

Candidates' sniping fails to impress first-time voter

First-time voter Mark Pakkala could've slept in Tuesday morning since he didn't start classes at Georgetown District High School until the afternoon.

Instead, the 18-year-old Grade 12 student fought the chilly morning temperature and the darkness—the sun had yet to fully rise—to get to Granite Ridge Golf Club to watch a 7 a.m. meeting involving Halton riding's five provincial candidates.

"I was prompted by my Mom (to attend the meeting) and I was semi-interested to see what was going on," he said after the meeting.

The one thing he said he didn't like seeing was some of the potshots candidates took at each other's campaign platform. He wanted to hear more about what they could do for Halton and not what others couldn't do.

"All they did was fight against each other," Pakkala said.

Fight is probably a strong word, but everything was fair game during the all-issues meeting. Voters go to the polls October 2 vote.

Taking part in the breakfast meeting were Incumbent Halton Tory MPP Ted Chudleigh; Liberal candidate Barbara Sullivan; NDP candidate Jay Jackson; Family Coalition candidate Giuseppe Gori; and Green Party candidate Matt Smith.

After making his opening remarks, Smith said he had to leave to fulfill prior engagements.

The remaining candidates fielded

a variety of questions from the crowd before ending with closing remarks.

On the issue of gridlock:

- Sullivan said the Liberals would provide two cents from every litre of gas—taxes are collected from gas—to municipalities to deal with transportation needs.

- Gori said his party would create high-speed transportation in the province to stimulate more growth in "satellite cities" like Halton, London and Peterborough rather than simply in Toronto.

On the issue of what the government can offer today's youth:

- Chudleigh said his government would create an economy that will stimulate the creation of more jobs for youth—half of which enter the workforce after high school he said—to apply for.

- Jackson said an NDP government would cut tuition fees by 10 per cent and increase the minimum wage to \$8 an hour.

Campbellville cash-crop farmer Peter Lambrick said he wanted to find out where the candidates stand on agriculture.

"It's the second largest industry in Ontario," he said after the meeting. "It wasn't as high (a priority) as I was hoping."

Meanwhile, Pakkala said he needs to do some campaign homework before casting his first-ever vote.

—By Jason Misner, special

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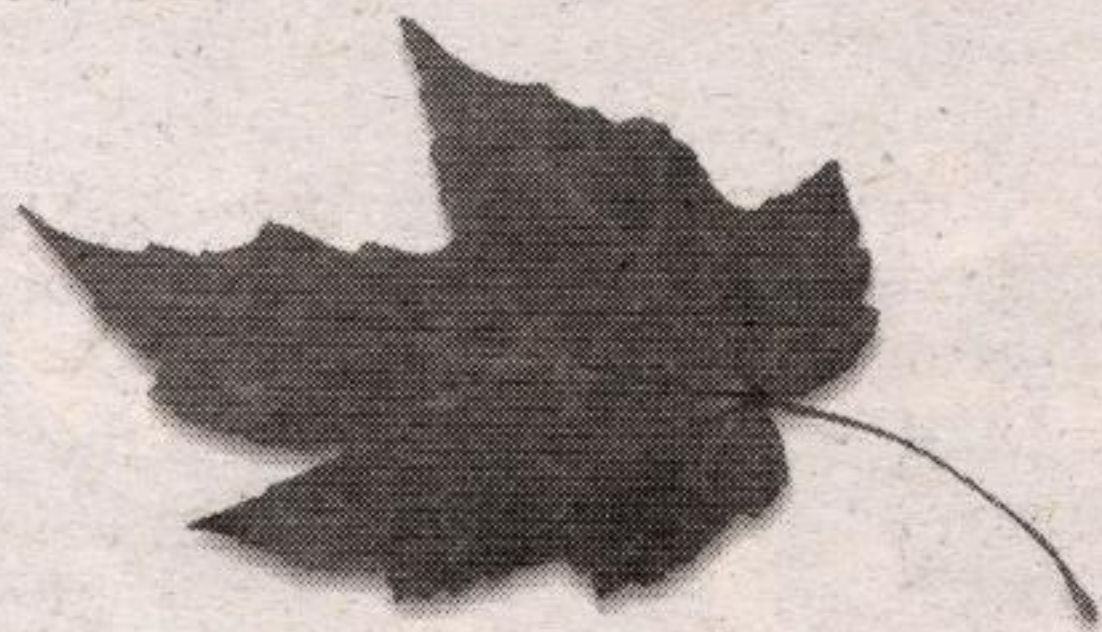
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