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— Walter Mulke-wich  
BURLINGTON MAYOR

# Report warns of huge tax hikes

By PAUL MITCHISON  
Special to The Champion

An explosive report, to be released to Halton regional councillors today, is expected to show Halton homeowners will pay an average of \$582 more in property tax if the recommendations of Anne Golden's GTA Task Force are passed.

The report will show taxes for an average home in Halton Hills will increase a

whopping \$883, while a \$620 rise is predicted for Milton, \$426 for Oakville and \$401 for Burlington.

The figures were compiled by officials in the treasury departments of outlying regions, including Halton. The report paints a gloomy picture for Halton taxpayers, who end up paying more, while Metro Toronto pays less, with taxes pooled across the GTA for services.

But Burlington Mayor Walter Mulke-

wich said he's not convinced the figures to be presented by regional staff are what taxpayers can really expect from the GTA recommendations.

"You're dealing with very contentious issues, a fundamental change in structure, and it's very clear there's going to be a position put forward to defend the status quo. I was expecting that to happen."

"I think in the next number of weeks you're going to have an array of figures that will likely confuse everybody. I'm not aware of the research that went into this," he said in an interview prior to the release of the figures.

It was already estimated commercial taxes will climb 30 per cent hike in Milton, according to figures prominently displayed in the Golden Task Force report.

A committee of regional treasurers compiled the latest information, released last week to politicians in Peel Region. Halton councillors will receive the same kind of information at a special meeting today (Wednesday).

Halton regional Chair Joyce Savoline said she's not certain what the figures will do to shape opinions about the Golden report, which essentially recommends scrapping Halton Region, and other regional municipalities, in favor of a larger GTA council with limited powers.

"I don't know whether it'll change any opinions, the opinions are all over the place anyway," said Ms Savoline.

"The only thing I'm sure of is whatever change occurs has to be for the better, the bottom line to the taxpayer has to be a good one."

She said the people who've been calling her since the release of the Golden Report have concerns it's designed to fix the problems of Metropolitan Toronto, at the expense of outlying areas.

"People are very worried about being part of a GTA (Greater Toronto Area) council. They feel the accessibility to a council like that would be so small, that it barely exists for them. They're concerned about how the priorities are set, with regards to smaller municipalities out here."

The task force recommended to the province a Greater Toronto council play a role in overseeing several services, including police, transit, waste disposal, water, sewer, economic development, some planning issues, conservation authorities and more.

## Kranstz cleared

— from KRANSTZ on page 1

blay, Ivan Thompson, Colin Bingham and Keith Madeley. Mr. Madeley is charged with first-degree murder in the slaying of 77-year-old Fred Sheppard of Milton.

Three people called by the defence to offer character references for Mr. Kranstz gave glowing reports of the correctional officer's integrity on the job and in the community.

"I believe, as other people do, that he is a person of very strong moral character," said correctional officer Anne Wintermute, who has worked with Mr. Kranstz for five years. "He brings a lot of maturity and wisdom to the job that not many others have."

Mr. Kranstz, who was transferred from the Martin Street complex's detention centre to the correctional centre following the assault charges, said after the verdict he felt he was treated fairly by prison officials and the Ministry of Correctional Services during the ordeal.

Maplehurst deputy superintendent Michael Stephenson said it's likely Mr. Kranstz will be moved back to work at the detention centre.

Milton Mayor Gord Krantz, Mr. Kranstz's brother, didn't attend the trial.

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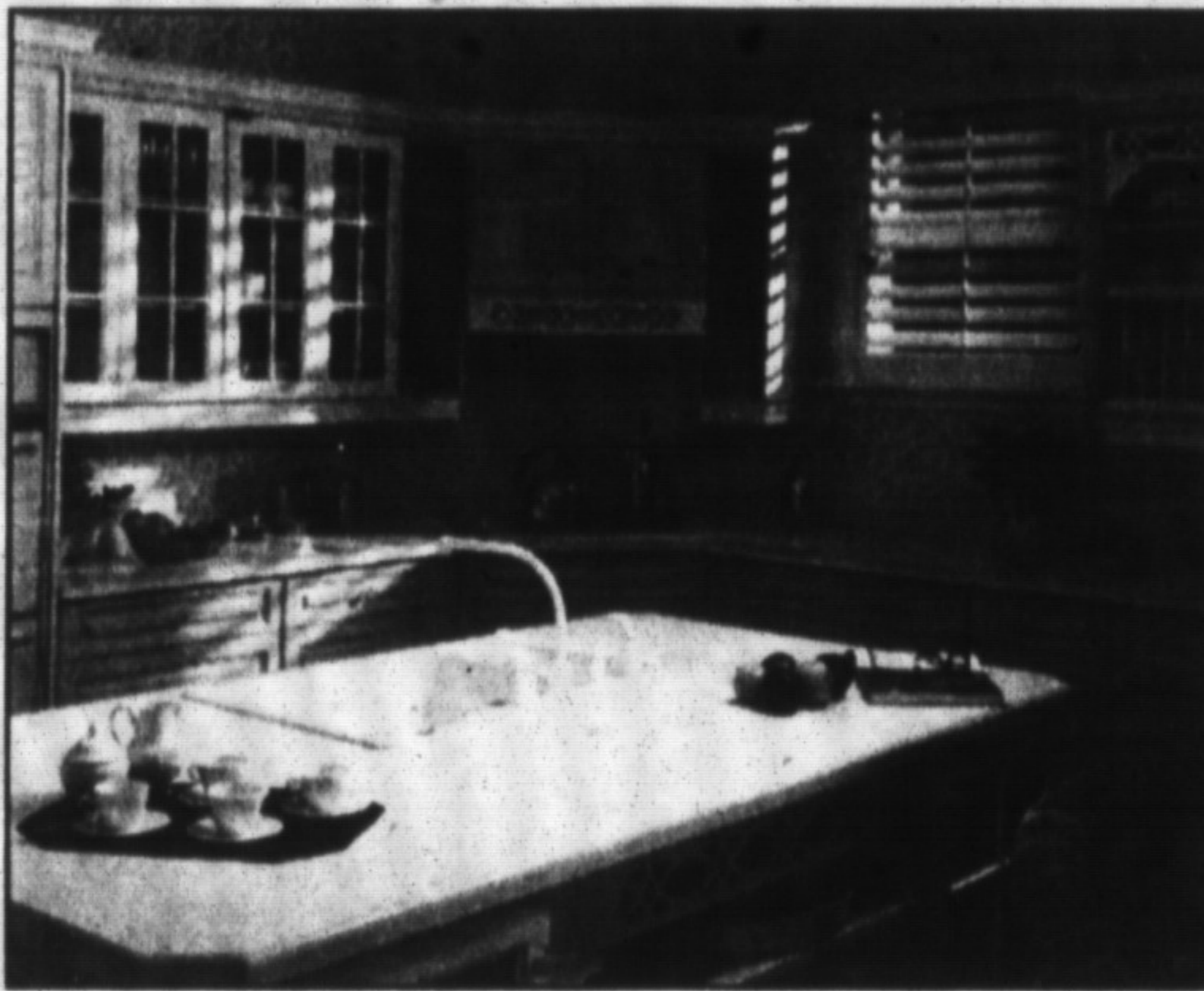
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