

Arts & Entertainment

Ontario Renaissance Festival kicks off its seventh season tomorrow; runs until Sept.

Plenty of new and returning acts to see this summer

By **RICHARD VIVIAN**
The Champion

Time travel will return to Milton tomorrow when the Ontario Renaissance Festival opens for another season.

Walking through the gate, visitors will be instantly transported through time and space to 16th Century Trillingham, England.

"We are not a re-enactment. We embrace the renaissance. We take all the good things about the renaissance and we bring those to light," said Tom Plott, entertainment director for the festival. "Our return audience gets bigger and bigger every year."

Performance takes on a broader meaning during the festival with actors showcasing their talents both on the stage (actually, five of them running continuously) and in the crowd.

The idea is to make the experience as interactive as possible, explains Mr. Plott.

"Our street characters, who are actors that portray the villagers of our town and royal court members, spend the biggest

part of their day out amongst the patrons. You may be sitting down eating somewhere and a villager comes up and starts talking to you," he said.

"You can talk to them and they'll respond. It's not like you have to just sit and watch them."

Visitors will also be involved in a mass "who-done-it" game which features an attempt (possibly a successful one) to steal the Queen's crown jewels — recreations of which are on display during the festival.

Wide variety of entertainment

Adding to the entertainment fun will be a variety of performances, ranging from Shakespearean plays to improvisational comedy and body manipulation. Children's performances will also be presented.

"The children's entertainment is fit for children of our age. There's a renaissance feel to it, but we don't necessarily go completely stylized on it because if we did, it would be really hard to hold the kids' attention without having something they can really relate to," said Mr. Plott.

Live jousting is another feature attraction

that pulls in a crowd. In addition to three daily jousting competitions, the festival will also host an international jousting tournament August 3 to 5.

"Our knights are in full armour, jousting for points and standings. They'll actually be competing for cash prizes (during the tournament)," the entertainment director said.

"When they pick up the lances, they mean business. They're really trying to knock each other off the horses."

The Ontario Renaissance Festival — located on Eighth Line, east of Trafalgar Road — opens its gate tomorrow at 10:30 a.m. and runs weekends (including holidays) until September 2.

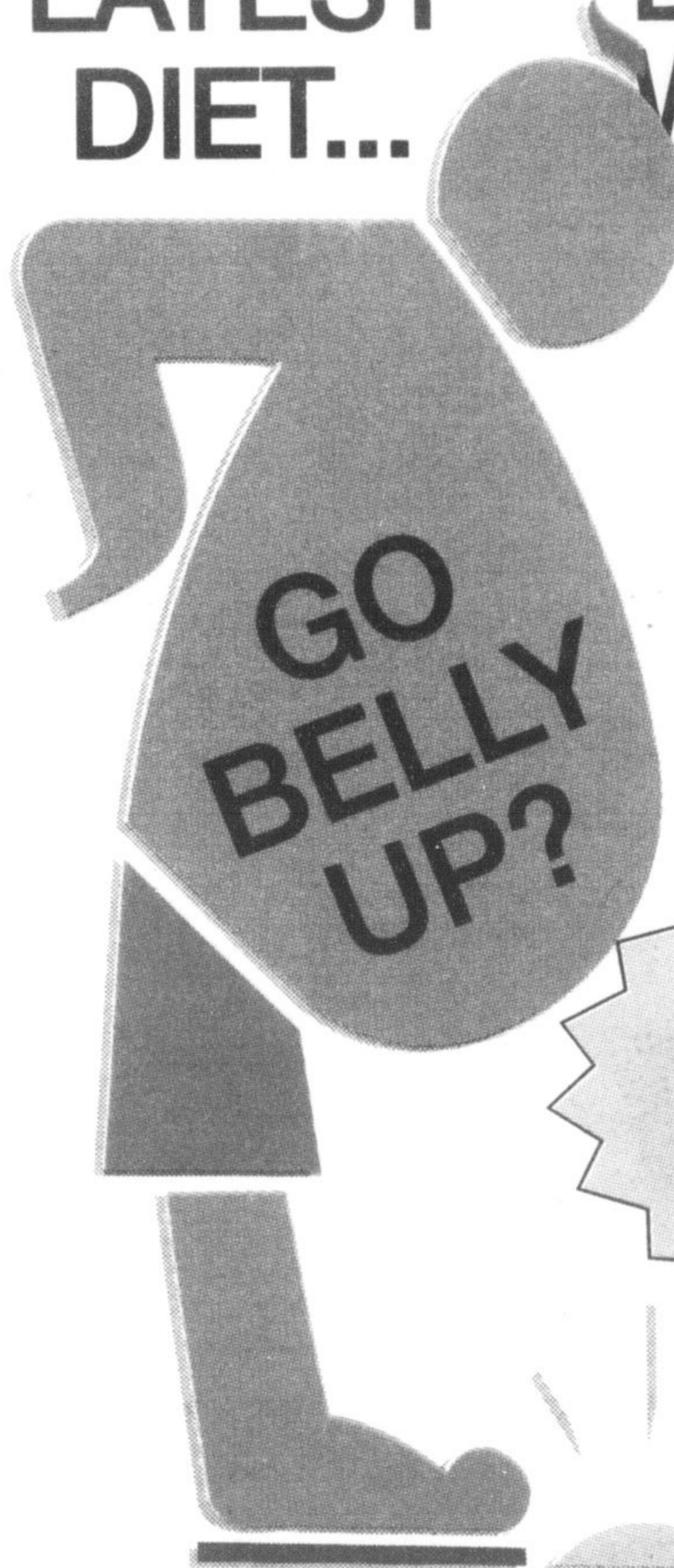
Sixteenth-century characters like Queen Elizabeth I (portrayed by Liana Maddocks) will entertain Ontario Renaissance Festival visitors for another season starting tomorrow. The festival is open on weekends and holidays until September 2.

