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# The North Halton Compass

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SEPTEMBER 05, 2003

## Questions remain about former Halton Hills CAO

BY GLORIA HILDEBRANDT

Eight weeks after Steve Andrews resigned without notice from his position of Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of Halton Hills, questions remain. Mayor Kathy Gastle states: "While I would like to address the unexpected resignation of Mr. Steve Andrews, my hands are tied. There is a contract between the Town and Mr. Andrews that prevents me from explaining his departure in detail."

Complicating the situation further is the fact that hiring a replacement for Mr. Andrews is not possible by September 26, the final day of nominations for the municipal election. The Municipal Act restricts council from appointing, hiring or even dismissing a municipal employee between nomination day and the day the new council is inaugurated, which is December 1. This leaves the Town of Halton Hills without a permanent replacement

for CAO. Robert Austin, Director of Engineering and Public Works, has been appointed Acting CAO until the position can be filled in 2004.

The duties of the CAO are critical to the government of the Town. The CAO is responsible for implementing the decisions of council. Seven heads of key departments report to the CAO. In addition, this position supervises legal administration; the Economic Development Office; human resource management, including contract negotiation; and ensures the processing of land development applications, including negotiation of agreements. The salary for the position in 2002 was \$131,920 plus standard benefits. Any other forms of compensation, including severance pay, if included in an employment contract, are confidential. What Mr. Andrews' departure has actually cost the

taxpayers of Halton Hills cannot be made public.

Mayoral candidates, Rick Bonnette and John Day, suggest the Town can manage well without a permanent CAO. "Since I was first elected in 1982, we have had a system where we have a rotating, acting CAO-of-the-month," says Mr. Bonnette. "This gives all department heads experience in running the Town. Mr. Day elaborates, "This process ensures the transaction of municipal business in as smooth and transparent a way as possible so that the public is well served, municipal staff continue to perform their duties and responsibilities, and council is continuously informed."

While the voters of Halton Hills are unable to find out why their CAO left, at what cost, and when and why a replacement will be hired, what can be made public are some events that may have

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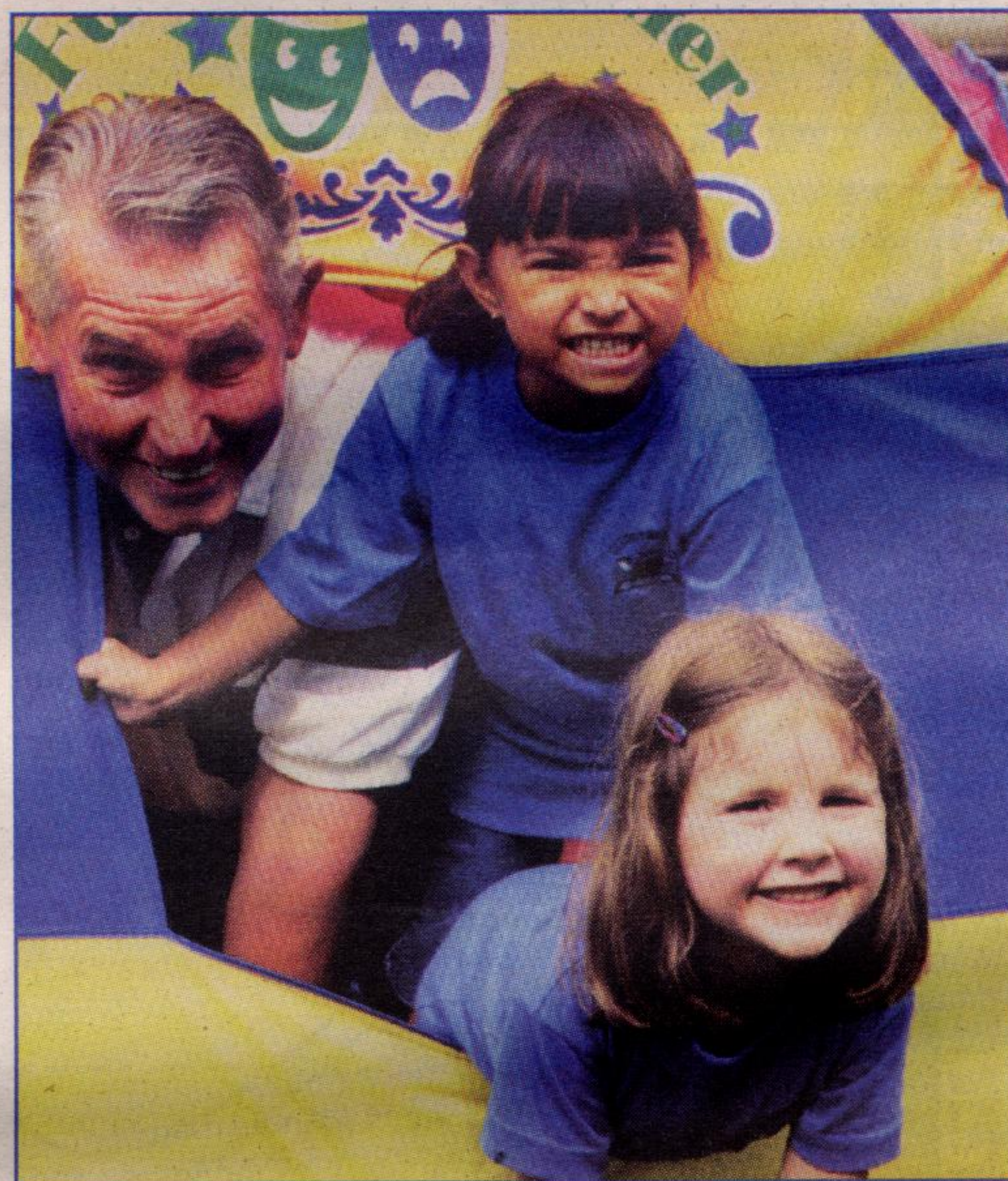


PHOTO BY DONNA DANIELI

### Kids will be kids

Mayor Gord Krantz joined Delilah Rixner and Margaret Boehmer for some playtime at the August 16 Family Fun Day in Victoria Park. Local Discovery Toy representatives hosted the day as a fundraiser for the Starlight Children's Foundation. More than \$500 was raised, which will be used by the Foundation to provide play areas, and bedside computer and game equipment for chronically ill children.

