

High School Confidential

Tobacco and students

BY ANN KORNUA

High school students across Halton learned about tobacco industry marketing tactics in a 70-minute presentation by the Region. The Halton Region Health Department in collaboration with the Halton District School Board and the Halton Catholic District School Board, traveled to different schools across the region to present Georgina Lovell, author of "You are the Target, Big Tobacco: Lies, Scams - Now the Truth". Georgina Lovell is speaking to Halton students in 11 high schools about the tobacco industry and marketing tactics they use to hook youth.

On November 9, Georgina made her stop at Georgetown District High School to address students in grade nine. Georgina made her morning presentation to a packed assembly of students in the cafeteria. For some students, it was just another assembly, but for others the shocking images made an impression.

"My dad died of lung cancer and I grew up in a time when people typically smoked," Georgina Lovell commented after the presentation. "My mother was diagnosed with emphysema due to my father's second hand smoking. That is how I became aware of what is going on in this industry." Georgina's fight is to bring awareness of the tobacco industry's tactics on hooking youth through advertising campaigns and media product placement. Her book and website, www.you-are-the-target.com, provides a plethora of information that she has accumulated over the years in regards to the tobacco industry. Quotes such as "...we really need something for people to die of. In substitution for the effects of war, poverty and starvation, cancer, as a disease of the rich, developed countries may have some predestined part to play. This argument is obviously not one the tobacco industry could use publicly," made by the Public Relations Strategy for the Tobacco Advisory Council for British American Tobacco November 20, 1978.

"I give information that took me years to dig out because once kids get all of the information it might help them to make choices in their best interest," Georgina explained. "Much of this information shows that there was great effort was made to keep it secret for so long. I encourage anyone to read up on it. Nicotine is very addictive and often kids are hooked from curiosity and peer influence. After only smoking three cigarettes, you can be addicted."

"I don't know about everyone else, but I am not stupid," a high school student commented during his lunch break. "My parents smoke and I see what it does to them and I am not going to start smoking just because a movie star or a magazine ad is telling me I should."

A grade 10 student said she started smoking when she was in grade 9 and her parents still don't know. "It's not like I picked up a magazine and it told me it's cool to smoke. All my friends smoke and it is just something to do. Shocking me with gross images isn't going to make me stop cause I know older people who have no problems and who smoke. It's like we're given two extremes and we have to choose who's lying to us."

Amy said it was not hard for her to get cigarettes, even with the strict laws enforced in the Province against retailers who sell to minors. "If it was such a big deal then why don't they make it illegal for everyone to smoke, but they won't do that."

Green Party Chooses Candidate

STORY AND PHOTO BY ANN KORNUA

Local chiropractor Dr. Kyle Grice was successful in becoming the candidate for the Halton Green party, contested at Hugh Foster Hall Milton on November 8th.

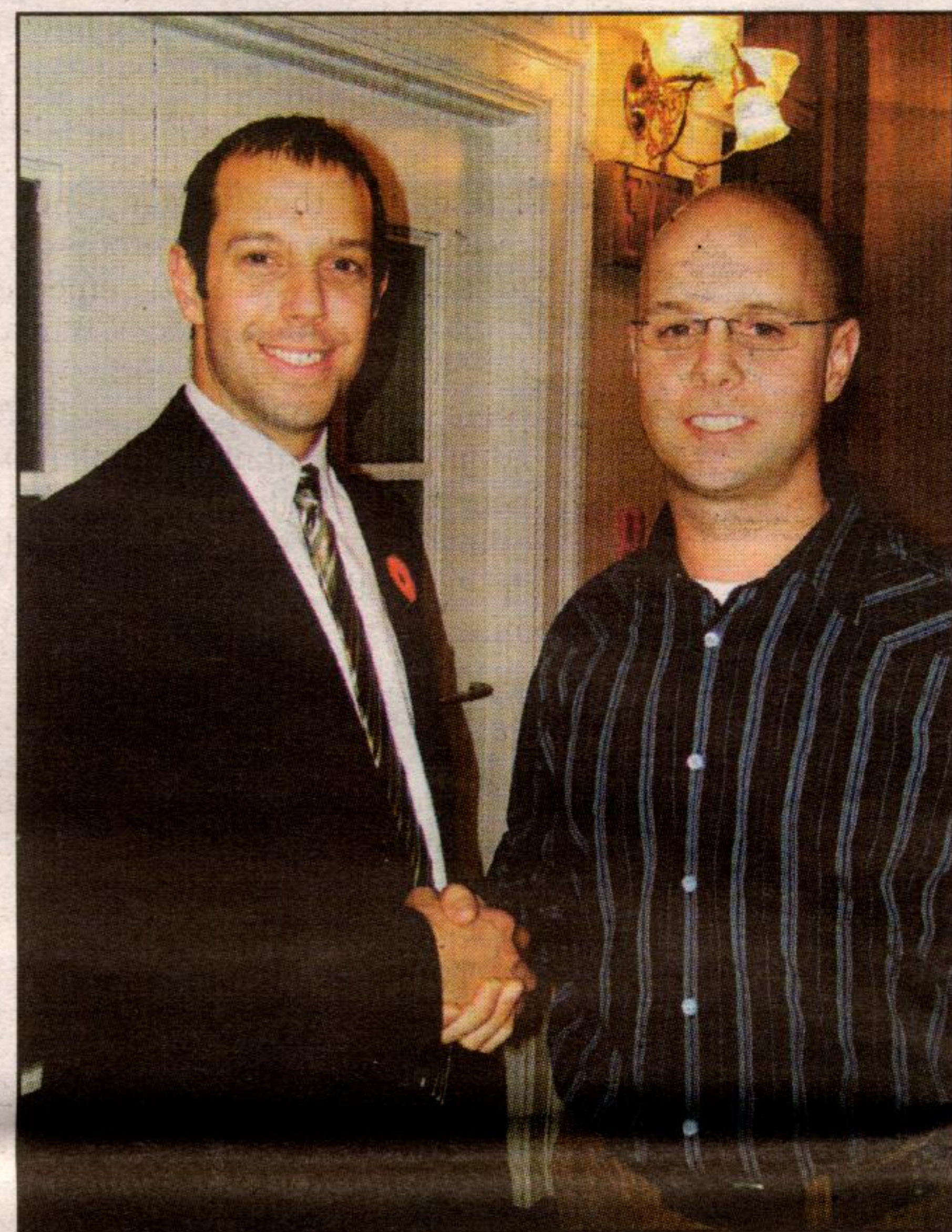
Dr. Grice faced off against Kurtis Andrews during the evening contest and was elected as the candidate, collecting over 60% of the votes. Both men addressed the floor during the question and answer period and presented their arguments. This was Halton's first ever nomination contest for the Green Party.

