

Trustee's replacement to be appointed: board

Appointment route approved by 8-2 vote

By **TIM WHITNELL**

Special to *The Champion*

Halton public school trustees have accepted the resignation of one of their own and decided to fill the vacancy via appointment.

In a 9-0 vote trustees agreed to accept a letter of resignation from Burlington's Ward 1 representative, Michael Ellis, at Wednesday's Halton District School Board meeting.

Burlington trustee Peggy Russell wasn't in the room at the time of the vote.

Whether or not Mr. Ellis' departure was palatable to the majority of the board was not in question — he's been absent from most board meetings for the past five months, for medical reasons — but the mechanism to be used to replace him wasn't so clear cut.

A philosophical debate ensued about the merits of appointing his replacement or ordering a byelection within the 60 days allotted under the Education Act to fill a trustee vacancy.

In the end, the appointment route was accepted in an 8-2 vote with only Ms Russell and Oakville's Drew Currah dissenting.

Board chair Ethel Gardiner, herself a byelection winner in 1995 to replace former board chair Dave Whiting, said a couple of factors, including lack of money and poor voter turnout for the last trustee byelection, convinced her an appointment is the way to go this time.

On an inquiry from Milton trustee Erica Andrew, Education Director Dusty Papke told the board about \$81,000 had been spent on an independent investigation and legal fees last year.

The audit was performed after allegations by Mr. Ellis of improper procedures by the board relating to several policy and public issues. The board was later cleared of any wrongdoing.

Those legal fees, plus a looming \$2-million-plus board deficit this year, and the cost of a byelection to be footed by the board, was enough to convince most trustees to appoint Mr. Ellis' replacement.

"With \$81,000 wasted and a needs budget coming out next week (at public meetings around the region) we cannot afford a byelection," said Burlington trustee Debbie Downs.

Mr. Papke estimated the cost of a byelection at \$50,000-\$60,000 and noted the board doesn't have that much in its reserve fund. Mr. Currah, though, reminded his colleagues that, "The board voted for a forensic audit."

Ms Russell disagreed with the appointment decision on principle.

"How do we put a price on democracy? This board has a history of byelections," said Ms Russell, alluding to board chair Ms Gardiner and former Oakville trustee Lynn Roberts, both of whom came to the board via that route.

However, Ms Roberts' case was used as an example by some trustees as a reason why not to hold a byelection this time. Mr. Papke said only four per cent of voters participated in the mid-1998 byelection won by Ms Roberts to replace the outgoing Mary Dempster.

"Summer may have contributed to that (low turnout) but, historically, there's been small numbers for byelections", Ms Gardiner later said.

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Barb has made a difference in this community on a personal as well as professional level. Best known as the principal of Milton District High School (currently on leave) where she focused on innovative programs for her students. Regionally, she is known as past president of Halton Women's Place, where she took a lead role in awareness-raising and fund-raising for the newly approved facilities in Burlington and Milton.

KATHY POWELL

Kathy is a tireless servant of our community. She has devoted years to bringing comfort in so many ways to so many people. Her volunteer involvement includes hospital, church, long term care facilities, nursing homes and individuals. Kathy is responsible for training lay pastoral care workers from various churches and coordinate their visiting in hospital settings. Kathy is recognized in many organizations as their "guiding light".

SCOTT SCHLOTZHAUER

Scott is dedicated to the Milton community. Through his quiet giving and generous spirit he supports many charities including MCRC, United Way, Rose Cherry's Home, local schools and Milton Hospital. An active member of the Optimist Club of Milton, Scott served as past president and continues to work with the following committees Santa Claus Parade, Canada Day Celebrations and Optimist Soccer skills program. M & M's corporate charity is the Crohns & Colitis Foundation, which is supported locally by Scott's Charity barbecue.

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Glen Eden set to host ski camps

Looking for some excitement over the March Break?

Glen Eden Ski and Snowboard Centre still has a few spots open for its March Break Ski and Snowboard Adventure Camps.

Ski camps are available for those between the ages of 5 and 17, as well as adults, and snowboard camps are available for youths between the ages of 8 and 17.

The five-day program costs \$140 per youth and includes daily lessons with a professional instructor as well as equipment rentals and daily lift tickets.

