

Next regional chair to be elected by Halton voters

By PAUL MITCHISON
Special to The Champion

Joyce Savoline will soon have to turn her mind to fundraising and campaigning if she wants to keep her job.

Under a new bill expected to receive approval, voters will decide who will become Halton Region's chair during the next municipal election in November.

Currently, the chair is chosen by the members of regional council.

Ms Savoline has already decided she's in the race and expects she'll need to raise a substantial amount of cash to run a campaign throughout Milton, Halton Hills, Oakville and her home town of Burlington.

Still, she said she's pleased about the change in the process.

"It is more than appropriate and totally necessary this office be accountable," Ms Savoline said.

"It's something regional council has been debating on and off for the past 15 years."

Ms Savoline was elected Halton's chair in 1994, immediately following the municipal election in a process that required her to step down from the Burlington city and regional council seat she had just won.

Running an effective Burlington mayoralty campaign requires contributions and can cost somewhere between \$20,000 to \$50,000.

An effective Halton-wide campaign might also be expensive, Ms Savoline said, but she wasn't be prepared to guess the amount she'll need to raise.

She anticipates, though, the campaign will require contributions.

"I guess a lot of it depends on the style of campaign," she said. "I'm just going to take it a step at a time."

The annual pay for Halton Region's chair is \$74,734 and the winner is assured a three-year term.

Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Tony Clement introduced



Joyce Savoline

legislation recently to allow for the direct election of the chair of Halton Region.

"One of this government's priorities for local government is improved accountability," Mr. Clement said.

"Giving Halton voters the chance to choose their regional chair is a definite step toward more accountable local government."

The legislation responds to a January, 1998 resolution of Halton council asking the provincial government to amend the Regional Municipality of Halton Act to permit direct election of the regional chair in the November, 2000 municipal elections.

Burlington Mayor Rob MacIsaac said making the position of Halton chair an elected one was a good step, but quickly added that it does little to change the need to restructure local government.

No drugs found in schools

No drugs were found at E.C. Drury or three other Halton high schools during last Wednesday's Project Hallwalk.

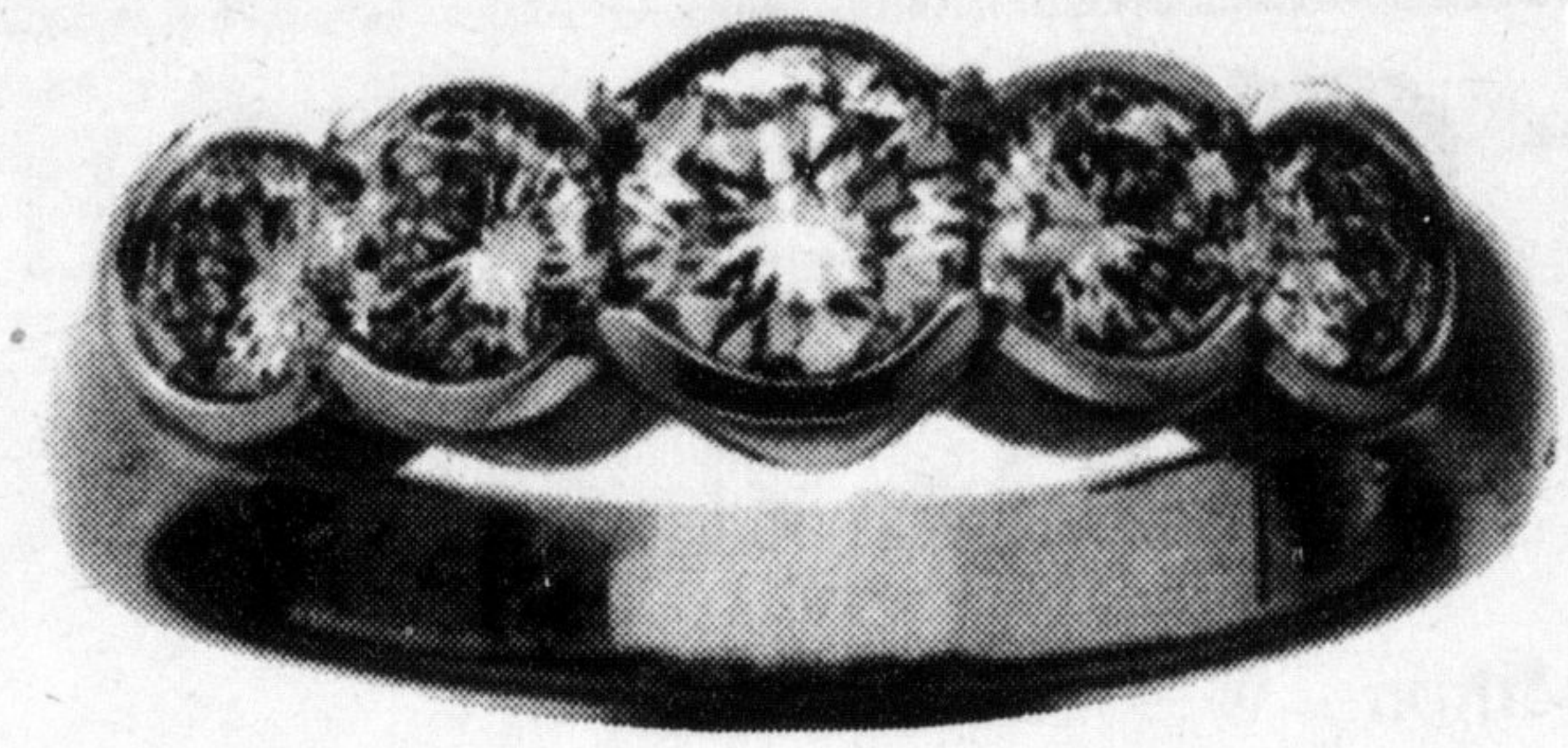
Halton Regional Police's annual pro-

gram consists of a drug detector dog walking the halls of a selected school sniffing for drugs. If the dog detects the possibility of drugs in a locker, it's opened

and searched — and if drugs are found, an investigation begins.

Other schools searched last week were Acton High School and White Oaks in Oakville.

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