

Arts & Entertainment

Milton native hopes to be next 'Nashville Star'

Tara Sales is hoping to land a spot on season four of 'Nashville Star'.

Photo by
KAREN
NEWMAN



By **KRISSIE RUTHERFORD**
Special to *The Champion*

She was crowned Miss Toronto Universe 2001, has been singing professionally for a decade in R&B, rock, pop and even German dance music — and now Tara Sales has her sights set on being the next 'Nashville Star'.

A Milton native, Ms Sales is part way through the audition process for season four of 'Nashville Star', the USA Network reality-music show that searches for the next country music superstar.

"I'm so excited — this has been my dream forever," she said. "Being on stage, being on tour is so much fun — it's not like work, it's something that you love."

Last month, the 28-year-old, who now lives in Burlington, and her younger sister drove down to Pennsylvania, one of 20 cities hosting auditions.

"I've been checking the 'Nashville Star' Web site since last year to find out when the auditions were, and I've had people on-call checking for me," she said, smiling. "I saw auditions were on and I said, 'That's it. We're going.'"

She was among 300 to audition in Pennsylvania, where contestants had to perform one country song from a list of 50 in front of a panel of judges.

Ms Sales sang 'Something More' by Sugarland. "I felt really good about it," she said. "We were just having so much fun." After the first day, judges cut 300 contestants down to 63 — and Ms Sales was still standing. "They said my name and my sister and I were both screaming," she said. "I think we were the only ones there who screamed."

Ms Sales was also the only Canadian at the Pennsylvania audition.

"After we found out I had to audition again the next day, we had a lot to do — we had to go shopping because I needed another outfit," she said. "We didn't even have a hotel room booked for the second night."

The Sales sisters almost had to sleep in the car that night because there were no vacancies at the hotel, but, luckily, competitors who didn't make it past the first day had checked out.

The next day, Ms Sales did an encore performance of 'Something More' and Gretchen Wilson's 'When I

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think about Cheating' clad in her brand new outfit, including gold cowboy boots. "It went really well," she said, smiling. "I rocked the audition."

She was one of 20 selected to continue, and is now waiting to find out if she'll be one of five from the Pennsylvania auditions chosen to compete at the regional final in either Nashville or Houston.

"I'm going to have a heart attack if they choose me," she said. "I'll be ecstatic."

At regional finals, 100 singers will be narrowed down to 10, who will compete on the reality TV series until only the 2006 'Nashville Star' is left standing.

"Honestly, that would be amazing," Ms Sales said. "It would be the best job ever."

A Milton native, Ms Sales uses words like 'gal' and 'darlin' — she seems like a natural fit for country music.

"My voice has always sort of lent itself to country," she said. "It's a lot of fun and I think what they're doing with country now is really exciting."

She admits that country music didn't interest her until Shania Twain hit the scene.

"She kind of convinced me that it was cool," Ms Sales said. "I think Shania's awesome."

She's also a fan of Patsy Cline, Faith Hill, "and of course," she said smiling, "Dierks Bently, who I'd like to marry."

Ms Sales is close to completing her first country record, which features all material she's written herself, and Jeff Healey on the guitar in three of the songs.

She wasn't able to sing her own songs at the 'Nashville Star' auditions, so she recently sent a home video to the show featuring two of her original songs as well as comments from family, friends and co-workers. "I want this really bad, which means I have to hit them from whatever angle I can," she said. "I'm going all out."

New Year's Eve bash to aid CHP

Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh is calling on Halton residents to ring in the new year at Country Heritage Park.