"I look forward to raising awareness of the party in Halton so the residents can look into this party and see the values behind it," Dr. Grice commented shortly after winning the contest. "Awareness is the biggest thing and if they do look into the party they will see that our values match their own."

Helping Grice in his campaign as chief strategist will be none other than his former opponent, Kurtis Andrews.

Grice plans to offer a wide platform for the residents as the Halton Green Party touches on issues from environmental, agriculture, and The CN intermodal terminal proposed for the rural Milton area. "I feel very passionate about the Green Party and for its future. 48% of Canadians have the Green Party as their second vote, but we need to show them it needs to be their first for the quality of the future," Dr. Grice said. "I want to push the importance on how our economy needs to shift to a more sustainable one. Energy is a big issue for the future and in Halton, we consume more than any other region in the area. Another point of focus the CN intermodal terminal is which we need to find a point of balance that will work with the residents and CN."

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Kurtis Andrews (right) congratulates elected Halton Green Party candidate Dr. Kyle Grice after the party held the first Halton contest.

MPPs Arnott and Sterling speak up for Double Hatters

Fire fighters forced by union to sit out while neighbour's home burns

MPPs Ted Arnott and Norm Sterling questioned the Labour Minister about Double Hatter firefighters who were forced by their union to sit at home even as a house in their community was in flames. The debate took place in the Ontario Legislature on November 2nd.

Mr. Arnott spoke about the incident in Shakespeare, near Stratford, where a home was seriously damaged and a family pet was killed. Two Double Hatter firefighters in Shakespeare were unable to respond and assist with the emergency because their union has charged them with the so-called "offence" of volunteering for the Perth East Fire Department.

Quoting the recent story in the Stratford Beacon Herald, Mr. Arnott informed the House that at the time of the mid-morning fire on October 20th, the volunteer fire department could not respond with a sufficient number of firefighters to meet provincial guidelines, and had to ask for help from their Milverton affiliate, 20 minutes away.

Mr. Arnott then quoted the Ontario Fire Marshal, Bernard Moyle, who called for legislation to uphold the Double Hatters' right to volunteer.

"This is a public safety issue, but it's also a labour issue," Mr. Arnott said in his question to the Labour Minister. "When will the Government demonstrate concern for public safety in rural Ontario, take the Fire Marshal's advice, and introduce such legislation into this House?"

MPP Norm Sterling's question focussed on the Ottawa Valley where the community of Kemptville has lost four volunteers and a senior captain with 22 years experience.

In his reply, Labour Minister Steve Peters did not address the substance of Mr. Arnott's or Mr. Sterling's questions.

"The Government is showing total disregard for this threat to public safety. I'm appalled that the firefighters' union is forcing firefighters to sit out in rural Ontario while a neighbour's home burns," said Mr. Arnott afterwards.

Mr. Arnott has introduced three Private Member's Bills since May 2002 to support Double Hatter firefighters and the rural communities across Ontario that they serve. "Because of the fact that the firefighters' union seems to be turning up the heat again on this issue, it appears that I will have to reintroduce my Private Member's Bill yet again," Mr. Arnott concluded.

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