

School programs might not get the axe after all

By **TIM WHITNELL**

Special to *The Champion*

The likelihood of lost school board funding shouldn't sound the immediate death knell of three popular programs for Halton students.

However, it likely means organizers of those programs will have to scramble to make up the difference or perhaps scale back what's offered in schools.

The Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) initiative for grade 6s, and the Celebrating Literacy and Food For Thought

snack and breakfast programs for elementary schools may lose significant funding.

Halton District School Board staff announced last week they're recommending the three programs have their combined funding removed as a cost-saving measure and it's unknown if more education funding announced by the provincial government Friday will make a difference.

The board paid out \$125,000 in those areas this school year.

Halton Regional Police, which administers the DARE program, and the Halton Social Planning Council, which oversees Celebrating

Literacy and Food For Thought, are understandably concerned about the school board's intentions and the possible after effects.

"When schools have to cut loose a resource like this it is a tragedy. I would say we regret what is happening to education in our community," said planning council executive director Joey Edwardh.

"Whatever the reason for it, hungry kids don't learn well." The Food For Thought program, ironically, expanded by three Halton schools just last week to more than 20 across the region.

"Right now, (we) are not an organization that

has its own resources, it leverages resources. Very basic funding (\$90,000 for each of the last two years) was given by the board that allows us to leverage funds in the community. That's the chunk that keeps it alive," she said.

"We have to turn this challenge back to our community. Nobody wants this program to disappear. We'll convene some meetings and see if we can develop some interim funding."

The hundreds of parent volunteers associated with the two programs affected will be notified of the situation, said Ms Edwardh.

As for the fate of DARE, Halton police Sgt.

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Hearing begins in murder case

The preliminary hearing of a Mississauga man charged with first-degree murder in the slaying of Murray Parrott began Friday in Ontario Court (provincial division) in Burlington.

The Crown is expected to call seven witnesses during the four-day hearing, which is held to determine if enough evidence exists to go to trial.

A publication ban prevents *The Champion* from reporting details of testimony — a common practice in preliminary hearings.

Mr. Parrott's body was found near the train tracks, just north of Millside Drive, August 31.

Mr. Stokes was arrested and charged with the murder of the Milton man in St. Catharines September 5. He remains in custody. The hearing will continue May 27 in Burlington court.

DENTURE ADVENTURE



by **GARRY TRENTON**
Denturist

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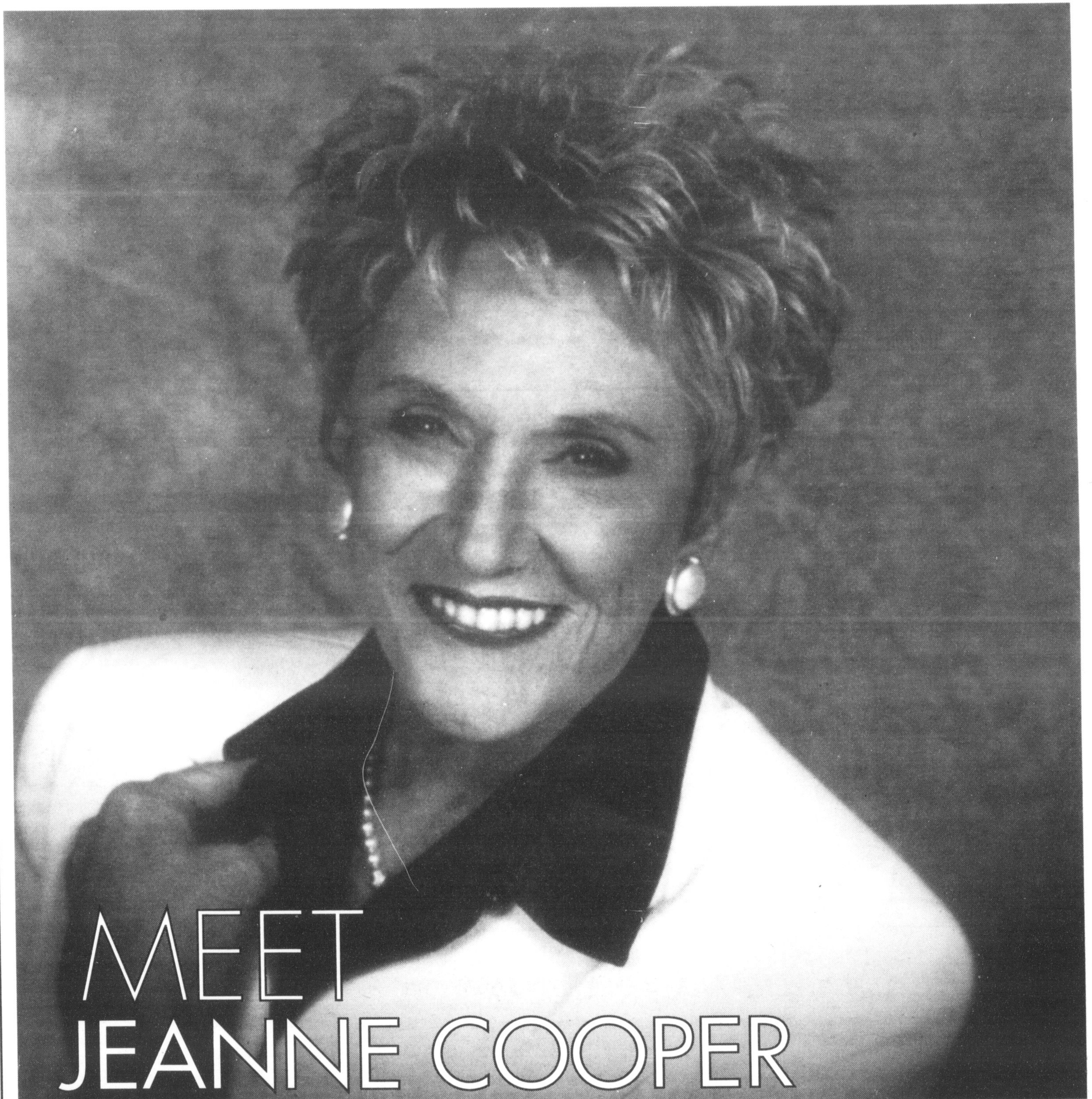
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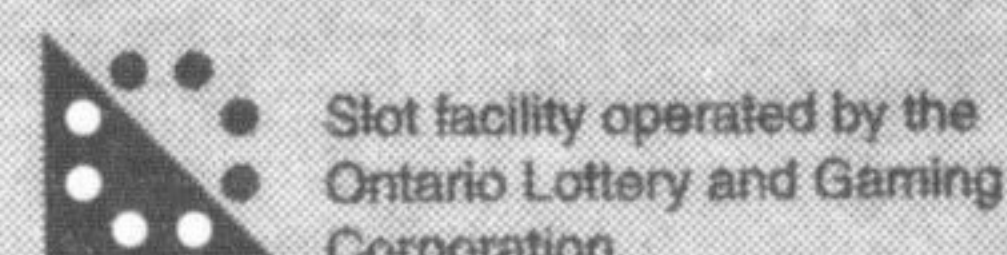
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