### Inside this month's Compass

#### HOMEWORKS

From inside to out, your residential space should be all that you'd like it to be. In this new feature section of the Compass, we mingle our regular columnists with new pictorial spreads and articles to help with your homework.

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#### IDLE PURSUITS

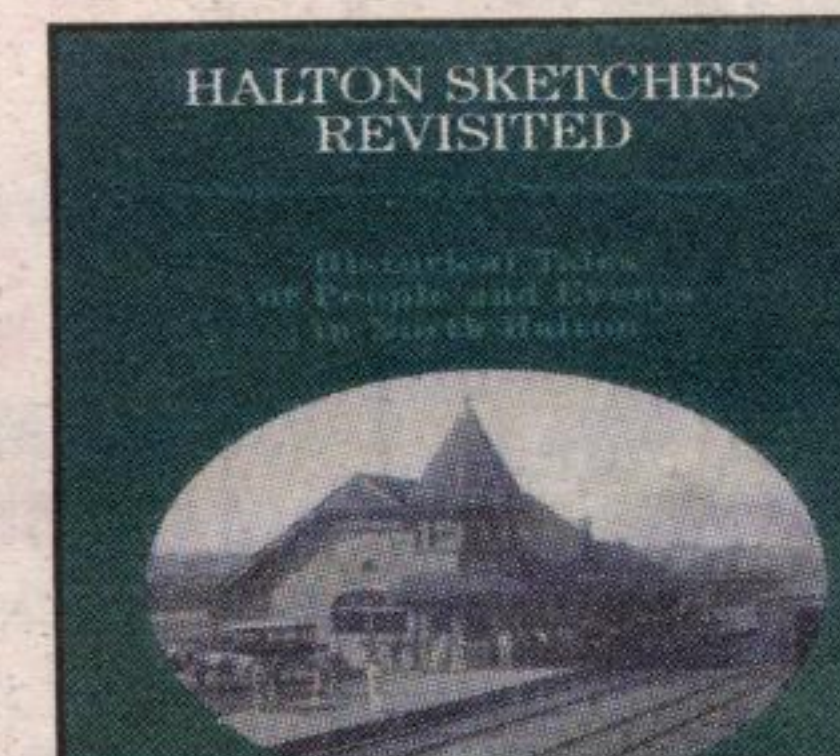
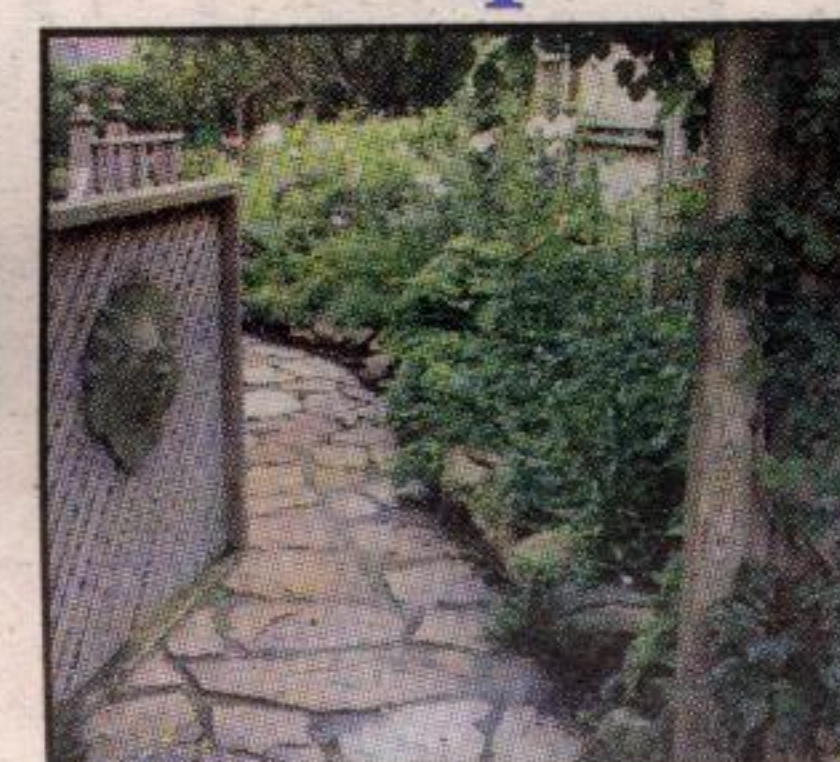
Boston Mills Press has rereleased *Halton Sketches Revisited* by Milton author, John McDonald. The book is a varied selection of homey, well-written tales that feature intriguing people, businesses and events that shaped Halton.

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#### COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE

Chris Burnett is a Milton area artist with a deft touch with her folk art. She captures local pastoral scenes, village beauty and, most recently, has produced the poster for the 150th anniversary of the Milton Fall Fair.

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