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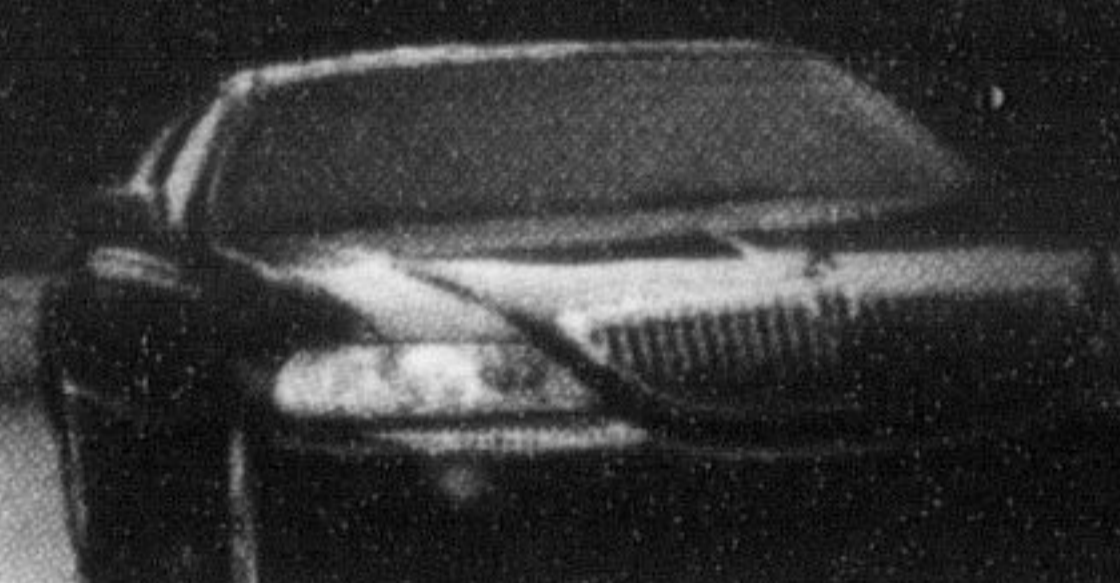
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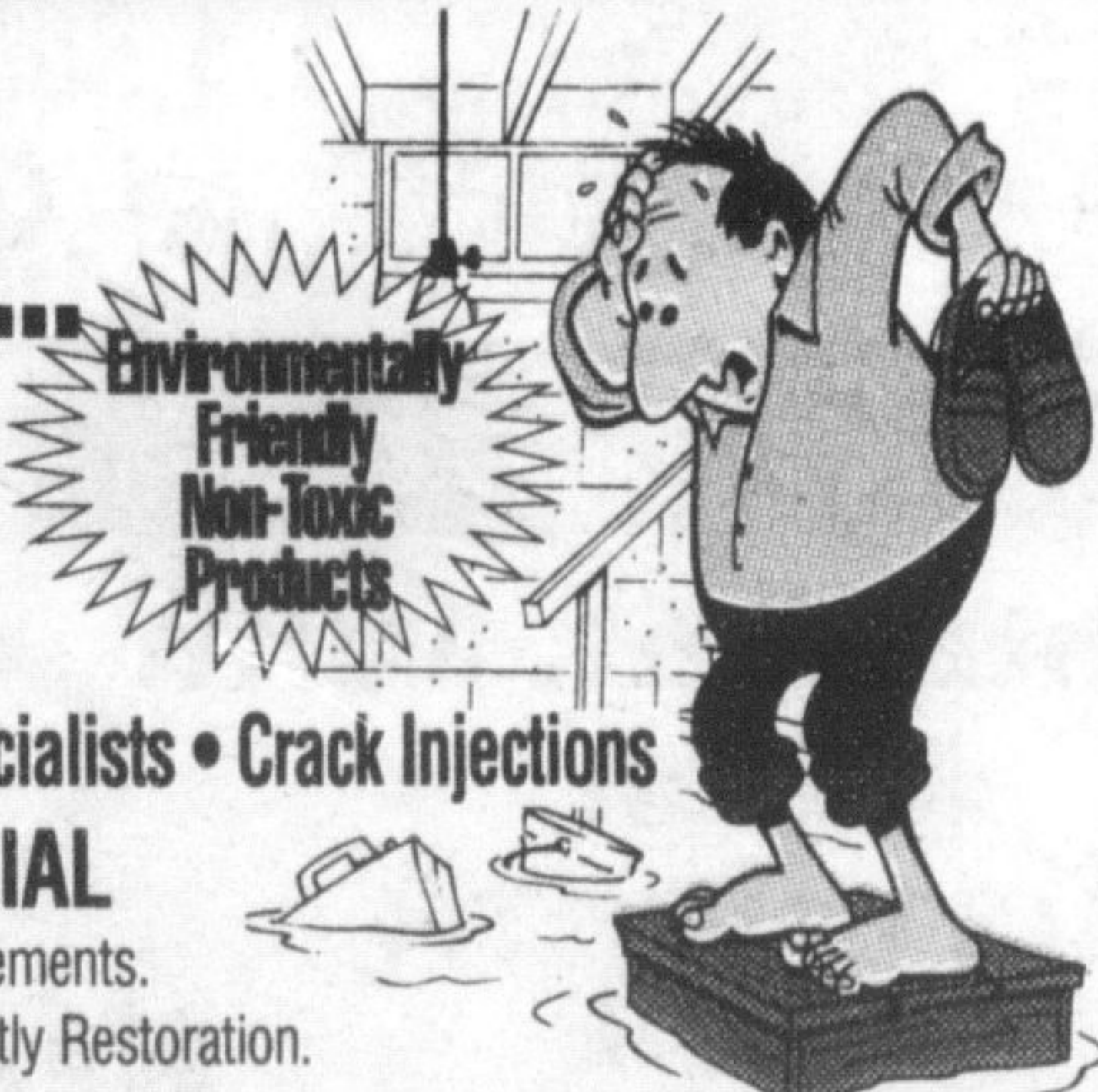
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# Trustees to decide where boundaries lie

