

Conservation Halton celebrates 50th anniversary

By Melanie Hennessey
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

A half century of preserving Halton's valuable natural environment was celebrated Thursday evening at Conservation Halton's (CH) 50th inaugural meeting.

About three dozen local residents and a handful of dignitaries turned out for the session to hear about what CH has accomplished over the past five decades and what it has in store to mark the anniversary.

"Conservation Halton has a proud history of conservation achievement," CH board vice-chair John Vice told the crowd.

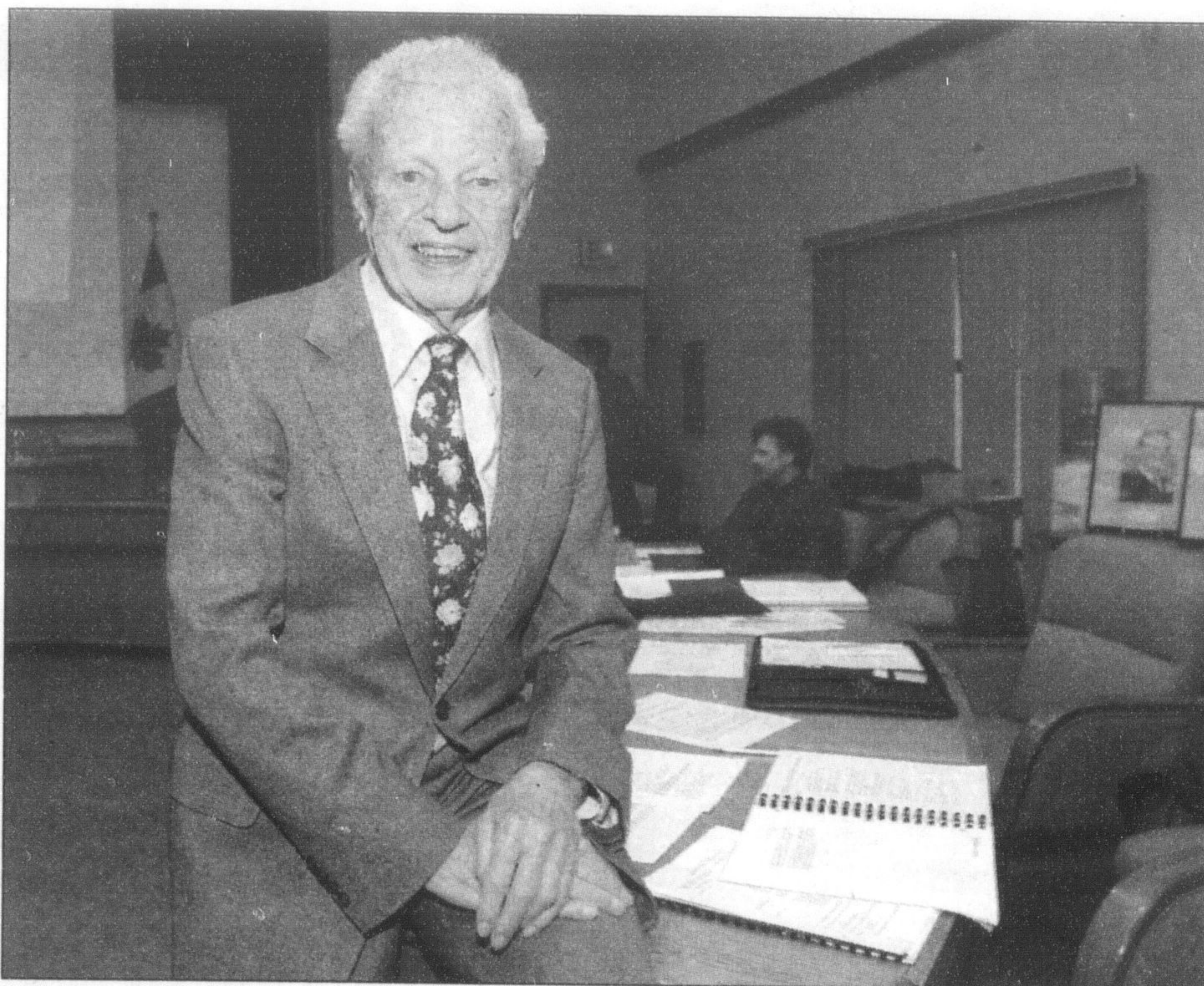
"During the past 50 years, we have had eight chair people who have guided this organization to what it is today."

Vice went on to outline what CH achieved under those chairs, including acquiring lands for its various conservation areas, planting thousands of trees, constructing water management dams and establishing floodplain and headwater regulations to protect natural watercourses.

And while he wasn't a former chairman, 92-year-old Burlington resident and original board member Allan Day was recognized at the event for his help in getting the conservation authority off the ground.

"You and your colleagues had great foresight to acquire some of the best natural areas in southern Ontario," Vice told him. "These lands have benefited generations of people and will continue to do so for many more."

While Day — who served for about 15 years on the board as an Oakville representative — was modest about his contributions, his daughter, Diane Leblovic, was quick to point out that he was instrumental in acquiring



LIESA KORTMANN / CANADIAN CHAMPION

MARKING A MILESTONE: Allan Day, 92 — one of the original board members of Conservation Halton — was among those on hand for 50th anniversary celebrations Thursday.

ing the lands for the Kelso Conservation Area and Hilton Falls.

She also credited her father for getting her interested in serving on the board, which she did from 1985 to 1991.

"When I was younger, my dad would take me to a lot of the (CH) properties and we walked miles," she reminisced. "It was sort of our outing on the weekends."

CH has a variety of festivities lined up to

mark its 50th anniversary, which past chair Jean Williams detailed at the inaugural meeting.

The events include:

- The launch of a new community tree planting program, 'Trees for Watershed Health', April 22 at Kelso Quarry Park — a new property in Milton CH hopes will be dedicated to it later this year

- The Conservation Awards of

Excellence, to be held May 24 at CH's Britannia Road office

- Parks Day on June 3 to introduce new people to CH's parks and show off its programs and services

- The first Halton Children's Water Festival, co-hosted by the Region, from September 26 to 28 at Kelso Conservation Area. It'll teach about 3,000 or 4,000 school children about the importance of water through a hands-on approach.

- The official opening of the newly-renovated Visitor's Centre at Mountsberg Conservation Area October 27.

Williams also announced CH's plans for its newest community outreach program called 'Stream of Dreams', in which students and community groups will participate in education sessions focusing on creeks and watersheds and then have the opportunity to create 'dream fish'.

"These are wooden cut-out fish that are to be painted in the most colourful ways possible," explained Williams.

"The dream fish will then be hung in a wave-like pattern on chain link fences near creeks in communities and neighbourhoods throughout the watershed. The goal of this program is to educate communities about the life and function of their rivers, streams and watersheds, while dazzling them with the charm of community art."

The program will be launched May 24 at the awards ceremony.

For more information on the 50th anniversary events, contact Conservation Halton at (905) 336-1158.

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