

# Savoline announces she won't seek another term

By MELANIE HENNESSEY  
The Champion

After 12 years of serving as the face of Halton Region, Chairman Joyce Savoline has announced that she won't seek re-election next year.

Fighting back tears, the well-loved head of regional council broke the news to her shocked colleagues Wednesday at the end of council's last 2005 meeting.

"I have chosen to make this announcement now, recognizing the magnitude of the campaign necessary to ensure voters from all of the municipalities have an understanding of the candidates seeking the position of chairman, and the personnel and financial resources necessary for this undertaking," she said.

The long-time Burlington resident noted she also knows how much time it takes to have a thorough understanding of the issues that affect all of Halton, and the ones unique to each municipality.

In an interview with The Champion, she explained that she feels this is her time to leave public office. The chairman has been serving at the Region since 1982 when she started as a local and regional councillor for the City of Burlington.

"For me, it's important to leave still enjoying the job," she said. "I felt in my heart that this is the right decision for where I am at this point in my life."

She pointed out that the chairman job takes a tremendous amount of time and dedication, and another three-year term "is a long commitment."

"It's not like a job where you apply and you know you're going to retire," she said. "When you make a commitment, you're really asking for the trust of 400,000 people. It's really important to know that you're committing for three years."

Ms Savoline's announcement sparked emotion around the council table, with most councillors looking visibly surprised.

"It was quite a shock," said Milton Wards 1 and 3 Councillor Barry Lee. "It got us all choked up. We're going to miss her."

Mr. Lee had nothing but good things to say about Ms Savoline. "She's been a big, big asset to Halton Region and just a lovely person. They don't come any better than Joyce."

He emphasized that she's always treated all residents equally and with a great amount of respect.

"She pays as much attention to us (in the rural area) as she does to the more densely-populated areas," Mr. Lee said.

Fellow Milton and regional councillor Ron Furik was also stunned after hearing Ms Savoline won't be seeking re-election.

"It brought a real sadness to my heart," he said, noting it will take "another Joyce Savoline" to fill the outgoing chairman's shoes.

At the meeting, Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale said Ms Savoline will leave a lasting legacy. And she definitely will have left her mark. After being appointed as chairman in 1994 and 1997, Ms Savoline pushed the Province to have her position changed to one that requires a public vote. Subsequently, she became the first chairman in Halton's history to be elected by the people.

In the coming year, Ms Savoline plans to continue affecting



Joyce Savoline

change. She told her fellow council members that she's looking forward to leading council through the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead.

"My priority is to do this job," she said. "I may have announced, but I have not stopped being chairman."

She noted that she will continue to impress on the provincial government the value of keeping garbage from other municipalities out of Halton's landfill and pushing for the creation of a GTA pooling (a system that helps Toronto pay for social services) exit strategy.

She said she'll also carry on with her support for the CAO and staff in developing the joint campus venture with both schools boards and police.

During her time as chairman, the mother of two said she's proud to have had a part in a variety of initiatives, including the Official Plan review and Halton concurrently receiving an AAA credit rating. She tipped her hat to the Region's staff for accomplishments that've been made, noting Halton is fortunate to have the kind of loyal and professional employees that it does.

"It really is a 'Team Halton,'" Ms Savoline said.

And staff had equally glowing things to say about her.

"She is respected and loved by all staff," said Halton CAO Brent Marshall. "She's enabled us to do our jobs — that's not always an easy role for a person in her position to do. We're going to miss her."

He noted the Region is certainly able to work through the transition, pointing out that part of Ms Savoline's legacy is to have left Halton "in good shape."

While she said she hasn't quite decided yet what her plans are come the end of her term, Ms Savoline told The Champion she definitely wants to continue working with people.

And, she had just four words to sum up her time at the helm of the Region.

"It's been a dream," she said. "They really have been the absolutely most gratifying years in a work career anyone could possibly have."

