



Running for Terry

Students at George Kennedy Public School were among the thousands who took part in the nationwide Terry Fox Run for cancer research as they ran around the school yard. Volunteer mom Joanne Russell was one of the many who kept a tally on the kids' laps as she marked off Jake Cabrita, 10, as he passed through the route. The Kennedy run was previously scheduled for Sept. 16 but was postponed until last Thursday because of inclement weather.

Photo by Ted Brown



Georgetown's Cristy Nurse of the Halton 4-H was named Grand Champion in the showmanship category with her dairy cattle entry at Milton's Fall fair this past weekend. Photo by Graham Paine

Firefighters extinguish open burn of car parts

Halton Hills firefighters were called to a possible structure fire on Winston Churchill Blvd. Thursday evening and when they arrived found an open burn of tires, car parts and household garbage.

The homeowner didn't have a permit, and even with one, he wouldn't have been allowed to burn the items.

The fire was extinguished.

Bob Austin Town's CAO steps down after 31-year career

Traveling with his wife and curling will top Bob Austin's to-do list when he retires from the Town of Halton Hills Friday.

Austin, the Town's CAO for the past two years, admits while he's excited about this new chapter in his life, he's also apprehensive. Retirement will require a lot of adjustment, he says.

"I don't know how I'm going to fill the time mentally," says Austin, a long-time Acton resident, and father of two grown daughters. "There's going to be an emptiness."

"The plan is to do nothing and over the winter to see how we (he and his wife Mary Ann) adjust, and recharge the batteries," he says.

Austin, 58, began working for the Town as Deputy Town Engineer in March 1974. The following year he became the Town Engineer (later retitled Director of Engineering and Public Works) and remained in that job, which he loved, until July 2003 when he took over as

the Town's Acting CAO following the sudden resignation of then-CAO Steve Andrews. Last February he was appointed to the position on a permanent basis.

Austin, who has always had 2005 as his retirement target, says when he was asked by council



'Bob is the first person in at the job every day, and most nights he's the last to leave.'

—Mayor Rick Bonnette

to take over the CAO's job temporarily he didn't hesitate, but the decision was more difficult when he was asked to continue on in a full-time appointment.

"It was very difficult because I had to walk away from the love of my life— (Engineering and Public Works)," Austin says. That job "was just me," he says.

"Everything that's happened in Halton Hills in Engineering and Public Works I was part of."

Engineering was a natural for Austin. Even as a kid he knew he wanted to "build big things"— like bridges, highways and roads.