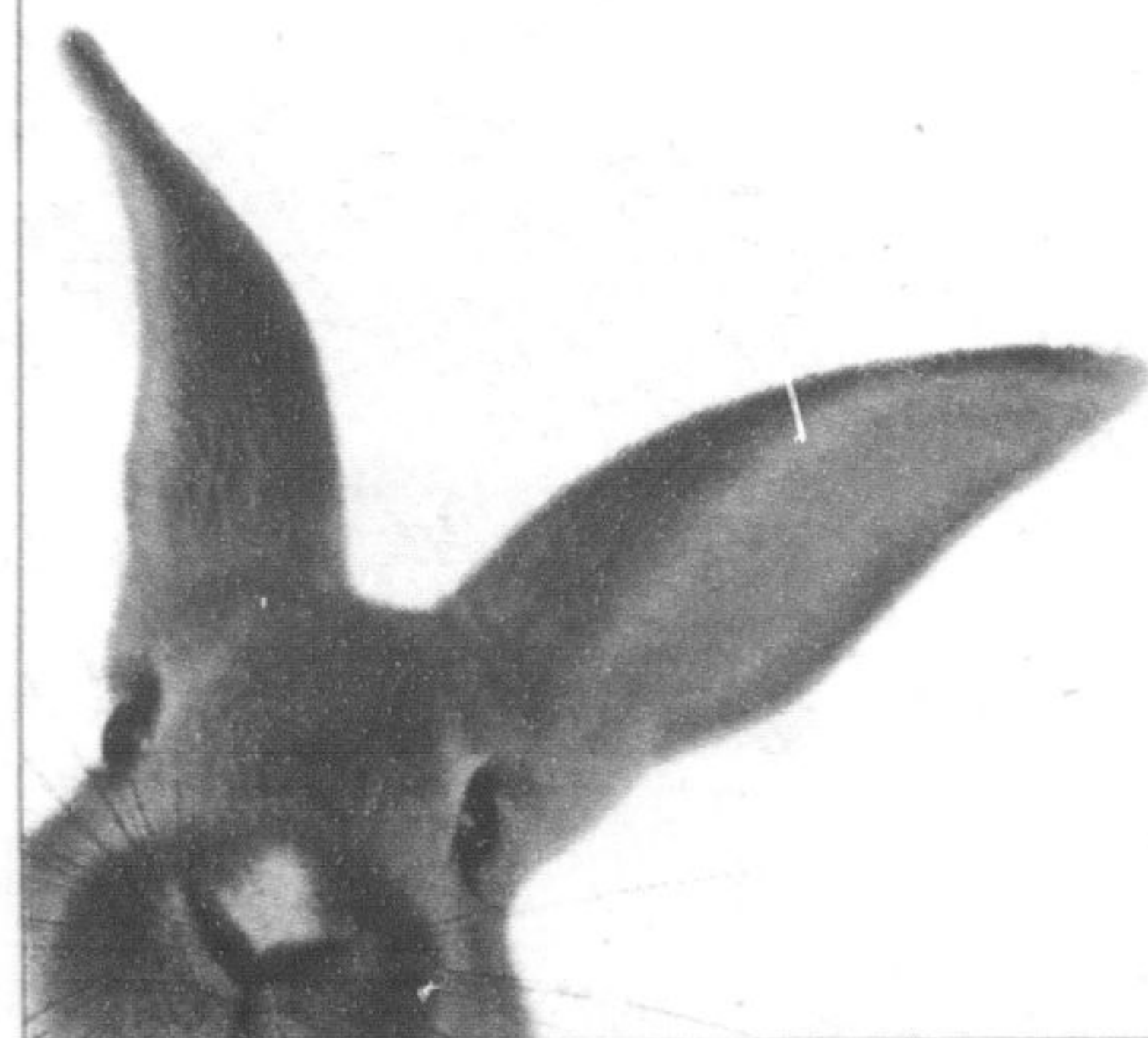
A New Year's Eve event has been planned at the local tourist destination to help raise funds it recently lost due to a Niagara Escarpment Commission decision disallowing the storage of Toronto Auto Auction

cars on its property in the winter months.

The evening will include live music and a full buffet served at 9 p.m., as well as a silent auction and party favours. The event is being organized by Friends of Country Heritage Park. Tickets cost \$65 per person or \$125 per couple. For tickets, call Lorna Wilson at (905) 876-1937 or (905) 878-1510, ext. 26.

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