

Ted Brown..... 7  
Sports .....25, 26  
Calendar ...30, 34, 35  
Directory..... 30, 31  
Classifieds .....32-34



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**PAGE 22**



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January 20, 2011

Halton Hills' award-winning newspaper



## Ambushed soldier earns commendation

Pte. Mike McNeilly (centre) was congratulated by his parents Gord and Fran, after he was presented with a Commander's Commendation for his actions during an ambush on his patrol in Afghanistan, October 20, 2008. **See story page 8.**

Photo by Ted Brown

## Catholic board rescinds policy on gay-straight groups

By **TIM WHITNELL**  
*Metroland Media Group*

The Halton Catholic District School Board has rescinded its recently passed equity and inclusion policy, paving the way for its high schools to form clubs or support groups that cater to gay and lesbian students.

At a school board meeting held Tuesday night and attended by more than 100 people, including an overflow crowd outside the boardroom, trustees voted 6-2 to overturn the equity and inclusion policy passed by the previous board of trustees last November.

Now in its place is an interim policy, the Ontario Education Services Corporation's (OESC) Catholic template policy, which was accepted on a temporary basis following an 8-0 vote of the board.

"The Equity and Inclusive Education Policy, as written and approved in November 2010, was too restrictive and narrow in focus and the board's decision to rescind the policy, which included a ban on Gay Straight Alliances (GSA), is based on this acknowledgement," said board chair Alice Anne LeMay.

New Halton Hills Trustee John Mark Rowe, who had requested the board consider replacing the former equity policy at the last policy committee meeting, said during debate about changing the policy on Tuesday, "I was immediately surprised at the shallow (nature of the) policy of the former board."

Rowe said he felt temporary acceptance of the interim OESC equity policy is a good move until a new policy can be re-written.



**JOHN MARK ROWE**

**See STUDENTS, pg. 3**

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