

MARSH A

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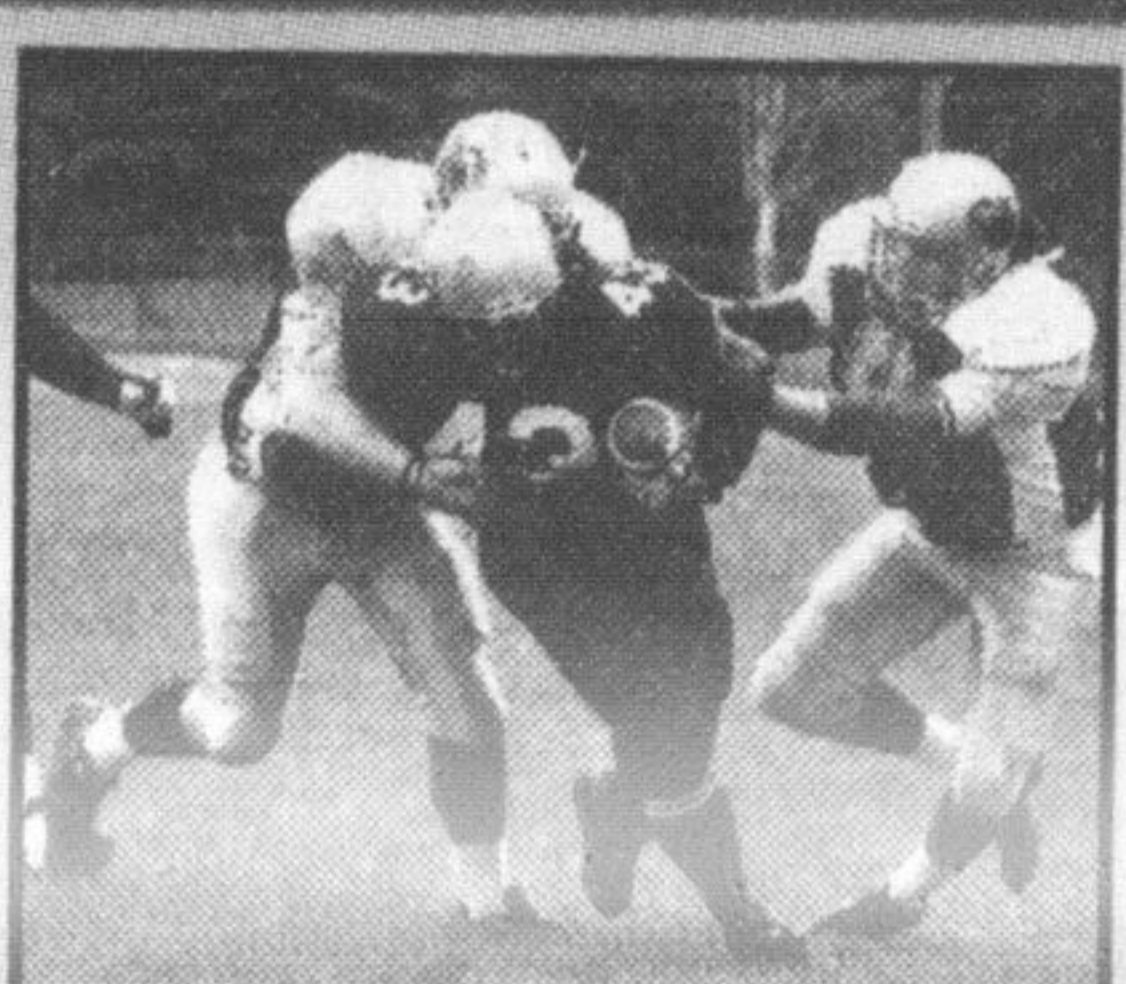
Rabid bat found in Halton

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Community Fund cheques handed out

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Marauders blanked by Markham

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Sheridan courses to begin this fall

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A Metroland Community Newspaper Vol. 144 No. 34 Tuesday, July 15, 2003 40 Pages \$1.00 (GST included)



How does your garden grow?

Theresa Cheung, left, looks around a Roseheath Drive garden with homeowner Heike Spohr — one of the featured gardens in the Milton and District Horticultural Society's annual Garden Tour Sunday. The garden features a pond and waterfall with the backyard garden accessible by an archway adorned with colourful clematis. The tour included 10 gardens.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Big pay hike for Halton politicians

By JASON MISNER
The Champion

Halton politicians have voted themselves a whopping pay hike, but in doing so gave up their one-third tax-free status.

On Wednesday, regional council approved a citizen advisory committee recommendation that the salaries of the chair and councillors increase to match those in similar positions in other Ontario municipalities.

Effective January 1, 2004, the regional chair's salary will go from \$82,591 to \$139,277. That represents an almost 70 per cent increase. It must be noted, though, the salary is now wholly taxable.

Councillors will earn \$35,135 — all taxable —

up from \$21,689, representing a more than 60 per cent hike.

However, Tom Clark, Halton's director of human resources, said it's difficult to calculate a proper percentage increase between the current salaries and the impending January 1 salaries.

He said the earnings were decided to ensure there wasn't a large discrepancy between the two net incomes. Mr. Clark noted the new salaries will see more income taxes paid and more money paid into pension plans.

Salaries were last reviewed seven years ago and the last substantial pay increase was in 1988.

Halton operates under what's called a two-tier government system, with some politicians serving regionally as well as locally, such as Milton.

The eight-person advisory committee, struck in

the spring, was comprised of two citizens from each of Halton's four municipalities. With help from a consultant, they looked at a host of issues including salaries, workload and the roles and responsibilities of politicians.

Regional politicians say they're satisfied with the results, not because of the pay hikes but because of the open process used in making the decision.

While some residents may raise an eyebrow at a salary increase, Regional Chair Joyce Savoline said: "I think it's an awkward situation to deal with (our) salaries, and I'm sure some will look at it in awe."

"But I think that it is a very transparent process we went through, and I believe they (committee see PAY on page 5

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