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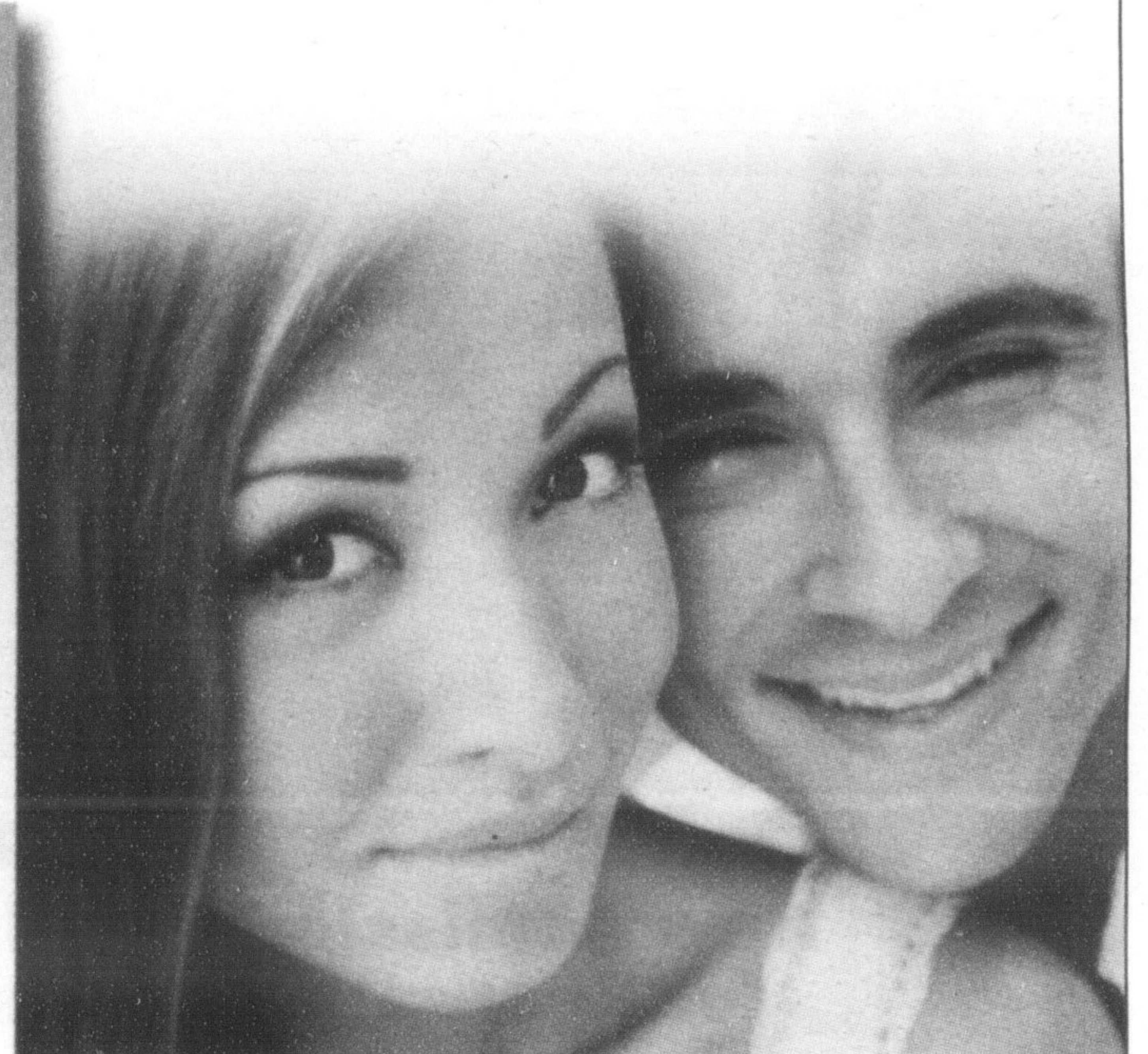
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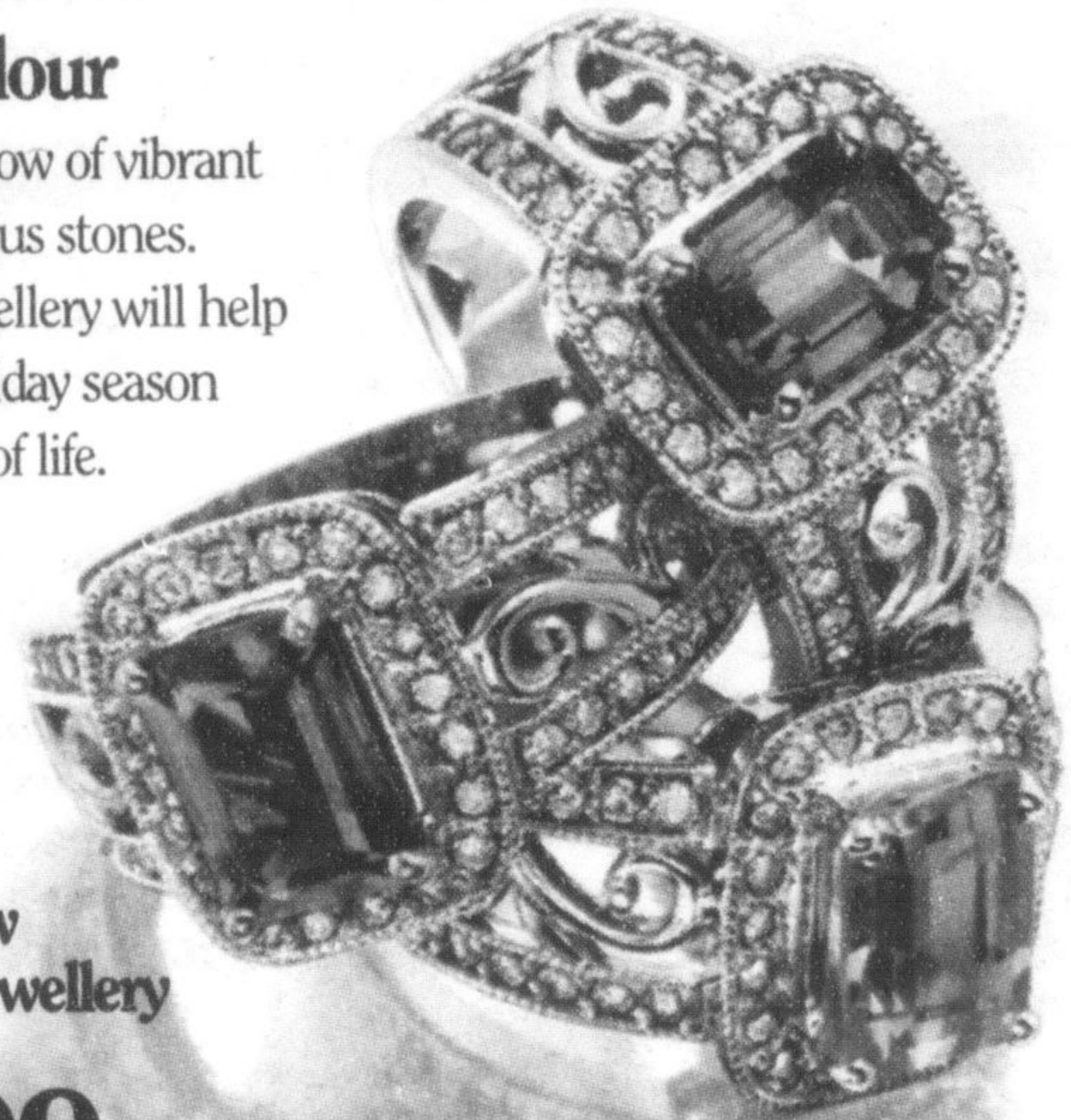
