

Tuck Katarina defeats Trustee Ockenden

While Halton Hills Trustee-elect Gillian Tuck Kutarna celebrated her re-election with gracious talk about building bridges and opening communications with Acton parents, defeated Acton trustee Jerry Ockenden complained bitterly that not being popular cost him the election.

Asked what he learned from the campaign, Ockenden was critical of some voters and councillors. "I learned from the community and the local politicians that it seems to be more important to be popular than to try to do the right thing," Ockenden said as the polls closed on Monday night at the Civic Centre.

"I suppose I could have danced around the McKenzie-Smith Bennett thing a bit better than I did, and it probably would have made a difference at the polling station. I still believe that – I think our board over the four years – we did a good job," Ockenden said, conceding trustees weren't the "most popular" board.

Ockenden was slammed by many Acton residents who were unhappy with his lack of effort to help stop the sale of surplus board land at MSB. The Town eventually paid \$1.3-million for five acres to save the site from potential development.

Tuck Kutarna, who voted to sell the MSB land, garnered 44 per cent of the vote (3,149), Ockenden polled 29 per cent (2,081), and newcomer Mandy Kerfoot ran a close third at 26 per cent (1,907).

"I respect the fact that the people have spoken and they got what they wanted," Ockenden said before being coaxed into posing with Tuck Kutarna for a congratulatory photo.

Ockenden said he is proud to have been involved in bringing all-day Kindergarten to Robert Little School next school year, in helping start a hockey program at Acton High School, and securing money for improvements at McKenzie-Smith Bennett.

Tuck Kutarna, who took the early lead and held it all night, said her first job will be to meet with the principals and parent councils of the eight Acton schools she now also represents. Halton Hills had two trustee seats until this election – one for Acton and one for Georgetown – but boundary redistribution resulted in the loss of one seat so one trustee is now responsible for all 15 Halton Hills schools.

Tuck Kutarna said she is up for the job.

"We need hard work and good communication to make sure we stay on the radar screen at the Board – to keep the needs of Acton and Georgetown schools on the agenda. The important thing going forward is to make sure we have a strong voice in the south (of Halton)," Tuck Kutarna said.

Halton District School Board trustees earn \$13,000 annually, and have a \$5,000 cap on approved expenses, like travel and FAX costs. The new trustees will be sworn in at the Board's Burling-



CONCEDING DEFEAT: Defeated Halton District School Board Acton Trustee Gerry Ockenden reluctantly congratulated Halton Hills Trustee-elect Gillian Tuck Kutarna following her win in Monday's municipal election.

– Frances Niblock photo

ton office on December 1 for a four-year term.

Acton native, former teacher and noted local historian Mark Rowe trounced incumbent Halton Catholic District School Board trustee Rossanna Palmieri for the Halton Hills seat, earning 72 per cent of the vote –

1,757 to Palmieri's 661.

Rowe said Palmieri's "negative" and "attack" campaign style did not resonate with voters, including her stance that former teachers should not be trustees.

"It was very unusual for municipal politics, I would think," Rowe said

on Wednesday, adding Palmieri left a congratulatory message on his answer machine.

Rowe said his first job is to "find out how things operate and establish a good working relationship" at the nine member Board, which will have five new trustees.

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Fire Report

False alarm

Acton firefighters could not find any trace of carbon monoxide when they answered an alarm activation at a Church Street West residence at 6:12 p.m. on Sunday.

Fryer smoke

Smoke from a deep-fat fryer set off a smoke alarm at Blue Springs Golf Course on Dublin Line at 8:44 Saturday morning. Acton firefighters advised staff to shut the fryer off and clean it before using it again.

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