

West Nile results finally in

By **JASON MISNER**
The Champion

Long-awaited West Nile test results are finally in the hands of provincial health officials, nearly four months following the completion of a rare blood study in south Oakville.

Kelly Keith, spokesperson for Health Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory of the Canadian Science Centre for Human and Animal Health (CSCHAH), said in an interview Thursday that the blood results were sent off to Ontario's Ministry of Health the previous week.

She said she couldn't comment on what the re-tests showed.

The health ministry, which is funding the \$250,000 study and is responsible for releasing the information, couldn't be reached for comment at press time.

Vial-sized blood samples were drawn from 1,505 residents from south Oakville in April and May to determine if they contracted the mosquito-borne virus. The data is to be extrapolated to the general population.

A high number of samples from the blood study were re-tested at CSCHAH in Winnipeg after it was found that the results might have been skewed by other West Nile-like diseases, such as St. Louis encephalitis.

But what has Halton health officials and politicians confused is that it was never the health ministry's intent to use the blood test results as some form of West Nile transmission messaging this year.

Paul Cantin, press secretary to Health Minister Tony Clement, said recently that "the purpose of (the study) is more to try and help build up the overall body of scientific information available to researchers.

"I think it would be difficult to say that whatever conclusion that comes out this study would've changed the way public health decisions were made this year."

The Champion accessed the Ontario government's Web site and found that three news releases were issued this year about the blood study.

A May 2 release quoted Dr. Colin D'Cunha, Ontario's Medical Officer of Health as saying the information from the blood study "will enhance our public education messages and the clinical advice that physicians give their patients."

In the same release, Health Minister Tony Clement was quoted as saying, "it will allow municipalities to develop improved ways of eradicating mosquitoes in their areas."

However, none of the three releases gave a specific date when or exactly how the results would be used for public consumption.

That May 2 release also stated the tests were to be completed by mid-June.

Later a health ministry spokesperson said they would be ready by the end of July because of the re-tests and then was changed to mid-August, again because of the time needed to complete the re-tests.

Regardless, the study's results have been considered an important element to Halton's comprehensive West Nile prevention battle plan for this year.

In fact, Dr. Bob Nosal, Halton's Medical Officer of Health had hoped the results would have been in his hands in May to be

