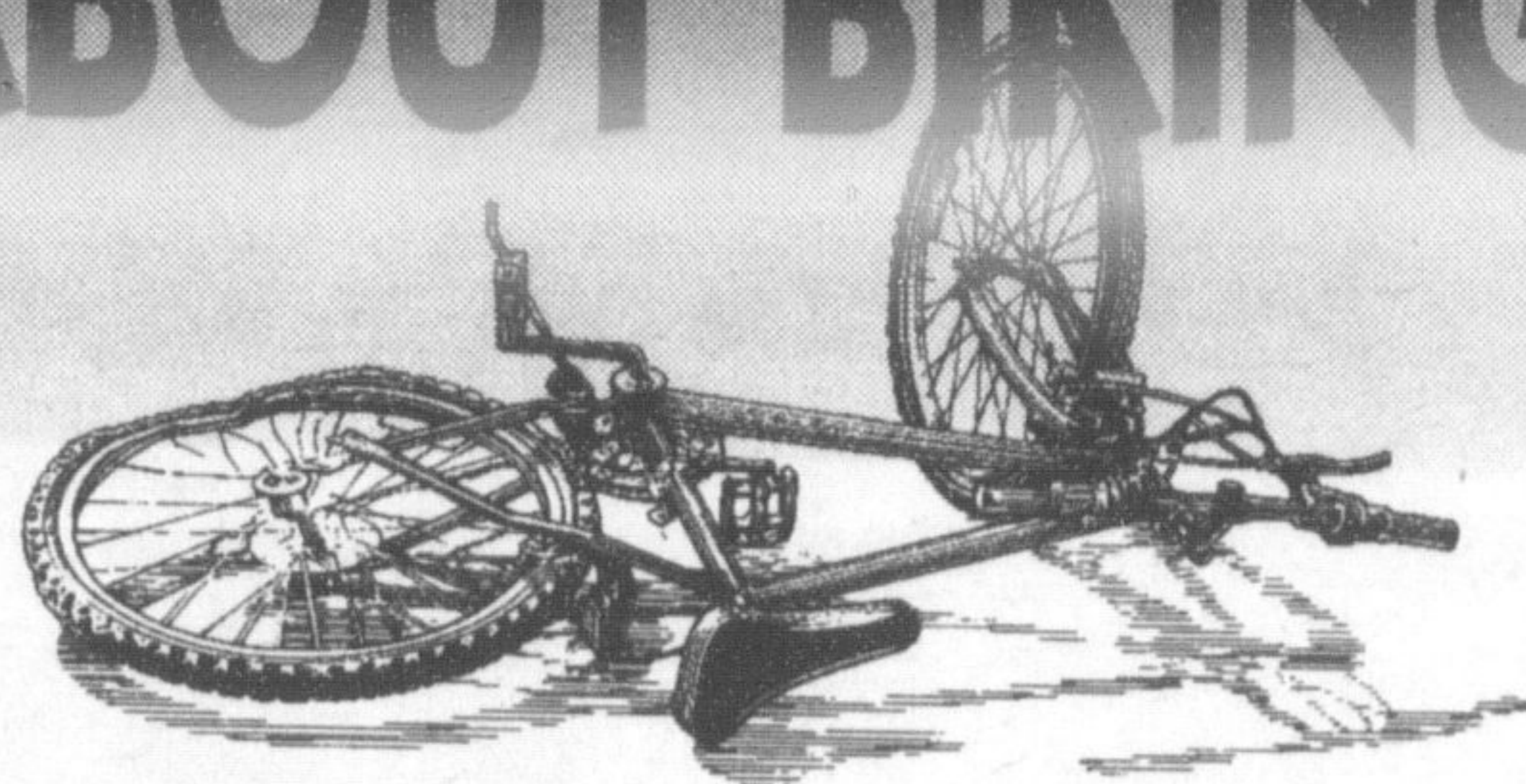


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We can all share the road this summer.

Mail theft charges are dropped

By **ROBIN DOWNTON-POIRIER**

Special to The Champion

Charges against suspects accused of stealing mail in Nassagaweya have been dropped, leaving residents discouraged.

Halton Regional Police say they understand the residents' reaction but encourage them to continue reporting unusual activities they observe in the community.

The suspects were arrested earlier this year after residents observed people stealing mail, pursued them through the area, and provided full descriptions to police.

The suspects went to court May 11, but the judge dismissed the charges.

"Any time there is just circumstantial evidence supporting a case, we know it is not very strong," said Staff Sgt. Susan

Delaney.

"It needs to be proven beyond a reasonable doubt that accused persons committed the crime. The witnesses had briefly lost sight of the suspects during the pursuit and that opened the possibility that someone else could have been driving the car."

Crown praises witnesses

Staff Sgt. Delaney said the Crown was complimentary of the witnesses and stressed that, although the charges were dropped, there's a positive side to the case.

"We now have these people's finger prints and that can help should they be caught again. As well, it has forced them to leave our area, which is good," she said.

Residents need to celebrate the small

successes of each case even if the outcome isn't what was hoped for, Staff Sgt. Delaney added.

As well, she said, continual reporting of unusual occurrences in the community is imperative to helping catch criminals and keeping the community safe.

"The residents are our eyes and ears out there," said Staff Sgt. Delaney.

"They need to keep watch, keep reporting, and somewhere along the way, we will succeed in putting the criminals away. The dismissal of charges is in no way a reflection on their ability to give evidence. Just try not to lose faith and don't take matters into your own hands."

