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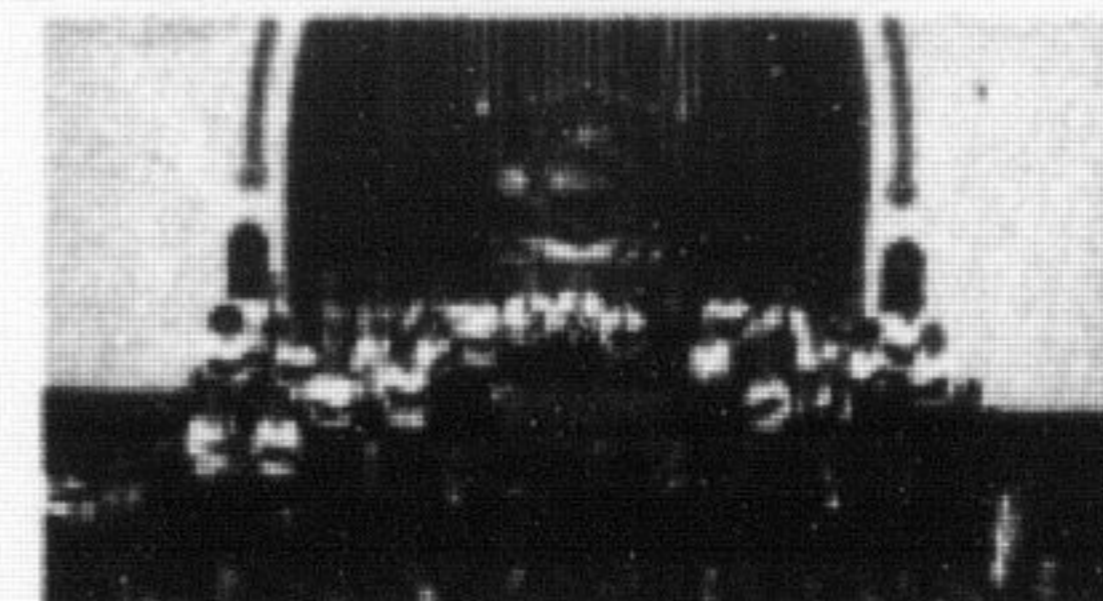
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A & E
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Eastern loggerhead shrike 'Jack' is perched on a branch in Mountsberg Conservation Area's captive breeding facility.

Mountsberg helping recover threatened shrike

By **Kathy Yanchus**
 CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

The eastern loggerhead shrike can be a nasty little thing.

A disgusting twist in its hunting habits has earned this striking songbird the nickname 'butcher bird'.

Slightly smaller than a robin, with grey black and white feathers and a distinctive raccoon-like mask, the shrike is a predator that hunts like a hawk.

Once it kills its prey with a swift bite to the

neck, the shrike then skillfully impales it on a barbed wire fence or thorn and tears it apart.

Because the shrike has no talons, it improvises explains Amy Fennell, Mountsberg Raptor Centre's lead.

Meals can be anything from a cricket to a mouse or small snake.

Fennell witnesses the impaled prey any time she steps into Mountsberg's new shrike captive breeding facility. The carefully designed structure was built this fall to assist in the recovery of the songbird, which hovers on the brink of extinction. Fennell is one of the select few

allowed into the delicate environment.

The news that Mountsberg had been chosen as a partner in the Canada-wide recovery program, which currently releases 100 birds into the wild annually, prompted "stark terror and amazing excitement" for her, admitted Fennell.

"The staff is putting their hearts and souls into making sure these birds are looked after," said Fennell.

Funded by numerous corporate and private donors, the facility will house the migrating birds — 11 now, with more on the way — over

• see **BIRDS** on page 4

Some can't afford to eat healthy

By **Christina Commisso**
 CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

A survey of Halton's grocery stores reveals those on a fixed income struggle to afford a nutritious diet month after month.

The Price of Eating Well in Halton 2011 report, released last week, shows low-income residents fall short on their monthly finances, often having to forego healthy basics like fruits, vegetables, dairy and meat.


"It's an alarming trend — alarming in that people who are already having difficulty accessing healthy food at a reasonable cost, they're going to be more challenged," said Lynn Roblin, former chair of the Halton Food Council and a registered dietitian.

The cost of a healthy food basket in Halton has gone up seven per cent since 2007 and 18 per cent in the last three years.



She said generally the cost of food is lower in Canada compared to the rest of the world, but that doesn't make it any easier for those struggling to keep up with bills in Halton.


"I hate to say our food is low cost. It's

• see **COMMUNITY** on page 12



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