File photo by GRAHAM PAINE



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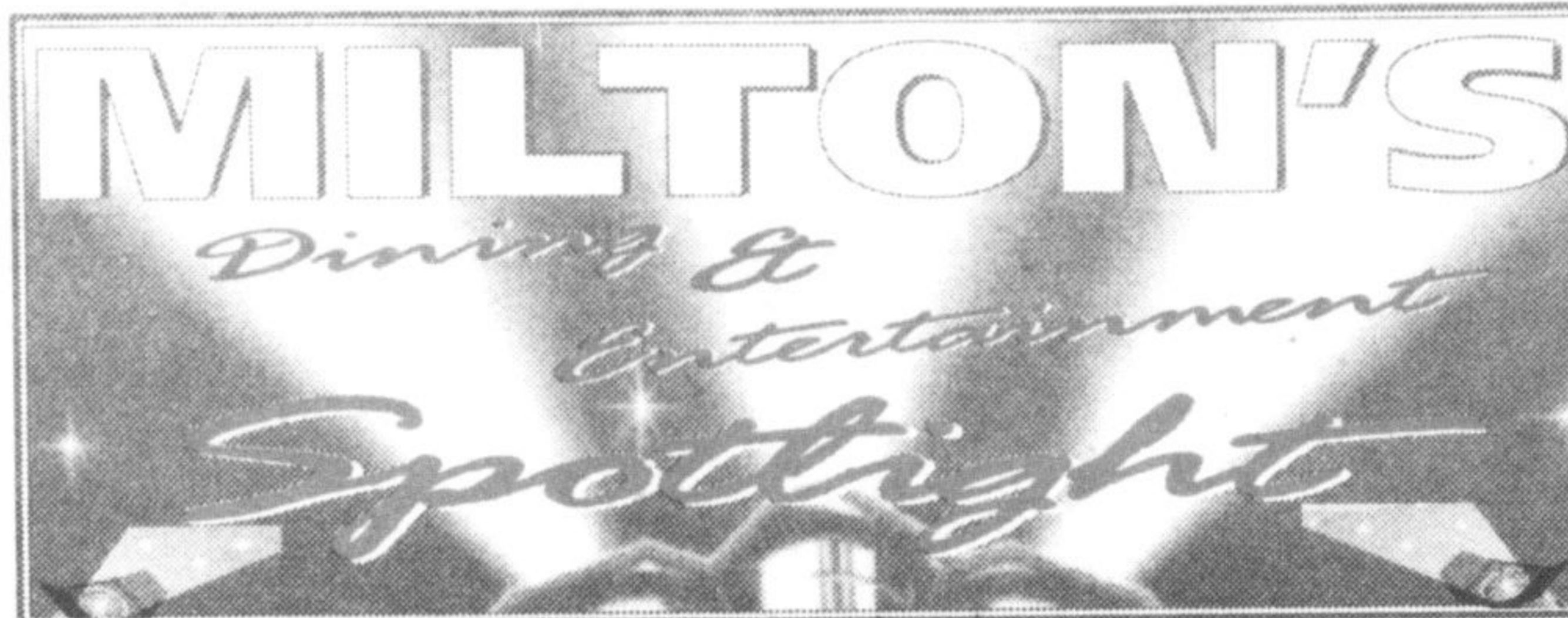
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Hearthside concert July 27

The blues will return to the Halton Region Museum July 27 with another installment of Hearthside events.

The boogie-woogie stylings of Blue Willow will entertain the crowd, following a full-course buffet dinner at the recently-renovated Hearth Room.

All funds raised through the event will be used for the museum's on-going renovations. Tickets for the Hearthside event cost \$35 per person, including dinner.

To purchase tickets or for more information, call Halton Region Museum at (905) 875-2200, ext. 0.

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