



Saira Peesker/Metroland

Empty seats sit on either side of Green candidate Eleanor Hayward and Liberal candidate Indira Naidoo-Harris at the Canadian Federation of University Women's election forum at Milton District High School on Wednesday, May 23, 2018.

'We want to skate where the puck is going': Hayward

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tend, while Smyth had informed them the same day as the forum.

There was no place setting for Cunningham at the speakers' table. CFUW spokesperson Elaine Reid said that when they sent out invitations, there was no candidate listed on the

Elections Ontario website for both the Libertarian and NDP parties. She said they did send an invitation to the NDP head office.

Smyth's campaign told the Champion that they learned of the debate by reading about it in the paper. They said he was unable to attend because he works three hours from Milton

and spends part of the week out of town, and must continue to work during the campaign.

"My understanding is that we had not said we would be attending," said communications chair Brett Lefebvre.

Gill spent the evening campaigning in rural Milton, according to a post on

his Twitter account.

"With today's announcement the Ontario PC party will expand natural gas and broadband across rural Ontario, I will be knocking on doors in Campbellville, Brookville and Moffat, in order to spread the good news."

The empty seats were the talk of the crowd during

breaks and after the forum concluded. Allan Halls, 61, said he has heard of candidates avoiding debates across the province and is worried about Canadian politics following some of the trends seen in the United States.

"The usual norms of how political candidates present themselves and

communicate are being abandoned," he told the Champion. "As I've heard, it's a deliberate strategy ... Lay low, don't say too much, don't make mistakes and hope that the polls hold until election day."

"You shouldn't consider voting for somebody who deliberately hides in the shadows, that's my view."



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