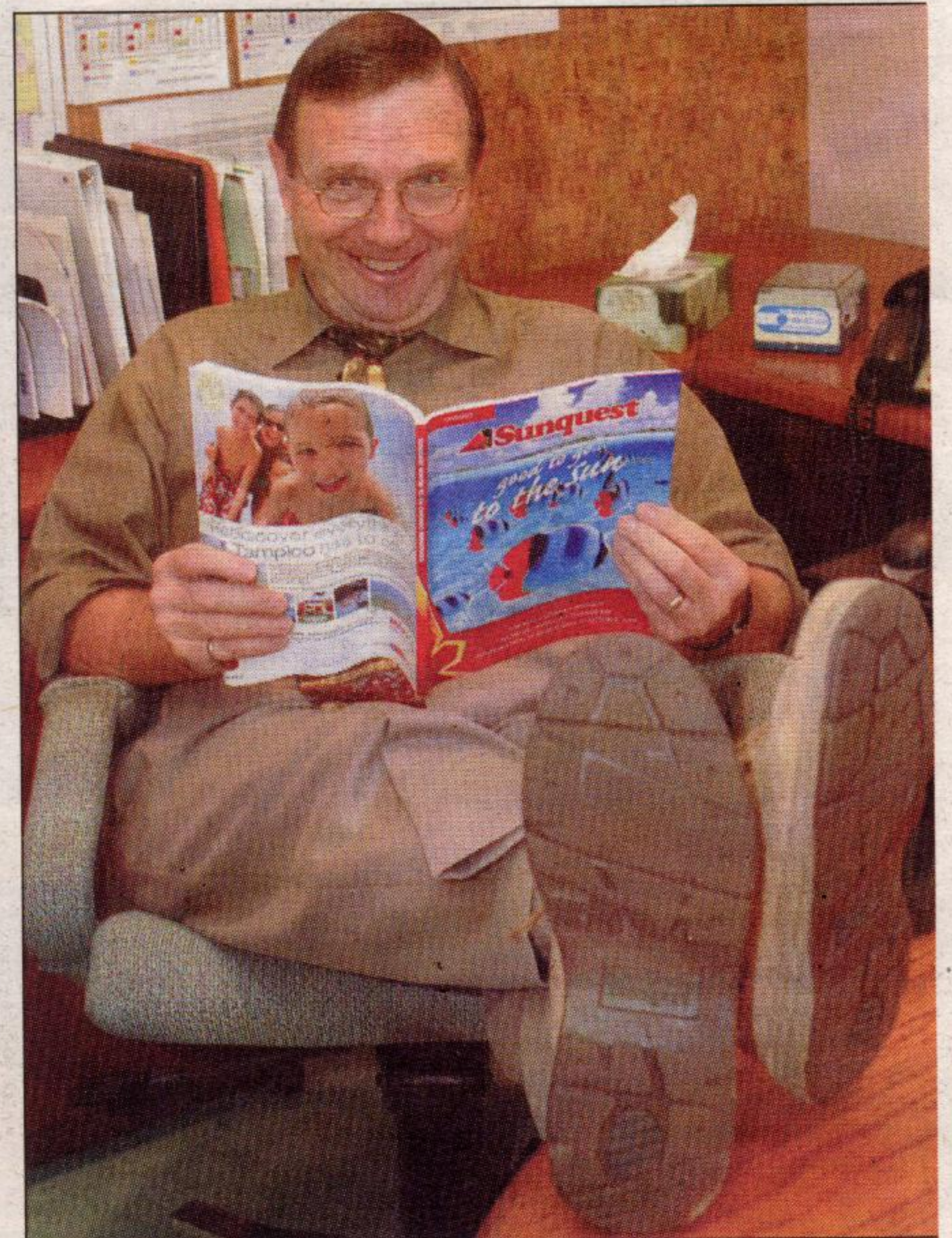
After earning his engineering degree, Austin joined the Ontario Ministry of Transportation's engineering training program and later the operational planning office before joining the newly formed Town of Halton Hills.

When he first started with the Town, its seven departments were all housed in different buildings. The Engineering Department was in the building that is now the Maple Ave. fire station, and remained there until the Civic Centre opened in 1989.

Highlights throughout his career have been watching the town grow, and working with Town staff.

Big issues for the town during his career include the proposed landfill application for the Acton quarry in the early 1990s, the application by Equity Waste Management to open a facility in the 401 Corridor, the development of Georgetown South (which was not well received by the rest of the town), and most recently, the agreement between landowners, the Town and Halton Region, for the extension of services along Steeles Ave.

He's proud to have recently seen the issuance of the



Town CAO Bob Austin, the man who has been a part of most of Halton Hills' growth during the past 31 years, catches up on some reading as he makes retirement plans. Photo by Ted Brown

first building permit (for Fernbrook water bottling facility) in the serviced 401 Corridor.

"I think that's phenomenal," he says.

Other accomplishments during his time with the Town include the rebuilding of Hwy. 7 and Mountainview Rd., and the completion of the library, Alcott and Acton Arenas, and Gellert Community Centre.

Austin says something he would have liked to have seen completed before he retired, however, was the approval of changes to the development application review process. The report on changes designed to streamline the development application process for non-residential development, was recently deferred by council.

Working as the Town's CAO for the past two years has been personally rewarding for Austin and he was honoured council asked him to take the job.

"It was rewarding, it was challenging. There were days it was fun. There were days I wondered why I had accepted (the job)," he says.

"The big thing was it took me out of my comfort zone."

Austin will miss many things about the Town.

"It will be the staff, the mayor, councillors, the consultants and the agencies and some members of the public," he says.

Mayor Rick Bonnette says Austin will definitely be missed. Bonnette says Austin is well respected by staff, department heads, councillors and the municipal community.

