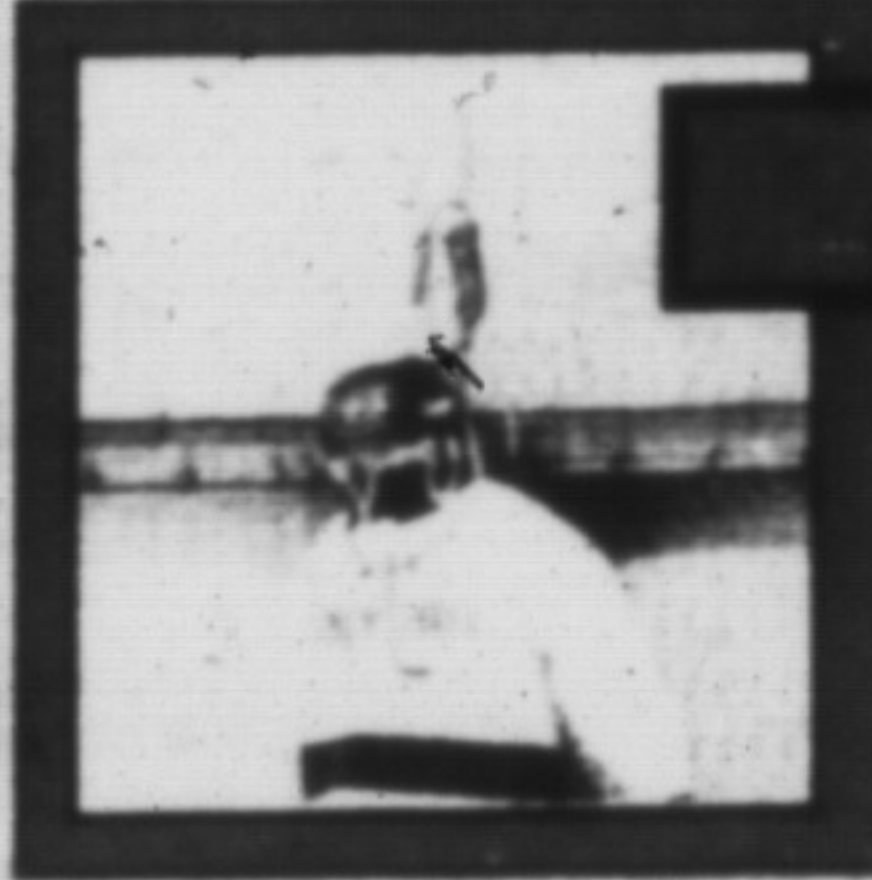




SULLIVAN

MPP Barbara Sullivan slams federal budget — 4



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Krantz warns of cuts if budget hikes passed on

By NORM NELSON



Gord Krantz

Milton Mayor Gord Krantz thinks the federal budget, unveiled Tuesday by finance minister Michael Wilson, will have a dramatic affect on taxes and the level of service provided at the municipal level.

"Not in the next three to five months, but in the long run."

"If anybody can't see that, then they have their head in the sand," he said.

Commenting on the budget's \$944 million cut in federal aid to the provinces, including a \$500 million reduction to Ontario, he said the federal government has thrown the ball into the provincial court. And if recent trends are any indication, the provincial government will pass it on to municipal governments.

Mr. Krantz has been a vocal critic of recent provincial off-loading which, says regional treasurer Joe Rinaldo, has added more than three per cent to this year's regional budget.

Examples of off-loading, he said, include a shifting of court security from the province to the regions.

"It's one of the reasons we're grappling with a double digit increase," he said. (This year's preliminary regional budget calls for an 11.2 per cent increase).

On the other hand, he said further off-loading is not a foregone conclusion as the reduction in transfer payments to Ontario amounts to about one per cent of the province's total budget — an amount he feels the province may be able to absorb.

The impact on municipalities, he said, will become clear when the provincial budget comes out this spring.

Mayor Krantz said he's against any further burden being shuffled by senior levels of government onto the municipal tax base because it hits the already beleaguered homeowner.

He's worried about further cuts to areas where municipalities have traditionally received subsidies such as roads, education, health care, and environmental initiatives.

Off-loading is unfair, he said, because in the past few years "municipalities have been doing super well, while the provincial and federal governments have seen fit to build up their debt."

Hazardous waste depot re-opens

The region's household hazardous waste collection depot in Milton is back in operation.

Citing violations in safety procedures, the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) closed the depot last year.

