

# Bonnette wants to see Town out of the GTA

**BY MAGGIE PETRUSHEVSKY**  
The New Tanner

Meet the Town of Halton Hills Ward 1 Elected Representatives - continued.

Rick Bonnette is single and came to Acton with his family when he was just over a year old. He teaches travel and tourism at Humber College. He has been a Halton Hills councillor since 1982 and became Acton's regional councillor in 1985.

At the regional level he sits on the Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Joint Waste Management committee, is vice-chair of the Planning and Public Works committee and sits on that committee's interview group. Locally he chairs the Norval Secondary Plan committee, is vice-chair of the Town's budget committee.

With concerns at two levels Bonnette sees two major issues for both his councils. Locally he says Acton needs to get residential growth to tie in with commercial development. At the Region the big issue will be keeping a decent tax rate so the budget can continue to provide the present level of services given their loss of \$40 million in government grants thanks to provincial downloading.

The fearmongering attached to the way Halton has been "dragged kicking and screaming into the Greater

Toronto Area (GTA)" is self-destructive, Bonnette says, but it will also cause problems for councillors to deal with.

How much time his council duties take depends on the week, he says. Considering he has an hour-long commute just to get to Regional meetings, he estimates council work consumes 35 to 40 hours per week.

Bonnette calls himself a high-energy person and unwinds with lots of sports-related activities. In summer he enjoys in-line skating and tennis, and has recently added golf. He works out at the gym in winter and walks his greyhound Lucky at least once daily. He enjoys watching hockey on TV now that he no longer plays the game himself. He also likes to kick back with a rented movie sometimes.

Considering the time involved in working on the Acton Proud campaign which supported construction of the new Acton arena, Bonnette says he's taking a year off his volunteer work to rest. He was strictly a community citizen on that committee, he says, never a council representative.

Bonnette says he likes to shop locally whenever he can and figures his last major purchase, apart from groceries, was a lawnmower from the hardware store.

He sees no friction between Acton and

## Interview with Coun. Bonnette



Councillor Rick Bonnette

Georgetown councillors but agrees there may be a perception of that. "It goes in cycles depending on the issues," Bonnette says, "but this council has been really good at avoiding friction."

In terms of preparing Acton to head into the next century Bonnette wants to see the town out of the GTA. He would also like to see the town become more self-sufficient with more industry and a larger population so they could support the variety of stores required to be self-sustaining. He would also like to see downtown Acton revitalized.

For an evening out Bonnette prefers a movie or a sporting event to concerts and live theatre entertainments.

Bonnette says the biggest surprise for him as a new councillor was to see how long it takes 12 people to debate an issue and reach a decision. "And that hasn't changed," he says with a grin.

The most stressful issue he recalls as a councillor was getting the fire hall and new arena for Acton.

The last book he read and would recommend, Bonnette says, is Another City, Not My Town. It was written by Dominic Dunn whose actress daughter was murdered in Los Angeles. He left the city

after his daughter's death, but returned to watch the O.J. Simpson trial. He drops celebrity names throughout the book as he comments on the differences he saw in the city now from when he used to know it, Bonnette says.

Privatizing garbage collection "had some glitches in the beginning", but it will save Halton Region more than \$1 million over five years, he says. "We lost a little in community pride with losing our own people, but it is saving major tax dollars."

In terms of additional tourist attractions beside the old Hide House, Bonnette says visitors ought to come for the Leathertown Festival, the Acton Fall Fair, and now the Winter Fair which he hopes is to become a new tradition for the town. He also feels we have some interesting tourist-oriented stores for visitors to see.

Bonnette figures we need

"pristine industries that will attract other industries" when the 401 corridor is developed.

"There are 740 acres to be developed there and I'd like assurance the industries that come will employ Halton Hills people," he says.

Bureaucracy can always be streamlined, he says but it's a double-edged sword. A few years ago the Region went from eight department heads to four. That did save money at the time but three or four extra staff had to be hired to cover the extra workload and he questions whether the end result won't cost just as much.

Bonnette says some day he might run for mayor "if the political climate is right." It can be a thankless job at times and it takes significant money to run a campaign. So there's no point in running unless there's a reasonable chance of winning.

## Section of Acton sidewalks added to snow removal

Pedestrian safety concerns prompted the Town's special purpose committee to recommend to Council that several small sections of Acton sidewalks be added to the list of those that are cleared of snow and ice by the Town.

The south side of Church Street from Main Street South to Willow Street will now be cleared of snow following a request from Blue Springs Funeral Home to improve safety for mourners walking to the facility. The cost of clear that .11-kilometre section of snow will add an additional \$82.50 to the Town's annual sidewalk snow clearing budget.

The sidewalks on the south side of Cedar Road from Churchill Road to the Acton High school property - a .09 section - will now be cleared by the Town at an additional cost of \$67.50 annually.

At a meeting later this month Town staff will report on the cost of clearing the sidewalk on the south side of Mill Street West from Main

Street to Park Avenue - a request made by Acton Councillor Clark Somerville who has had complaints about pedestrian safety.

Somerville said he will also ask the committee to consider adding the entire length of the sidewalk on the north side of Bower Street from the railway tracks to Willow Street to the sidewalk clearing route.

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