

Tutors needed to help others read and write

By GILLIAN CORMIER

Special to the Champion

Literacy North Halton (LNH) is looking for volunteers to spread the written word.

Almost one in five Halton residents has difficulty with everyday reading and writing tasks, and LNH volunteers help adults overcome barriers and reach personal literacy goals.

Potential volunteers are asked to start applying now to begin the screening process in time for the next volunteer orientation, which will take place October 17.

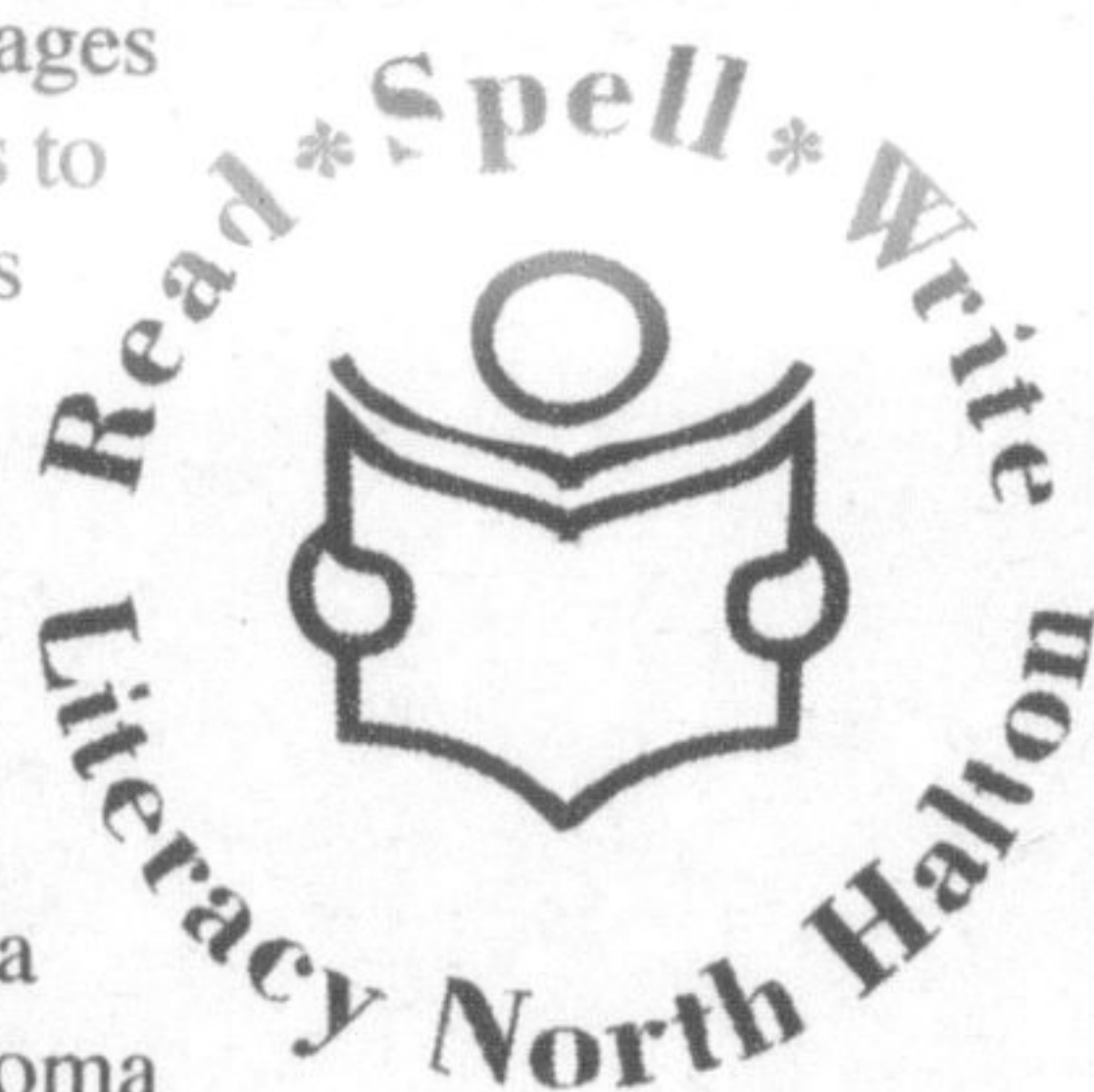
"Our volunteers come from all walks of life," said Executive Director Dympna Dewar. "The main thing is that they have an interest in helping people."