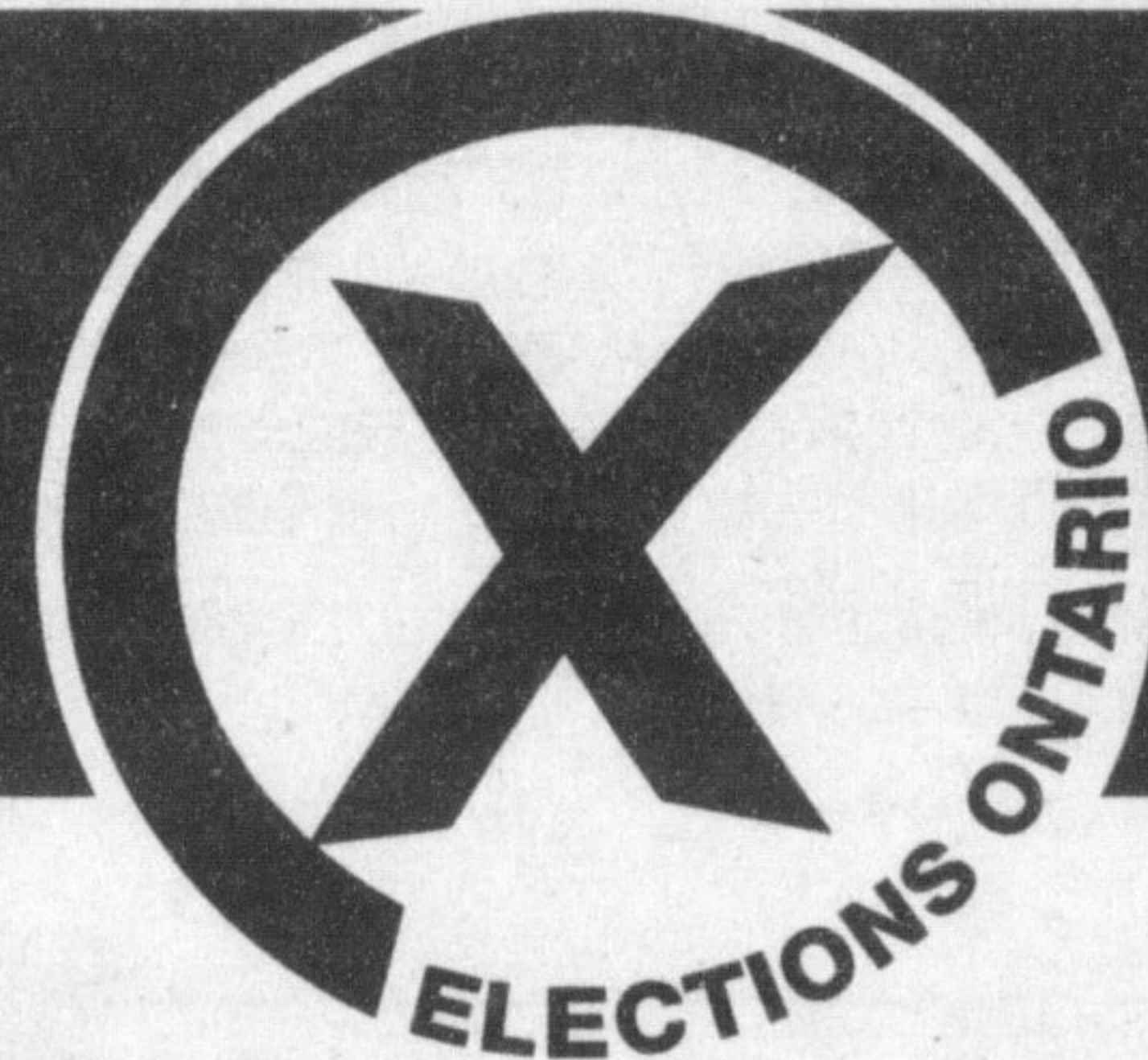
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Open for business

Supporters and local dignitaries join Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh at the official opening of his provincial election campaign headquarters on Charles Street Saturday morning. Mr. Chudleigh is seeking re-election.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE



ONTARIO PROVINCIAL ELECTION THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2

QUALIFICATIONS TO VOTE

On election day you must be:

- 18 years of age
- a Canadian citizen, *and*
- a resident of Ontario

Persons who ceased to live in Ontario within the two years prior to election day may be entitled to vote under certain conditions. Call us for further information.

REVISING AGENTS MAY VISIT YOUR HOME

The Permanent Register of Electors means that province-wide enumeration is no longer necessary. In some areas, however, target revision may be needed to identify eligible voters.

By providing our team of revising agents with accurate information about eligible voters living at your address, you will help us to make sure that it appears correctly on the Voters List.

