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School board stunned by director's resignation

In a stunning announcement, Dusty Papke said Wednesday he would retire as the director of education for the Halton District School Board.

Near the end of a lengthy public school board meeting late Wednesday night, Papke, in a prepared statement, told staff and trustees he's resigning effective June 30. He didn't give specific reasons why he has decided to leave eight years after taking the helm as education director, and he couldn't be reached for additional comment yesterday (Thursday).

Raucous two-hour debate precedes decision

However, Papke's announcement followed a fractious and heated debate that ended up seeing the board passing a motion, put forward by chair and Milton Trustee Paul Tate, that limits the education director's power over deciding operations of the board. Called policy governance, it was introduced to the board four years ago.

Following the board meeting, Tate said the changes bolster the decision-

making power for trustees, and allow a more hands-on approach in determining issues such as school boundary changes and placement of principals and vice-principals in schools.

"This board has always done what's in the best interest of students," he said. "In fact, this will get the public more engaged in what goes on at the board because they will have more access to board policy and board decision-making that they haven't

had under policy governance.

"The public had made demands of me on issues around board policy such as moving (school) boundaries. The way it happens now we are informed, but not asked to judge. We need to be able to judge."

Trustees also passed a motion that altered how they can amend bylaws.

That means a simple majority— or six votes— is only required, which is a change from the previous policy that mandated a two-thirds majority or eight votes.

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Win or lose, fans still love their Raiders

There was one trophy missing from the collection of hardware on the table but the 200-plus people who showed up to welcome back the Georgetown Raiders didn't seem to mind.

The Raiders were given a hero's welcome at the Alcott Arena Wednesday night, four days after being eliminated in the national Jr. A semifinal in Weyburn, Saskatchewan.

Raider captain John Wheaton said he would have loved to bring the Royal Bank Cup back to Georgetown for the fans that had supported the team all season.

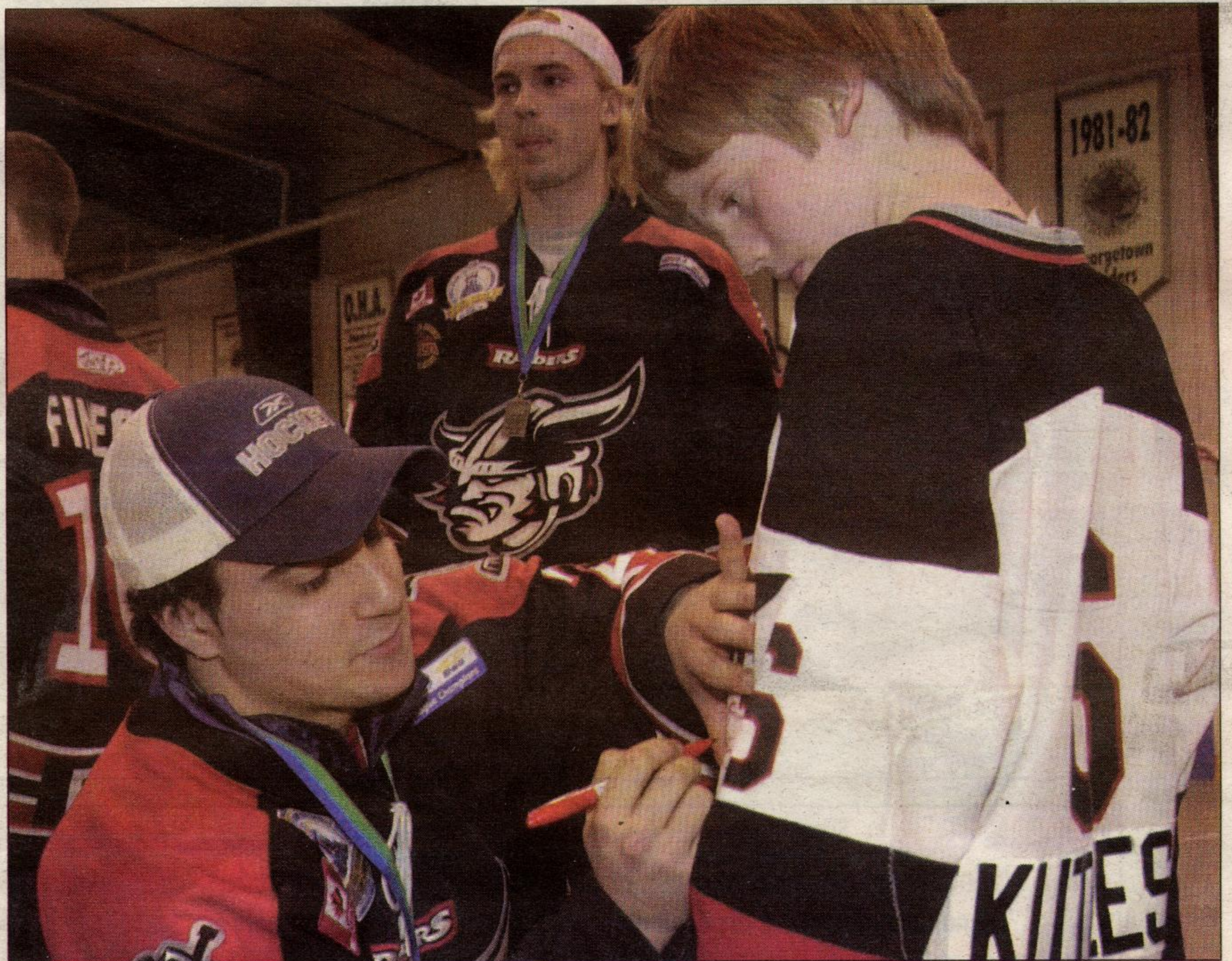
"I've had the best two years of my life here in Georgetown," Wheaton told the audience. "I met my best friends here. I'll never forget these two years."

"We'll never forget you either," came the response from the crowd.

It was definitely a season to remember. The Raiders won more games than ever before—a team record 41 in the regular season and 24 more in the playoffs. Only one team in Canada came out on top more often, the Camrose Kodiaks, the team that knocked the Raiders out in the semifinals of the Royal Bank Cup.

The Raiders' first Central Canadian championship, their second Provincial Jr. A West Conference championship, and third regular season West Conference title were commemorated on a banner that was unveiled by Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette and Raider general manager Robin Inscoe. Like the hockey season itself, it didn't go off without a hitch as the banner's cover got caught momentarily. But eventually, like the Raiders, it came through, as the cover fell to the ground revealing the team's accomplishments.

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Georgetown Raider defenceman Frank DeAngelis signs Brendan Kutlesa's jersey at Wednesday's rally for the team which returned from the national Jr. A championship in Weyburn, Saskatchewan earlier this week. More than 200 people came to congratulate the Raiders for their season, the best in the junior team's history. Photo by Herb Garbutt

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