She said volunteers aren't as easy to come by at some points during the year, and the organiza-

tion always encourages potential volunteers to apply so there's always enough tutors to meet the needs of students.

Tutors don't need an educational background, just a high school diploma and some secondary education or training, along with good reading, writing and verbal communication skills. Flexibility is an asset, and the ideal volunteer is caring, non-judgemental, patient and a good listener.

Volunteer tutors must attend a three-hour orientation and a nine-hour training workshop. They also must commit a minimum three hours



per week for tutoring for a recommended one-year period. This allows tutors to see students through their individual learning programs.

"They (tutors) learn from the students as well as teach," said Ms Dewar. "It's a very rewarding experience."

A student is first assessed, and then placed in small group learning programs or with a one-on-one tutor.

Classes are offered part-time, days or evenings, and sessions are typically three hours long. Students and tutors meet in local libraries, churches, offices or schools.

LNH students are adults 19 to 65 years old and pay \$70 for resource costs, but the fee's waived if they're unable to pay. There's no curriculum, and lesson plans are based on a student's individual needs.

"Students have a wide variety of needs," she said.

"Some want to upgrade, some had their schooling interrupted, some want to improve their skills to get or keep a job."

Many students want to improve their family literacy skills. By improving their own literacy, students with children are better able to help out with homework and promote literacy at home.

LNH believes literacy is essential for full participation in society, and since 1986 the non-profit organization has trained more than 1,500 students in Milton, Georgetown and Acton.

"Adult literacy is crucial to the health and functioning of the community," said Ms Dewar.

For more information on programs or volunteering, call (905) 873-2200 or (905) 693-8458 or visit www.literacynh.org.