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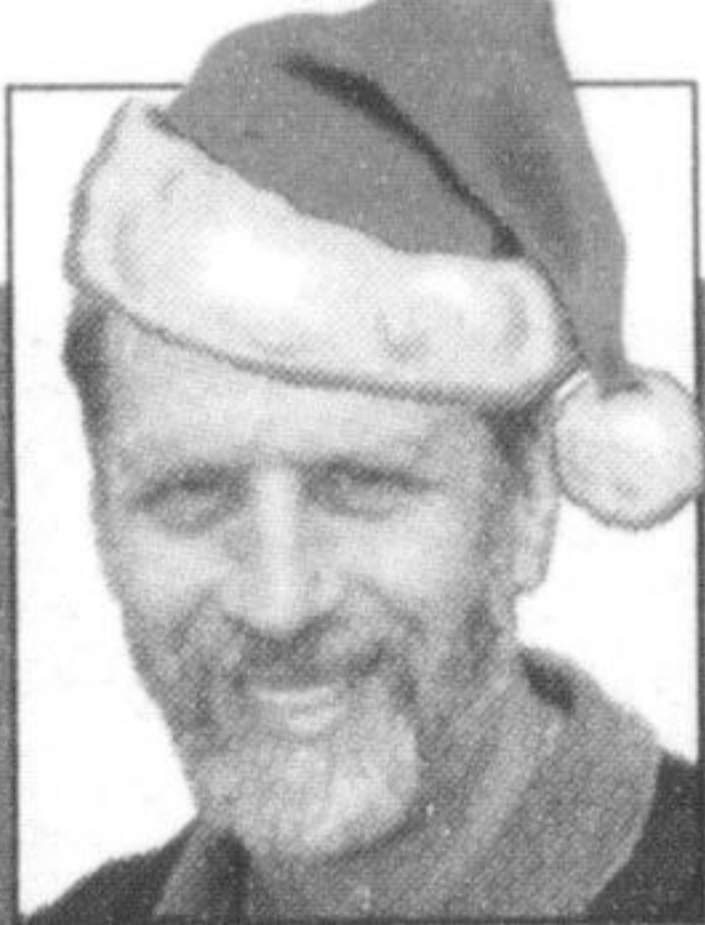


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