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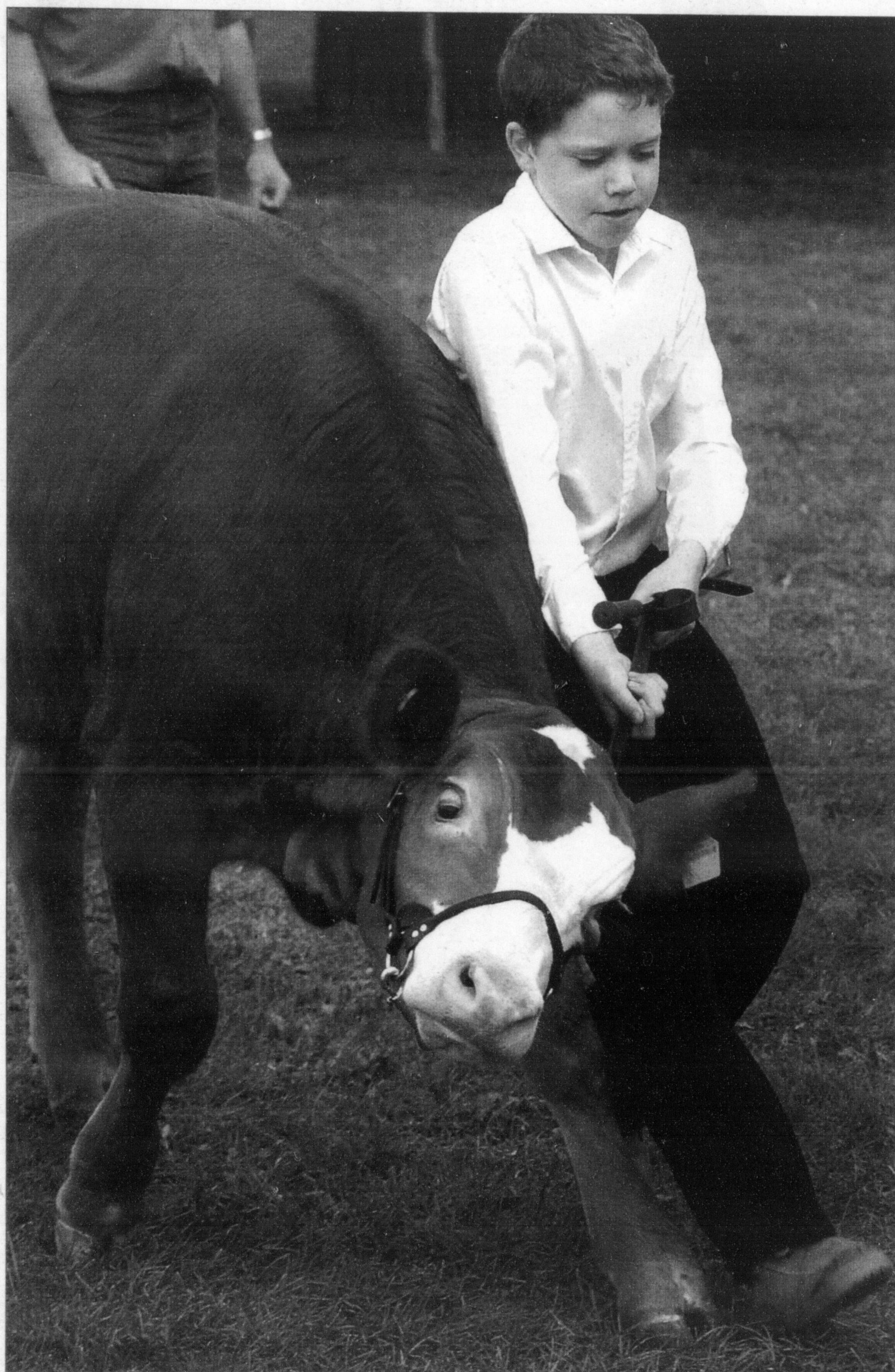
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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

**HOLDING ON:** Graham Bird, 12, has his hands full trying to hold Rachel, his entry in the Youth Beef Show Saturday at the annual Milton Fall Fair. See more fair coverage on page A14.

## Public school trustees up for big pay raises

By Tim Whitnell  
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

A citizens' advisory committee has recommended current Halton public school board trustees get maximum retroactive pay and that future trustees get a significant raise, in accordance with new remuneration guidelines established by the Ontario government.

The decisions of the six-person citizens' group, which met last Tuesday, were announced at a Halton District School Board meeting Wednesday.

The sextet — consisting of three parent representatives and three community reps, all of whom serve on school councils — have recommended back pay that would give each current trustee \$8,153 to cover the retroactive period of September 1, 2005 to September 1, 2006, as set out by the Ministry of Education. An additional amount of \$1,882 would be paid to cover September 1 to November 30, 2006, the end date for trustees' current term of office.

As for a trustee's regular pay, called an honorarium, the group recommends it be bumped to \$13,159 per year for the new four-year term starting December 1, 2006 and ending November 30, 2010.

As in the past, the ministry is retaining a provision that gives the trustee who's elected chair of the board an extra \$5,000 per year; the vice-chair gets an additional \$2,500. There's also an extra student enrolment component and the local committee is recommending the chair and vice-chair get an additional \$2,290 and \$1,145 respectively.

That leaves the new annual recommended pay at \$20,475 for the board chair and \$16,830 for the vice-chair.

A series of formulae were provided by the government to come up with trustees' potential retroactive pay and increases to their annual honoraria.

Trustees' annual pay has been

\$5,000 since the Conservative government of Mike Harris changed the pay scale in 1997 to a flat-rate system for the 72 school boards in the province. Previously, trustees set their own pay, which, depending on the board, could be two to 10 times higher than the current \$5,000. In 1996, Halton trustees received \$12,252 annually while the board chair got \$18,372.

One potential pay increase the local citizens' group rejected was a maximum \$50 for each meeting attended by trustees as a member of a couple of specific sub-committees. They recommend no pay to attend those meetings.

A new policy on trustee pay needs to be passed by the board before the citizens' committee recommendations are enacted.

A special board meeting will be held before the next committee-of-the-whole board meeting on October 4.

• see TRUSTEES on page A3

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