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION CARDS WILL BE MAILED

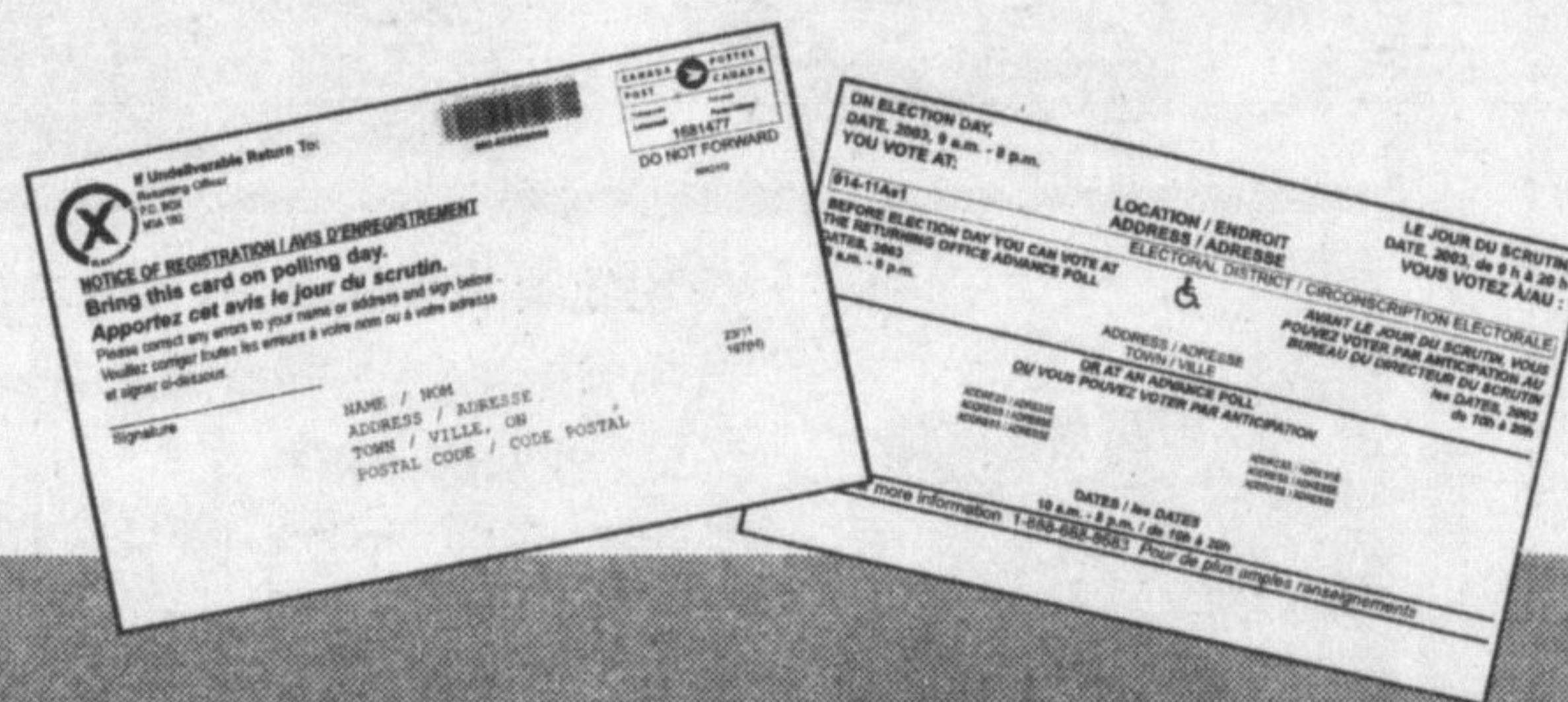
If your name is on the Voters List, you will soon receive a Notice of Registration card in the mail.

Your Notice of Registration card identifies:

- your electoral district
- the location of the poll where you vote on election day
- the dates and locations for advance poll voting in your electoral district

PROXY VOTING

If you are a qualified voter who is not able to vote in person at either an advance poll or the regular poll on election day, you may vote by proxy. Visit our web site or call us for details.



Your Notice of Registration card looks like this. Bring it with you when you go to vote.

IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE A NOTICE OF REGISTRATION CARD

If you are qualified to vote and have not received your Notice of Registration card by **September 20**, your name may not be on the Voters List.

Before election day – you may have your name added to the Voters List by applying for a Certificate to Vote up to 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, **October 1**. Contact us for further information.

On election day – you may register and vote by completing an application form and showing the following identification documents to the officials at the poll:

- **EITHER** one identification document showing your name, current address and signature
- **OR** two identification documents, one showing your name and signature and the other showing your name and current address.

CALL US AT
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

E-MAIL US AT
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VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT
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If you require a sign language interpreter, Ontario Interpreter Services (OIS) makes them available to voters across Ontario on a first-come, first-served basis. Call OIS at the Canadian Hearing Society office nearest you to determine their availability, or contact Elections Ontario for additional information.



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KEEPING YOU INFORMED



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