

# Keates brings new, fresh face to municipal council

By IRENE GENTLE  
The Champion

The newest face on town council isn't easily daunted.

That determination to beat down odds helped Nassagaweya resident Ken Keates beat back incumbent Lieven Gevaert to become the latest council representative of Ward 3.

"We worked very hard," said Mr. Keates. "Being a newcomer, trying to unseat an incumbent isn't an easy task."

And in a sprawling ward that stretches from Hwy. 7 to Steeles Avenue, just getting residents to know who you are can be tough.

"One the questions I was most often asked was 'was I the one from Acton or the one who missed the meetings,'" joked Mr. Keates.

The question referred to fellow candidate David O'Drowsky, who is technically from Acton, while Mr. Gevaert received criticism for his frequent absences from council due to work commitments.

The concerns Mr. Keates heard most during his canvassing of residents revolved around slots revenue from Mohawk Raceway, water quality and road safety.

His campaign consisted of bulk

mailing and plenty of door-knocking. And each time he learned a crucial piece of support was missing, Mr. Keates and his wife, Vee Lapstra-Keates, simply renewed their efforts.

That helped the couple, who moved to the area 16 years ago, draw nearer to the neighbourhood.

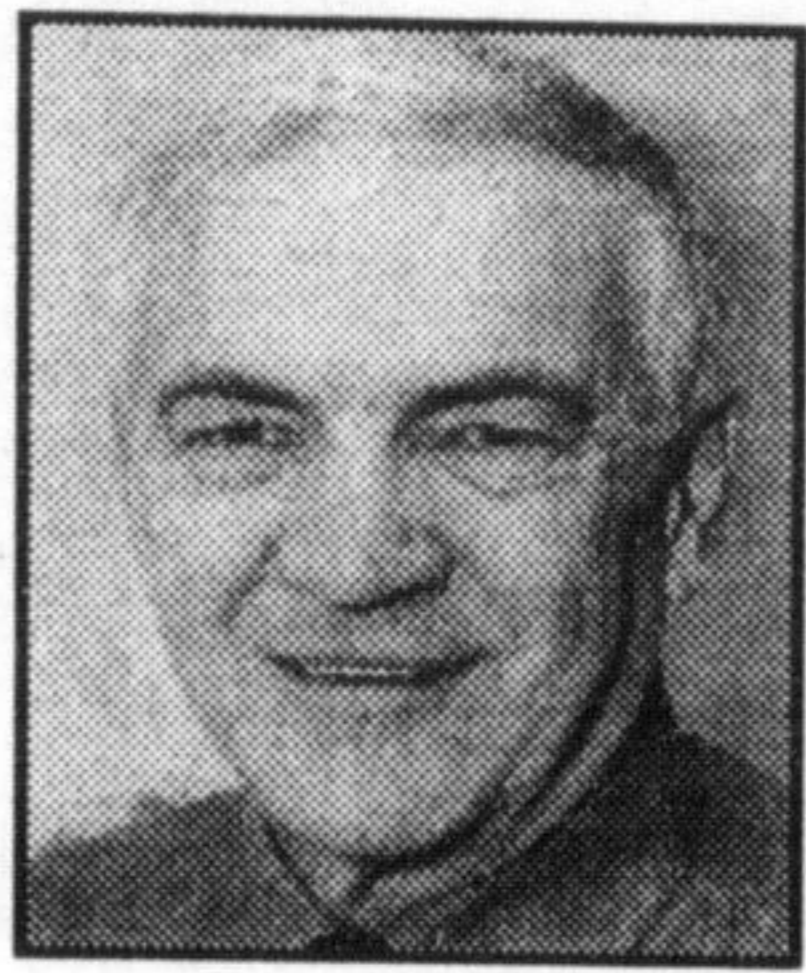
"She (Ms Lapstra-Keates) was a great help in the campaign," said Mr. Keates. "For her it was finding out a little more and getting a little closer to the community."

As for Milton's newest councillor, his willingness to expend lashing of effort would seem to bode well for his constituents.

