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## Halton's politicians disagree on same-sex marriage

BY GLORIA HILDEBRANDT

Halton's elected federal and provincial representatives oppose same-sex marriages, while two provincial candidates do not. Ted Chudleigh, Conservative MPP, and Julian Reed, Liberal MP, believe that marriage should remain the union of a man and a woman. Jay Jackson, the New Democratic Party candidate, supports same-sex marriage, while Barbara Sullivan, Liberal candidate, is open to a compromise in the definition of marriage that would include homosexual couples.

Mr. Chudleigh is circulating a petition asking the federal government to confirm the sanctity of marriage as the union of one man and one woman. "Marriage is an ancient rite," he states. "I strongly believe that there are some things on which the foundations of our culture, our way of life and the very civilization we so cherish are built."

Mr. Reed reports that he has been receiving literally hundreds of letters on the issue. "My own position is the same as it was in 1999 when I voted for the clause stating

that marriage is between a man and a woman," he says. "I see no reason to change my position at this point. People can still be different but equal."

"Canadian values are always changing," says Mr. Jackson, "and our institutions need to be respectful of those values. The move to same-sex marriage is something that has found its time."

Ms. Sullivan hopes that "marriage of heterosexuals would be celebrated in a religious ceremony offered by a church, and a church

could decide to celebrate same-sex marriage if it chose to do so. In a similar way, a civil union of both heterosexual and homosexual couples could be recognized through a civic ceremony."

Mr. Reed questions whether this kind of decision should be left to the Supreme Court. Mr. Chudleigh's opinion is, "It is not an issue for the courts to decide, but rather one that should be made by Canada's parliament."

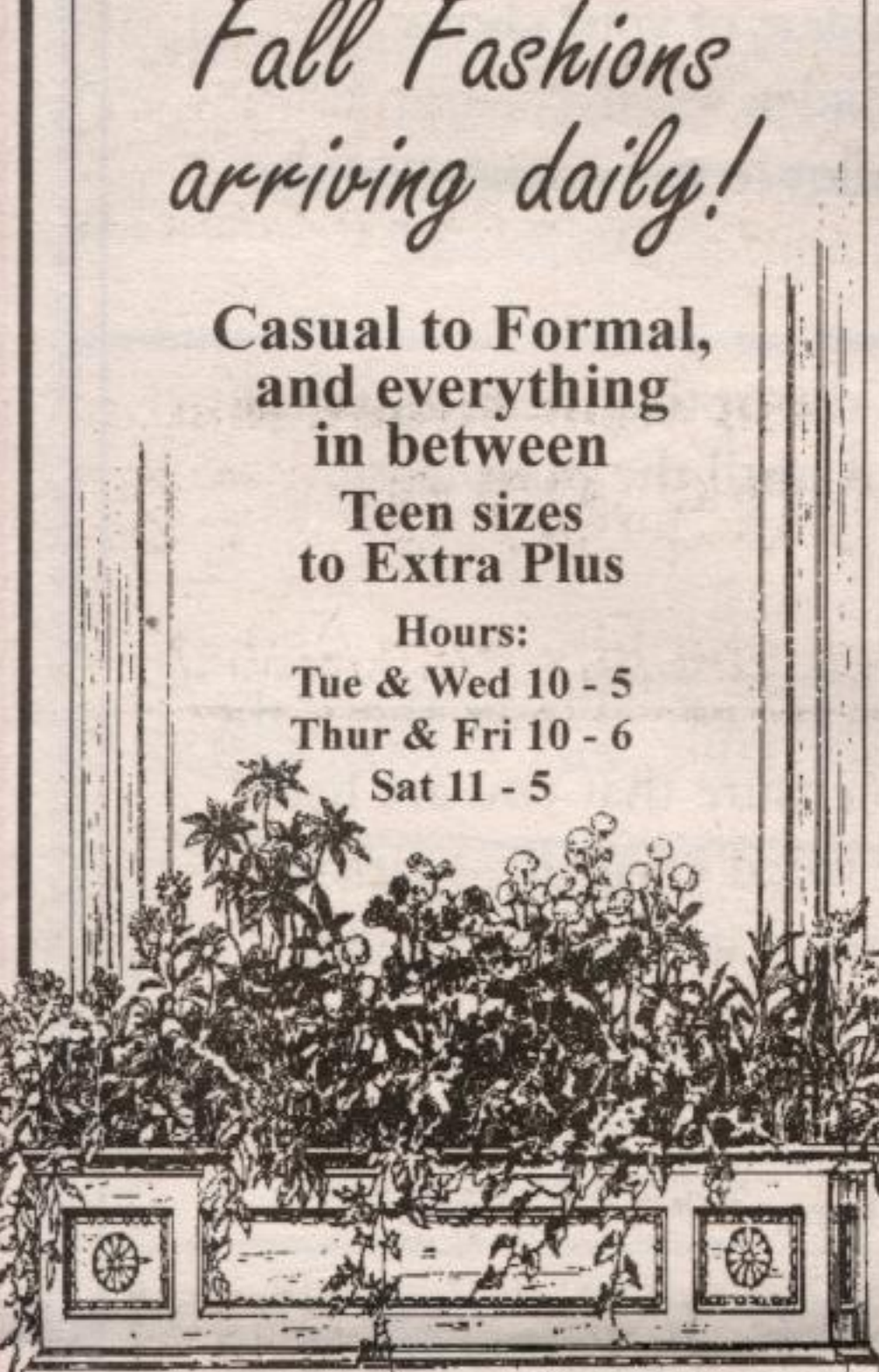
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## Questions remain about former Halton Hills CAO

