

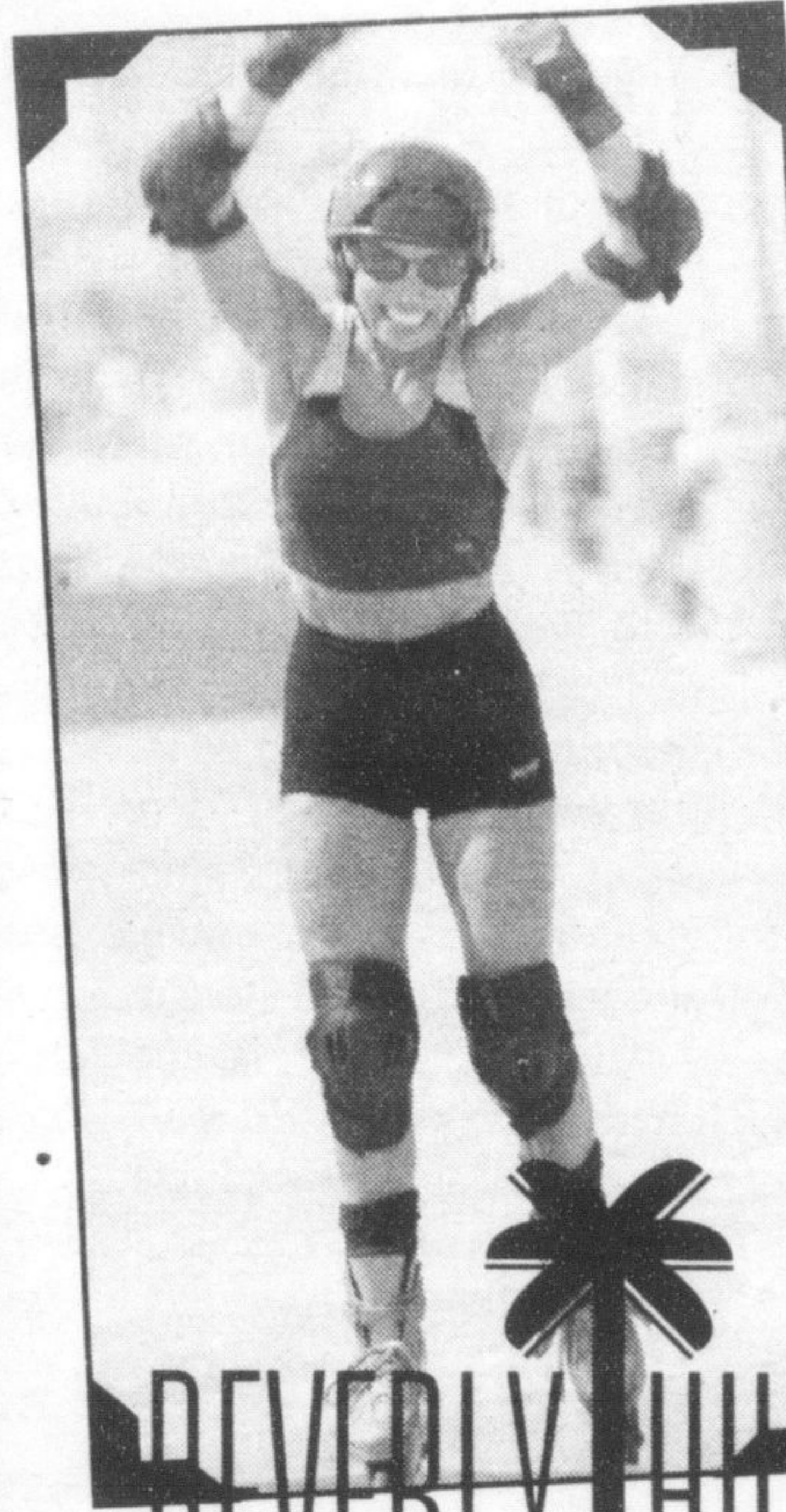
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Plan to help prevent suicides in the works

More than 30 individuals and agencies have committed to helping develop suicide prevention action plans for Halton, according to the Region's medical officer of health.

A report from Dr. Nosal that regional council received Wednesday provided an update on the development of a comprehensive suicide prevention strategy for Halton.

The process was sparked last year by a startling health department report that concluded suicide was the leading cause of injury-related deaths among Halton males, 18 and over, and the third-leading cause of injury-related deaths among Halton females between 1995 and 1999.

Dr. Nosal's report said three work groups will be developing action plans on education and awareness, crisis response and service and enhancement of protective fac-

tors. "These draft plans will be presented to members of the Halton Suicide Prevention Coalition for approval in spring, 2005," the report noted.

The coalition recently held a community consultation to prioritize the suicide prevention needs in Halton.

"Suicide rates can't be reduced through the efforts of any one sector of the community or government, which is why Halton Region is working closely with the community and with local organizations to identify the needs and gaps in service," said Regional Chair Joyce Savoline.

"An issue as complex as mental health and suicide requires a comprehensive, collaborative approach."

For more information on the coalition, contact the Region's health department at (905) 825-6000.

Emergency services review committee is established

The Region has established an emergency services review committee comprised of Regional Chair Joyce Savoline and a councillor from each Halton municipality.

Wednesday, regional council approved the appointment of Milton Wards 2 and 4 Councillor Ron Furik, Halton Hills Councillor Clark Somerville, Burlington Councillor Rick Craven and Oakville Councillor Jeff Knoll to the committee.

The group will develop a terms of reference for a review, bring a work plan for-

ward to council and the report back on the findings.

A report from Rick Cockfield, acting director of strategic planning and policy, said the process will be undertaken in cooperation with the local municipalities.

"Regional staff plans to maintain open communication and consult with local municipal staff throughout the review," the report said.

It's expected the review will be complete by the end of the year.

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