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NORTH AMERICA'S MOST AWARDED COMMUNITY PAPER

A Metroland Publication Vol. 40 No. 135

"USING COMMUNICATION TO BUILD BETTER COMMUNITIES"

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2003 48 Pages \$1.00 (plus GST)

It's unofficial: Mulvale wins a squeaker

*Just 12 votes separate
 hard-fought campaigns*

By Angela Blackburn
 OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF



Photos by Peter C. McCusker • Oakville Beaver

An elated Ann Mulvale (above) speaks to her supporters at Le Dome Banquet Hall and is cautiously optimistic with a 12-vote lead. Scrutineer Rachelle Horton (right) goes over numbers from polling stations 305 and 309 with mayoral candidate Rob Burton. Regional Chair Joyce Savoline (below) gets a victory hug from Patricia Blackstock. For the Regional Chair results see page A4.



Peter C. McCusker • Oakville Beaver

THANKS DAD: Attending yesterday's Oakville Legion Remembrance Day ceremonies at George's Square was Chester Helgason. The Second World War veteran spent two years in Sunnybrook Hospital after being injured serving with the Princess Patricia Light Infantry in England and Italy. Flanking him are his daughters Arlene Curtis and Muriel Barrie. For pictures from Sunday's Remembrance Day Ceremony by the Bronte Legion, see page C1.

In a nailbiter of an election, Mayor Ann Mulvale squeaked to a still unofficial victory with less than a baker's dozen of votes Monday.

Mulvale retained her seat as mayor with a mere 12 votes on the 25th anniversary of her first-ever election.

The mayor trailed political newcomer Rob Burton most of Monday night, and had to face the serious possibility of becoming a private citizen — though she wasn't prepared to concede on such a close vote — after 15 years as Oakville's mayor.

"The Town Web site has the Mulvale team winning by 12 votes, however, let me say it again, if it's obviously going to be that close, there's going to be some sort of a recount," Mulvale told her supporters at 9:40 p.m.

Ten minutes later word came to her election party at Le Dome that the Town Clerk and a Toronto television station had declared her the winner — by 12 votes.

"I always learn my lessons well and I went out today and got every single vote."

• Mayor Ann Mulvale

Unofficial Results
 Ann Mulvale 15,728
 Rob Burton 15,716
 Richard Serra 573

What had been a sombre mood with many Mulvale supporters obviously registering shock and disbelief, turned into applause and cheers.

However, disbelief still lingered in the air and on people's faces as it registered the unofficial victory was by only 12 votes.

Mulvale who remained positive and hopeful, though ready to accept Oakville's vote gracefully, climbed onto the podium to declare the news and share a hug with her son, Robert, before heading to Town Hall.

"Thank-you," Mulvale told her supporters, adding, "I always learn my lessons well and I went out today and got every single vote."

The mayor, clad in her traditional campaign colours of blue and yellow, recalled she had lost her first municipal election 25 years ago by a mere 30 votes and has since believed strongly in getting voters out to the polls.

(See 'Official' page A8)

Burton consults lawyers after unofficial loss

By Howard Mozel
 OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF

Rob Burton is seeking legal advice after the unofficial ballot count showed him losing by 12 votes to incumbent Mayor Ann Mulvale.

When reached Tuesday, Burton said he has "authorized our legal advisors to pursue every opportunity to be certain of the results so that whoever wins their victory is not clouded by lingering questions."

Burton also congratulated Mulvale on her "apparent victory and strong campaign."

A first-time mayoral candidate, Burton led for most of the night only to have the numbers fade out in the final stretch. Gracious in defeat, but vowing to run again in three years, Burton said the close race and his narrow defeat sends a "really strong message."

"We all want the town to grow without losing its soul," said Burton, who plans to work "every day" until the next election to honour the high level of faith voters placed in him. "I treasure your trust in me."

In addressing the Ramada Inn crowd, Burton said he had "zero" name-recognition at the start of the campaign, a fact which made Monday's squeaker of a loss that much

sweeter. "From where we started that's an incredible increase," he said. "Next time we'll do better. I promise you."

Burton, who said during the race that his campaign was a referendum on growth, told his assembled supporters that having two "distinct points of view" in the campaign — his and Mulvale's — was vital.

"This election campaign was a healthy one for Oakville," said Burton, who acknowledged the solid backing of his family, especially wife, Wendy, when thanking his team. "I am so grateful for your support. Support like yours is how to change things."

The evening started off on a positive note when the first scrutineer to phone Burton announced that he had won Poll 105 at Walton Memorial Church. That was clearly taken as a good omen by the few supporters in attendance and by Burton himself.

"Wow!" he said, plainly delighted and wringing his hands with excitement as more results and team members first trickled, then flooded, in.

"I'm very proud of what we've achieved," said Burton, midway through the evening. "This is going to be close."

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