By Tim Foran

METROLAND WEST MEDIA GROUP

Trustees at Halton's two English school boards will have to decide at their next public meetings on whether to reduce their own numbers by one and which geographic areas the elected members will represent starting December 1, 2010 and for the following four years.

The Province's Ministry of Education has set a deadline of April 3 for boards to submit the information so that local municipalities can prepare for the upcoming municipal election October 25.

The public school board, which currently has 11 trustees, will likely have to decide whether it's fair for Halton Hills, with an estimated population of 59,000, to continue to have two trustees while fast-growing Milton, which reports a 2009 population of 81,000, has only one.

"I believe the (population) numbers we have generated will warrant a second trustee," said Milton's current public school trustee Donna Danielli.

The two public school trustees in Halton Hills didn't return calls for comment as of press time.

While the population of Georgetown and Acton is expected to remain stagnant for at least the next four years due to a lack of water capacity, Milton's population will grow by an average of 5,000 to 6,000 per year over the next four years, according to Halton planning statistics.

"The workload is just going to get heavier," said Danielli, who's planning on running again.

She said the trustee would have to be taken from Halton Hills. Both Burlington and Oakville, which have populations estimated at under 175,000 each, have four public school trustees.

Unlike previous election years, adding an extra trustee to the board is not an option. As per a new regulation (412-00) under Ontario's Education Act, school boards can't increase the number of trustees they will have for the next municipal term.

However, to ensure proper representation and accommodate population shifts within the region, both school boards have other options available, including reducing their number of trustees by one, re-distributing the existing amount of trustees from one community to another, or creating new geographic boundaries.

As both boards represent the entire region, they don't have to choose boundaries that coincide with the ward boundaries for councillors in the lower-tier municipalities, though that has been the tradition.

For example, unlike in Burlington, Catholic school board trustees in Oakville have chosen to be elected to serve the entire Town, or "at-large," for the past three elections, said 30-year trustee Alice Anne LeMay.

The four trustees in that community have decided to keep that approach again for the upcoming election, something the entire board will have to ratify at its next meeting Tuesday.

"I kind of want to go back to the ward split," said LeMay. "I think people feel more secure if they have ward representation."

LeMay, who plans to run again, said her three colleagues preferred the at-large format and she went along with them as she saw no pressing reason to oppose them.

"If you're not going to win a battle, why would you start a war?" she said.

Currently, three of Oakville's four Catholic trustees live south of the QEW, none living in the growing area of Oakville west of Trafalgar and north of the QEW.

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