

Human rights' day

By **KAREN SMITH**
The Champion

Halton residents need to recognize the significance of Human Rights Day even though Canada is a leader in individual freedom, says the head of a local equality group.

"Even though this great country, Canada, has been a leader in the field of human rights, it does not mean its citizens should be complacent," said Elizabeth Carmichael, chairperson of the North Halton Cultural Awareness Council (NHCAC).

"There is sadly still much work to be accomplished and this can only be done by all of us working together as a community."

How citizens can get involved in the cause will be addressed Tuesday through a line-up of speakers at a Human Rights Day celebration in Halton Hills.

John Hucker, Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) secretary general, will discuss the importance of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the community's responsibility at the Halton Hills Cultural Centre.

Tom Morris of the National Office of Amnesty International will also speak. Mr. Morris works with Amnesty's 140 community groups and more than 300 youth groups in Canada.

Human Rights Day commemorates the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted and proclaimed December 10, 1948 by the United Nations' General Assembly.

Each year the special day is recognized around the world as one to renew commitment to the protection and promotion of the basic human rights named in the declaration's 30 articles.

The Halton Hills celebration, which runs from 7-10 p.m., has been organized by the CHRC, the NHCAC and the local chapter of Amnesty International.

The CHRC chose to become involved in the event "as part of its ongoing work with community groups to promote human rights awareness across the country, particularly in Ontario," said Mervin Witter, director of the CHRC's Ontario Region.

The NHCAC is sponsoring a poster contest in local high schools to boost awareness of the significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Ms Carmichael said.

Amnesty International asks as many people as possible to place a lighted candle in their window Tuesday to celebrate and support the work of human rights activists and to remember victims of human rights abuses. Anyone interested in attending the event is asked to call (519) 853-2911 or (905) 877-8853.

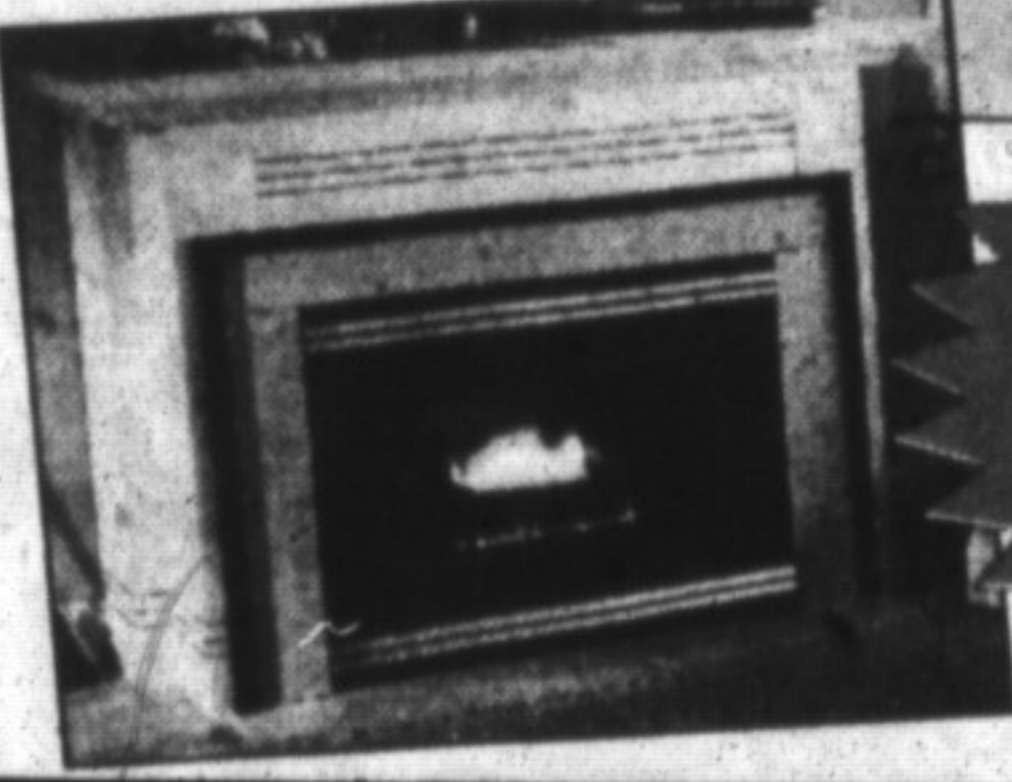
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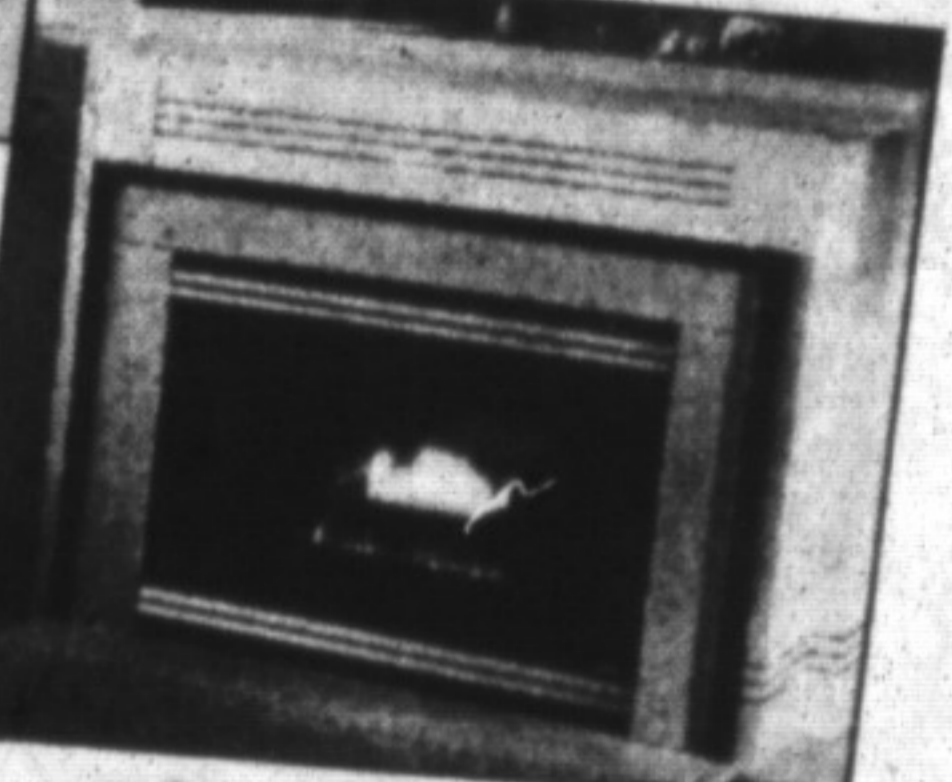
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