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E-learning program comes to Halton Hills Library

By: Vivien Fleisher

The definition and scope of libraries continues to evolve and expand, aided in large part by the internet, which, far from eroding the presence of libraries within communities, has actually greatly enhanced them. In a special presentation to council last week, Community and Adult Services manager Beverley King provided more proof of that with the introduction of Lynda.com, an e-learning tool available to all Halton Hills library members. 'Lynda' is both the name and the logo: a stereotypical bespectacled librarian/bookworm who is the face of the video-based online learning library that's been around since 1995. It can be accessed from home, which is great, but what's really great about this new tool is the fact that you can boost your employment skills with ease, stay current and advance your career. It has already translated into better jobs and salaries for some subscribers, who have learned or improved their Excel, AutoCAD and Photoshop skills, just to name a few. Lynda offers over 3,500 video courses and 144,000 tutorials in all. And, it's free; not only do residents save time and money, they can do it all from home. It's even part of LinkedIn.

The mission according to King is to "help you learn the skills you need to achieve your full potential" and flows out of Halton Hills' overall strategic plan of 2014-2018

Town Councillor Jon Hurst to represent Wellington-Halton Hills Liberals on June 7

of a "connected community enriched by population growth and increased diversity." Removing the financial barrier for residents is a great way to help them realize their life goals and aligns with the goals of council. King cited the example of an administrative assistant in her fifties who was looking for work but could not land an interview. After upgrading her skills through Lynda.com, she got a job.

Councillor Fogal said she couldn't grasp how this platform was different from YouTube before the presentation and now understands the value to the community. Councillor Albano wondered if the courses would be recognized by colleges or universities, which King promised to find out, though she was confident it would be recognized as a professional development tool directed toward employment. Councillor Somerville described it as a tremendous opportunity and expressed hope that a Mandarin course offered at the library will be offered again in the future. Councillor Johnson said it was terrific how the program supported the trend toward lifelong learning in a community without public transit. Also, with computers available for use in the library, another barrier is eliminated. Councillor Lawlor spent time exploring on the weekend and was impressed with the sheer number and variety of courses available, saying "it's easy to get hooked on."



Milton MPP and Minister of Education Indira Naidoo-Harris, Jon Hurst, and former North Halton MPP Walt Elliot.

By: Vivien Fleisher

Ward 1 Councillor Jon Hurst was nominated on April 30 as the Ontario Liberal candidate for Wellington-Halton Hills for the upcoming provincial election. At his acceptance speech in Rockwood, he said, "I'm honoured and excited to carry the Liberal banner here. As a municipal councillor, hospital board member and community volunteer, I know that people in our riding are better off because of Liberal programs," said Hurst. "I feel, very strongly, that Doug Ford's policies, such as opening up the Greenbelt to de-

velopment, would destroy some of the best features of Wellington-Halton Hills. I am dedicated to protecting and making our towns and countryside better, not paving them over." A life-long Acton resident, he's been councillor since 2003 after retiring in 2000 from the electrical business he established in 1966.

His list of accomplishments and honours are huge. He is Council's Liaison to the Board of Directors of Hillview Active Living Centre, Acton; Council's representative on the Board of Directors of Halton Healthcare which governs hospital operations in

Georgetown, Milton and Oakville; founding member and chair of the Acton Terry Fox Run Committee; a founder and member of the Paul Murr Memorial Golf Tournament for Cancer Research for over 30 years; a two-time recipient of the Acton Citizen of the Year award; a Paul Harris Fellow courtesy of the Acton Rotary Club; and, has received the Queen's Jubilee Medal in 2012 for outstanding volunteer contributions to his community. Of note was his involvement as councillor in saving the obstetrics department of the Georgetown Hospital which would have shifted

to Brampton.

Fellow councillors and Milton MPP Indira Naidoo-Harris took turns speaking about Jon, painting a picture of a compassionate community member who has used commercial space he owns downtown to accommodate the Acton BIA, the 'Off the Wall' Youth Drop-in Centre when it was under threat of closure, and providing housing for a Syrian refugee family in 2016. As Councillor Jane Fogal put it, "Jon doesn't just hold beliefs; he acts" and "when he believes in something, we're going to get a speech and it's going to be a good one."

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