

# TIME AS MAYOR TRULY MEMORABLE

NEVER A DULL MOMENT AT THE HELM OF COUNCIL, WRITES RICK BONNETTE



RICK BONNETTE  
Column

Congratulations to Mayor-elect Ann Lawlor: I would like to congratulate all the candidates who were successful.

To those unsuccessful candidates, I say thank you for putting your names forward.

After 19 years as mayor and 21 years as a councillor, this is my last mayor's column.

Where did the 40 years go?

I can honestly say there was never a dull moment. Right from the get-go and after only a few months as mayor, I had to deal with the hospital crisis in May 2004.

The hospital board decided to close obstetrics and pediatrics. After holding rallies and issuing press releases, we took our fight to Queen's Park.

It was an exciting six weeks, especially to hear then-health minister George Smitherman override the board and keep these vital services open.

Today we have a vibrant hospital, but we are now in need of a new one.

In 2009, Halton Hills was put on the international map when the United States brought in its "Buy American" campaign. They were banning all products made in Canada

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on government infrastructure projects.

I brought a resolution to council stating Halton Hills would not buy from any country that discriminates against Canada.

Wow! I had no idea that this went over the wires — national papers, the British Guardian, NY Times, etc. This got right up to the Prime Minister's Office.

It was an interesting time. My motto after every interview was "It's time to show Canadian backbone and not Canadian back bacon."

In the end, the potential trade war was resolved.

The residents of Halton Hills always elected a great council that I could work with. During my time as mayor, we built three ice pads, two fire halls, two libraries, the Helson Gallery, a public works operations centre, three destination skateboard parks and 27.5 kilometres of trails. We also reduced rural gravel roads from 95 kilometres to only 10 kilometres today.

Two epic events I will never forget during my time as mayor were the 2013 ice storm and, more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. They were very challenging times.

I am truly humbled the people of Halton Hills chose me as mayor over the years. A sincere thanks to all of you.

*Rick Bonnette is the outgoing mayor of Halton Hills.*

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## SNAPSHOT



Anita Robinson photo

Sparrows enjoy a bird bath in a backyard on Mowat Crescent. Do you have a great local photo you'd like to share? Send it to sleblanc@metroland.com, along with a brief description.

## CHALLENGING TIMES AHEAD AFTER ANOTHER INTEREST RATE INCREASE

Many households will feel the pain of the most recent interest rate hike. And the cumulative effect of so many hikes over such a short time could be unmanageable.

The Bank of Canada's most recent increase is one half of one per cent. That increase was a combination of good news and bad.

On the positive side, most had predicted a higher increase of three quarters of one per cent.

The bad news is this is the sixth time this year the BOC has raised interest rates.

Consider the impact on households. The trend to manage spending is based on an ability to pay the cost of financing. Gone are the days that most people would save first then purchase an item.



PETER WATSON  
Column

decline or disappear while borrowing costs rise.

These are challenging times. We hope you can successfully navigate them.

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Now for the reality of 2022 — six interest rate hikes with another anticipated in December, plus the amount of rate hikes is higher than would be expected.

If the BOC's hard policy on raising interest rates goes too far, the economy could slip into recession.

Business activity would decline, workers might have their hours of employment reduced or suddenly find themselves unemployed. Your income could

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