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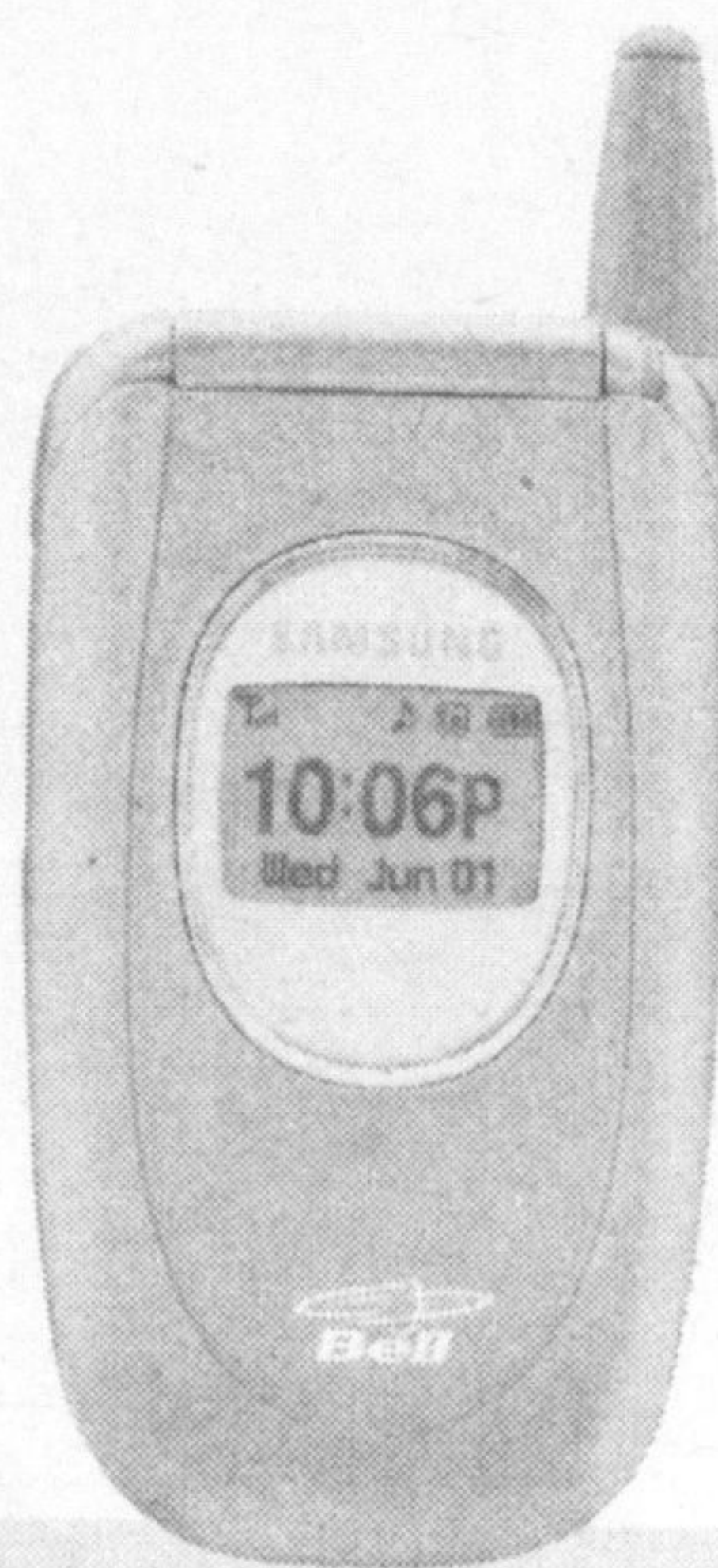
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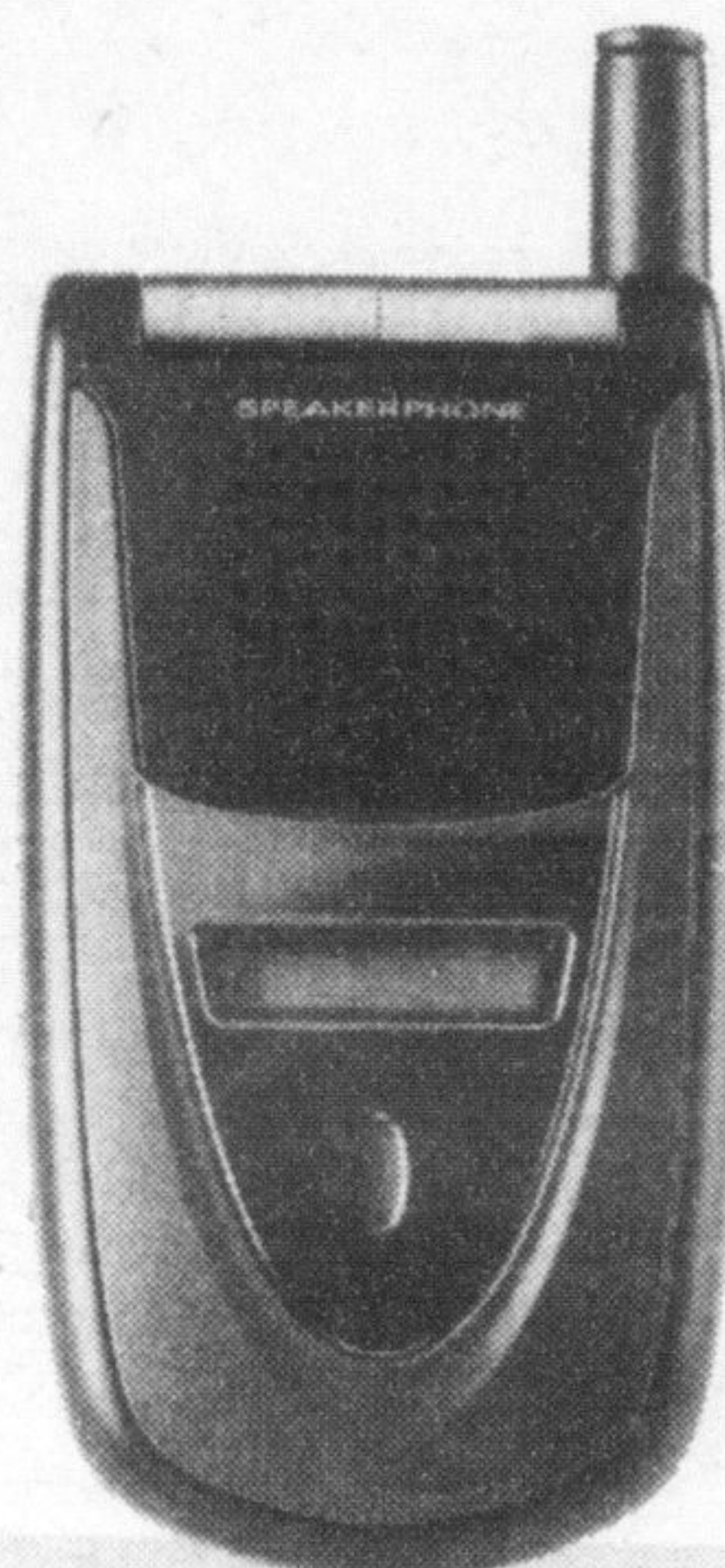