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led to the current situation.

At the July 7 Halton Hills council meeting, Dave McNally spoke to council, as president of the North Halton Golf Course, regarding a buffer zone next to the Arbor Glen development that had been offered to the golf course by Mattamy Homes. He revealed that he had had several meetings about this issue with Town staff, including Mr. Andrews. "Steve told me that the Town was going to take the property," stated Mr. McNally. "I mentioned that it didn't make me very happy and that we'd have to try to fight for the property. And I was also told at the time

that he didn't know if he had any use for the property but the property was going to be taken to make the council look good. It looks like you've taken something from the developer."

Mr. McNally went on to reveal discussions involving a buffer zone in exchange for funding toward the Town's trails and a watering system for Remembrance Park. "Now this scheme was not guaranteed by Mr. Andrews," Mr. McNally added, "but this is what we talked about."

Councillor Ron Chatten mentioned that such meetings with staff would have been unusual. "I would have thought we would have a staff report explaining how we would solve this," he added. "I have a lot of questions of staff, but I don't think I have them tonight."

According to council minutes, that evening council held several *in camera* meetings between 11:15 p.m. and 1:00 a.m. regarding potential litigation issues, the acquisition or sale of property for municipal purposes, and a personal matter about an identifiable individual.

During these meetings, councillor Moya Johnson made a confidential verbal report regarding litigation or potential litigation and recommended that staff "proceed as directed." A recorded vote was requested on this. The vote was close with six in favour and five against. Rick Bonnette voted

yes, while Mayor Gastle and John Day voted no.

Perhaps Mr. Andrews' employment was discussed at this time. "The contract was approved by a majority of council and I, as mayor, am obligated to obey council's decision," says Mrs. Gastle of this meeting.

On the evening of July 9, the office of *The North Halton Compass* received an anonymous telephone call stating that Steve Andrews was resigning.

Thirteen hours later, at 7:35 a.m. on July 10, a special council meeting was held in Halton Hills council chamber. A confidential verbal report from Jackie Bowles, Manager of Human Resources, was given regarding a "personal matter about an identifiable individual" and staff was to proceed as directed. At 5:30 p.m. on the same day, another special council meeting was held in the chamber, and a further confidential report was given by Ms. Bowles about an "identifiable individual." At this time, council accepted the resignation of Mr. Andrews. The mayor was authorized, on behalf of council, to sign a confidential letter regarding a personal matter.

On July 21, a special council meeting was held in the council chamber regarding a personal matter, labour relations, employee negotiations and potential litigation. The mayor and clerk were authorized to execute an employment agreement, and a bylaw was

created to appoint an Acting CAO.

The issue had not died down by August 5. Council meeting minutes state: "Derek Williams inquired why taxes are being wasted in paying for Mr. Andrews' contract. Mr. Williams requested council to conduct a public inquiry regarding Mr. Andrews' sudden departure."

All three candidates for mayor of Halton Hills were asked about future actions they would take to ensure that the Town is not again left in such a situation by the departure of the CAO.

Mrs. Gastle replied, "To answer your question at this time would be to commit a breach of confidence." Mr. Bonnette said he could give no guarantee that a CAO would not abruptly leave the position, and added: "Job performances and expectations by both the individual and the corporation may differ. People have a right to leave any job they want." Mr. Day commented: "No mayor has control over these matters. However, where quality of the workplace is concerned, I can do something as mayor. An organization cannot run well in an atmosphere of public suspicion, mistrust or loss of faith. It is hard on staff which is doing its job, bad for morale, bad for public image, hard on the public and equally difficult for elected officials. The smooth and transparent conduct of business is a top priority."

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