"I'm prepared to put as much time as it takes to have a safe and happy place to work and play," he said.

And that means heeding his ward's desire to remain rural.

"My number one plank was Nassagaweya and keeping it as it is," said Mr. Keates.



Ken Keates

But with growth gaining momentum, he acknowledges it could be a tough slog.

"Some things are inevitable," he said. "But some things aren't so inevitable."

His inauguration is scheduled for December 4, with the first meeting taking place December 18.

Around the table, he expects his accounting and agricultural background, as well as his "ability to analyze problems and situations and find a path through it" to be a boon.

Finally, there's his willingness to take risks. Like being the only fresh face among a crew of returning councillors, for example.

"I'm not afraid of being a newcomer," said Mr. Keates. "It's a challenge, and I don't walk away from a challenge."

But as a representative of residents scattered through the town's largest ward, it can be a monumental task to find, never mind read, the pulse of the people.

He hopes to team up with fellow rural councillors to spread the word on ongoing issues, possibly through a quarterly newsletter.

And now, he's raring to get started. "I'm very excited. I'm trying to do as much research as I can."

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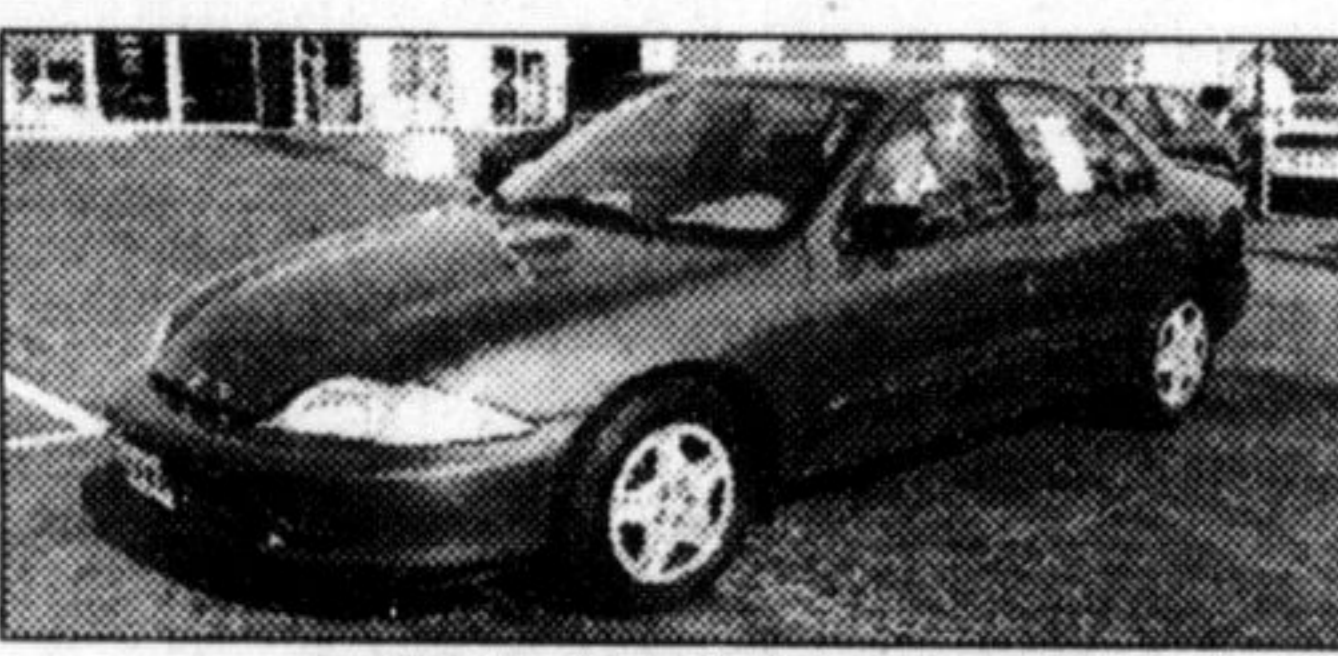







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