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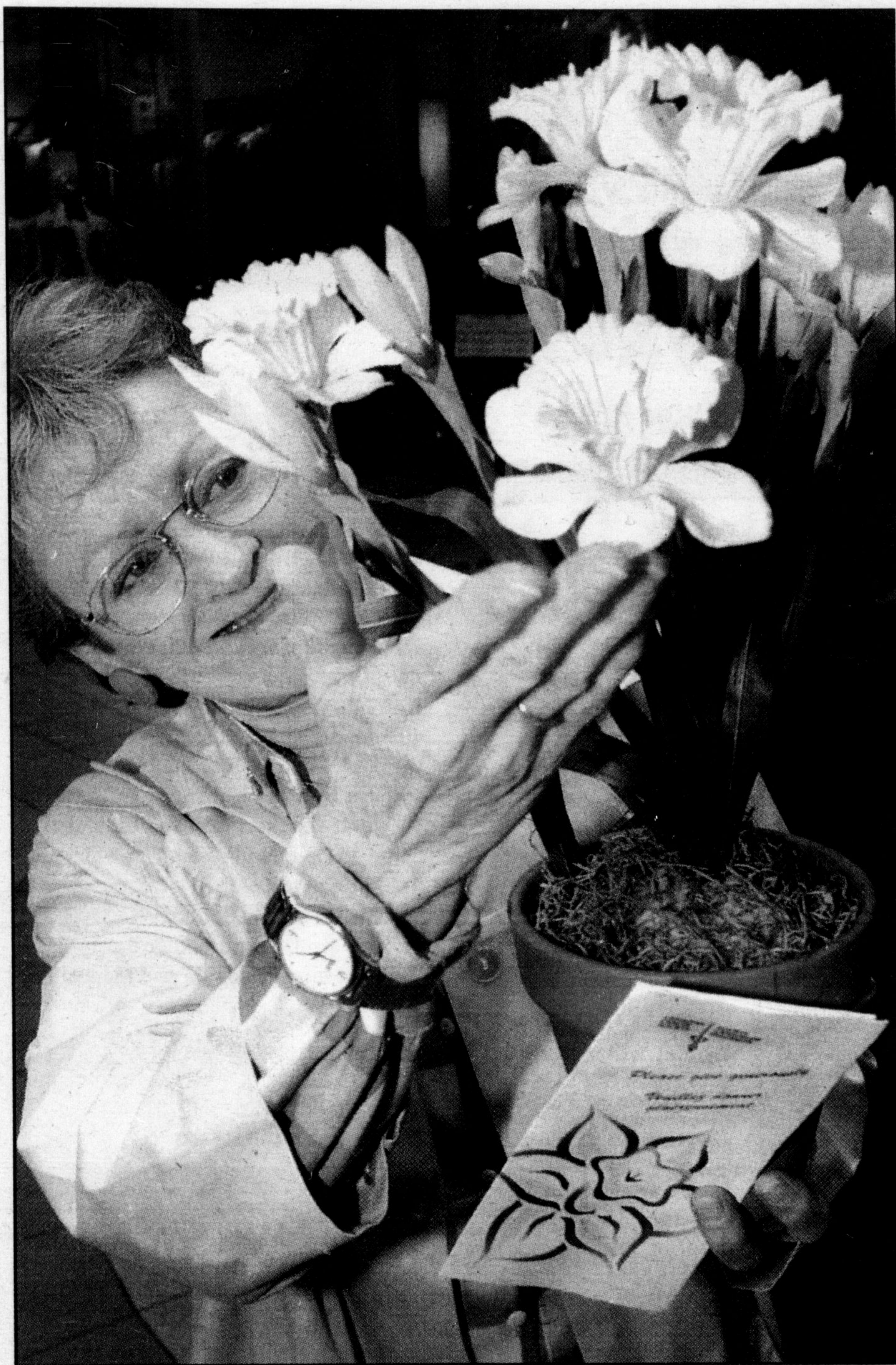


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Blossoming awareness

April is blooming with daffodils as the Canadian Cancer Society kicks off its annual fundraising drive for Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer survivor and society volunteer Joan Gervais shows off the flower that helps fund research to end the deadly disease.

Halton budget brings good news, bad news

Only \$5 tax increase in budget this year, but bigger hike projected for 2001

By IRENE GENTLE

The Champion

Halton residents will likely pay just under \$5 more in property taxes this year in a Regional budget that's a classic good news, bad news story.

The good news is the Region has escaped increasing its portion of property taxes for six years running, and Halton's debt is at its lowest in over 20 years.

The bad news is reserve levels are falling and tax increases in the area of 2 per cent, police services included, will likely arise next year.

And new debt will likely be taken on in the near future as the Region struggles to cope with pooling costs, such as social housing and GO Transit.

"Social housing — no one's building it," explained Halton's manager of budgets Rob Rossini. "The housing problem isn't

"Social housing — no one's building it. The housing problem isn't just going to go away. Right now, we're 100 per cent on the hook for housing."

ROB ROSSINI

just going to go away. Right now, we're 100 per cent on the hook for housing."

And paying for recently downloaded roads, such as the former highways 5 and 25, will put additional pressure on upcoming budgets.

But even with additional programs in ambulance services, public health, social housing and waste management, the Region's portion of the 2000 tax bill will go down by .6 per cent if the \$187 million budget put forth to several regional com-
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Allendale volunteers honoured

By LISA CARTWRIGHT

The Champion

The reasons people volunteer are as varied as the people themselves, but all were honoured at the Allendale Reception for Volunteers Tuesday as part of National Volunteer Week.

"I like working with the residents," said 12-year-old Alayna Byrnes who has been volunteering at Allendale for about a year. "I help the residents go places and do things."

Ms Byrnes visits the Ontario Street long-term-care facility three times a week.

She said she recommends her friends go "because it's fun and you are always doing something."

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WEEKEND INSERTS
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