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Budget brings both good and bad news for farmers: OFA

Last week's provincial budget provided a combination

See OFA Commentary page 23

of good news and bad news for Ontario farmers.

That's according to Ron Bonnett, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA).

"It was encouraging to see \$20 million put in place to help farmers pay their costs of compliance with regulations under the Nutrient Management Act (NMA), but the treatment given tobacco farmers in Ontario was anything but fair," Mr. Bonnett said.

"Without knowing the final version of the regulations under the NMA, we have no idea what the associated costs will be. This leaves us uncertain of the real value of the \$20 million in terms of helping farmers meet the costs of compliance."

The budget document is only part of the overall picture, Mr. Bonnett said, adding the OFA will request a meeting with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food to receive assurance the dollars will be allocated appropriately.

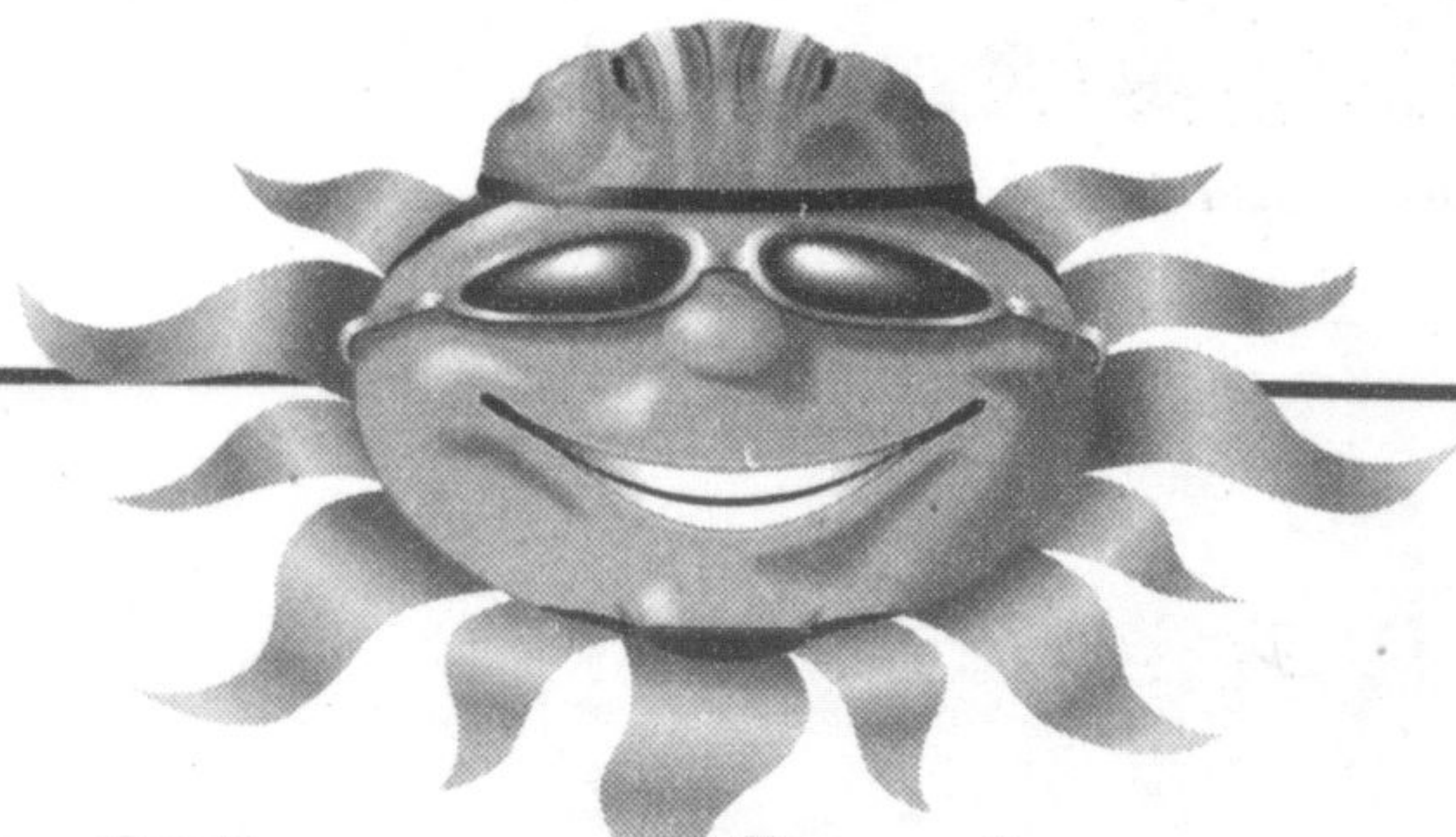
For years, the OFA has asked the provincial government to simplify the application of its sales tax (PST) in the farming sector, Mr. Bonnett said.

The McGuinty government responded with recognition of the Farm Business Registration OFA membership card for PST exempt status, he said.

The OFA will continue to work with the government to expand the list of exempt items to match the list in other Canadian jurisdictions, he said.

"OFA asked for changes to the intergenerational land transfer tax on farm sales, and Finance Minister Sorbara confirmed that with his budget document," Mr. Bonnett said.

Farmers and rural residents of Ontario will pay increased costs for health care as a result of the budget. Mr. Bonnett said the OFA will continue with its ongoing lobbying to ensure rural hospitals and health-care facilities get a fair share of this investment to fund needed improvements.



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