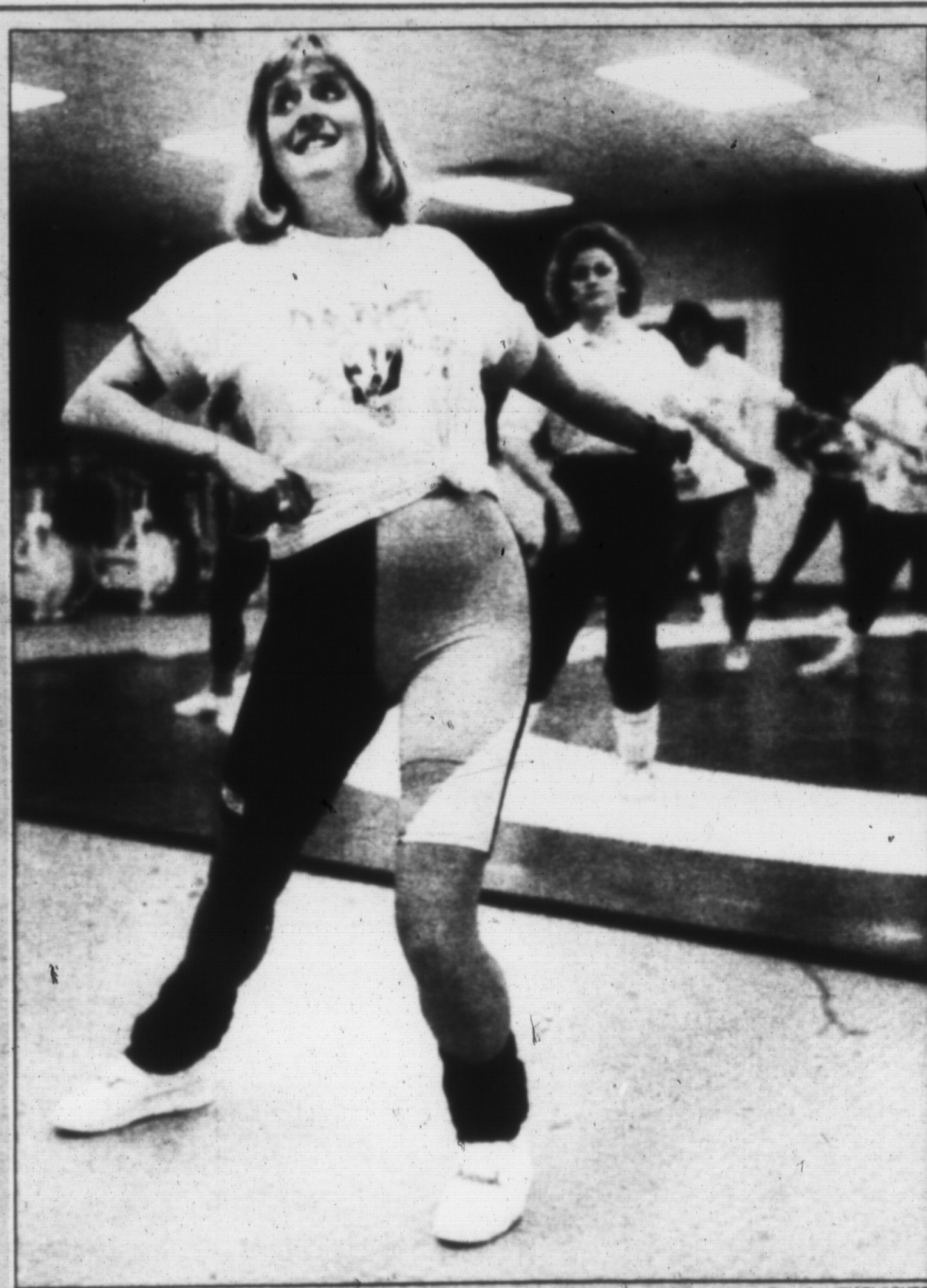
Halton's cost to meet MOE requirements was about \$40,000.

The more stringent guidelines that have been implemented have also left the region with only one person on staff fully qualified to operate the facility.

As a result the facility, which is open Thursday to Saturday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., will be closed in the absence of the attendant. Regional waste management director John McKay said the attendant's vacations will be scheduled so as not to coincide with the peak periods in the spring and fall, and advance notice of closure will be posted at the site.

The controversial closure upset regional officials, who said they weren't given a chance to correct what they thought were minor problems. They instructed regional staff not to open the facility until "a partnership attitude has been arranged with the MOE and not the apparent adversarial approach that now exists."

Staff assured councillors "a cooperative attitude is developing with the MOE."



Let's boogie

Photo by JON BLACKER

DanceFIT instructor Cathy Hutchison of Milton leads the troops in a fitness program designed to incorporate dance moves with standard workout routines. The program is becoming more popular in Milton and there's still plenty of time to get involved prior to swimsuit weather. See story page 7.

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