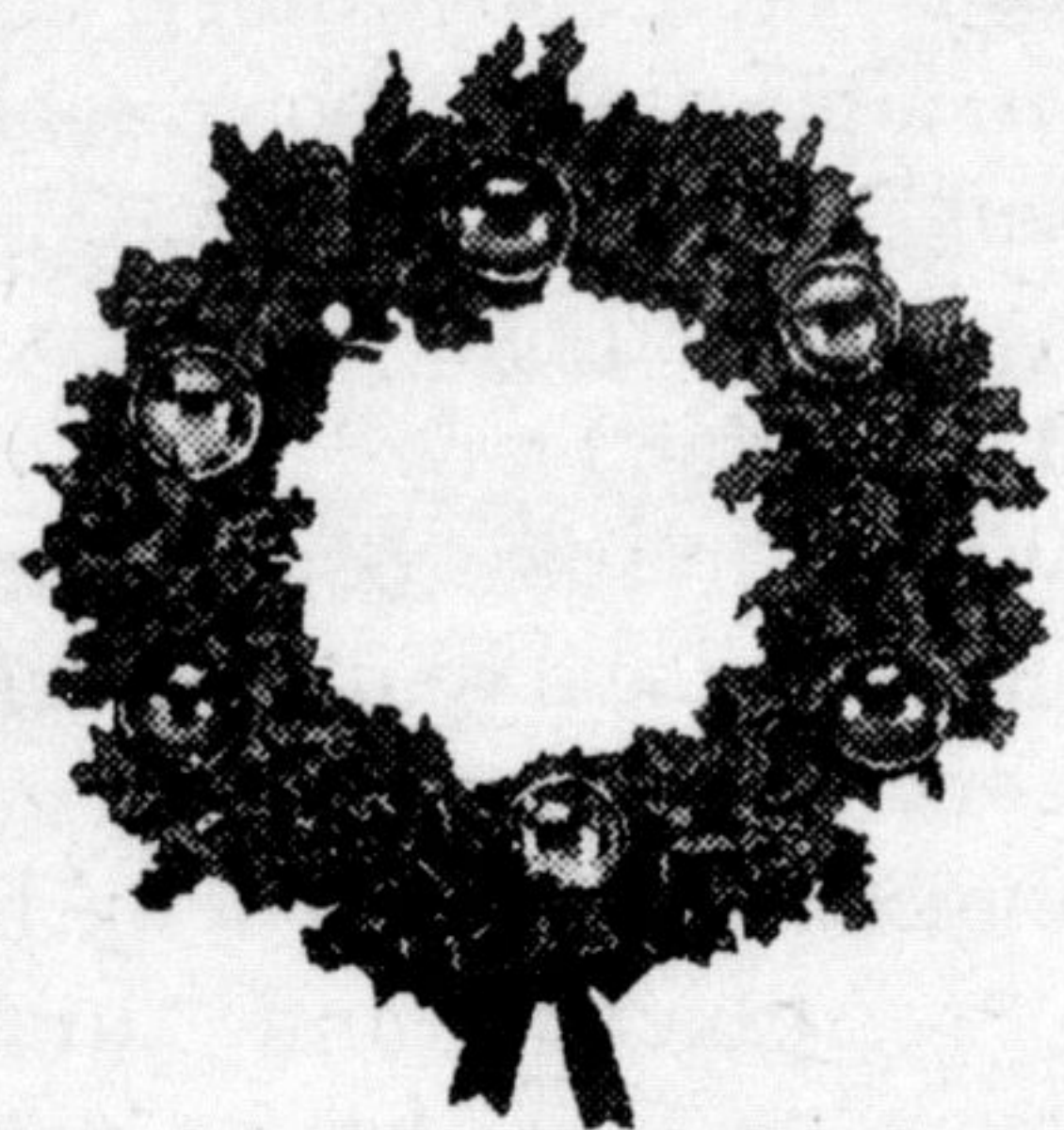
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