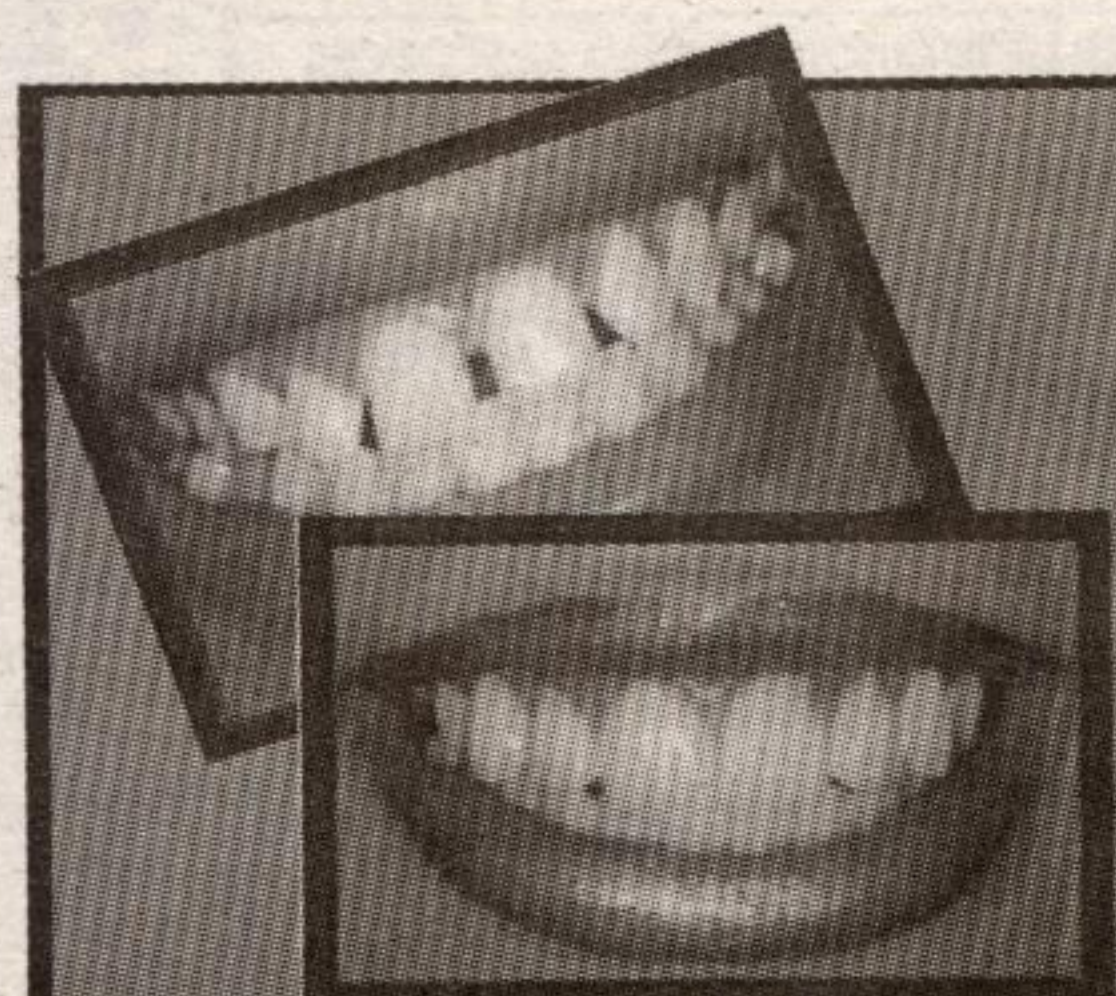
"He has a work ethic that's second to none," says Bonnette. "Bob is the first person in at the job every day, and most nights he's the last to leave."

He praised Austin for his common sense and judgment, and says he "steadied the ship" when he became CAO.

Former Halton Region CAO Dennis Perlin will take over the CAO post from Austin, who had a few words of advice for his successor.


"Halton Hills is unique," says Austin. "It's a big town with a small town character. I think you've got to realize that."

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer



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