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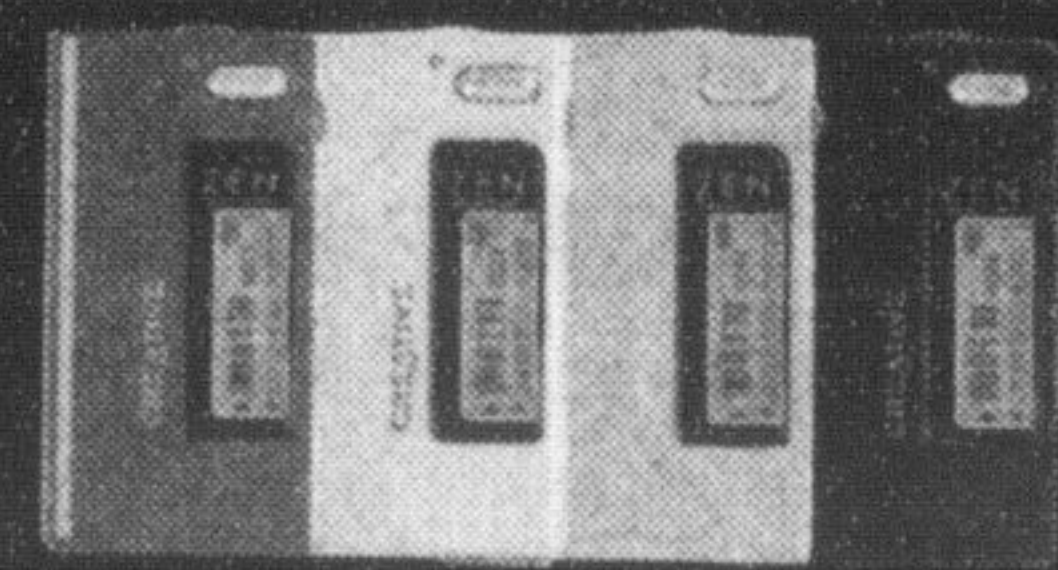
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