To get to Glen Eden Ski and Snowboard Centre from Hwy. 401, exit at Hwy. 25, travel north to Campbellville Road, head west on Tremaine Road and south on Kelso Road.

Registration for the camps must be done in person or by fax. Registration forms can be downloaded from the Internet at www.gleneden.on.ca.

Fax registration forms to (905) 878-1619 or call (905) 878-8455 for more information.

March 1, 2002

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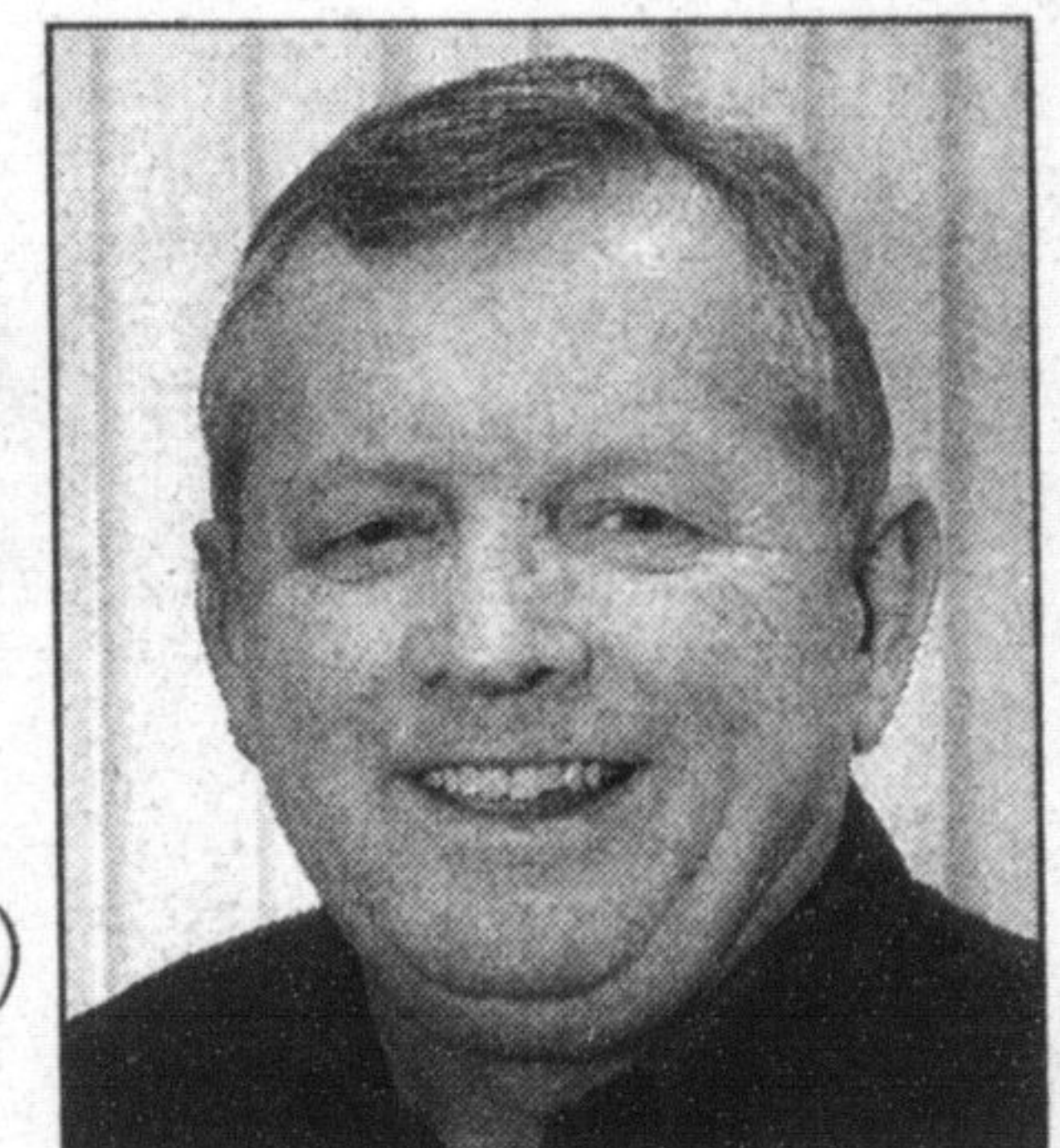


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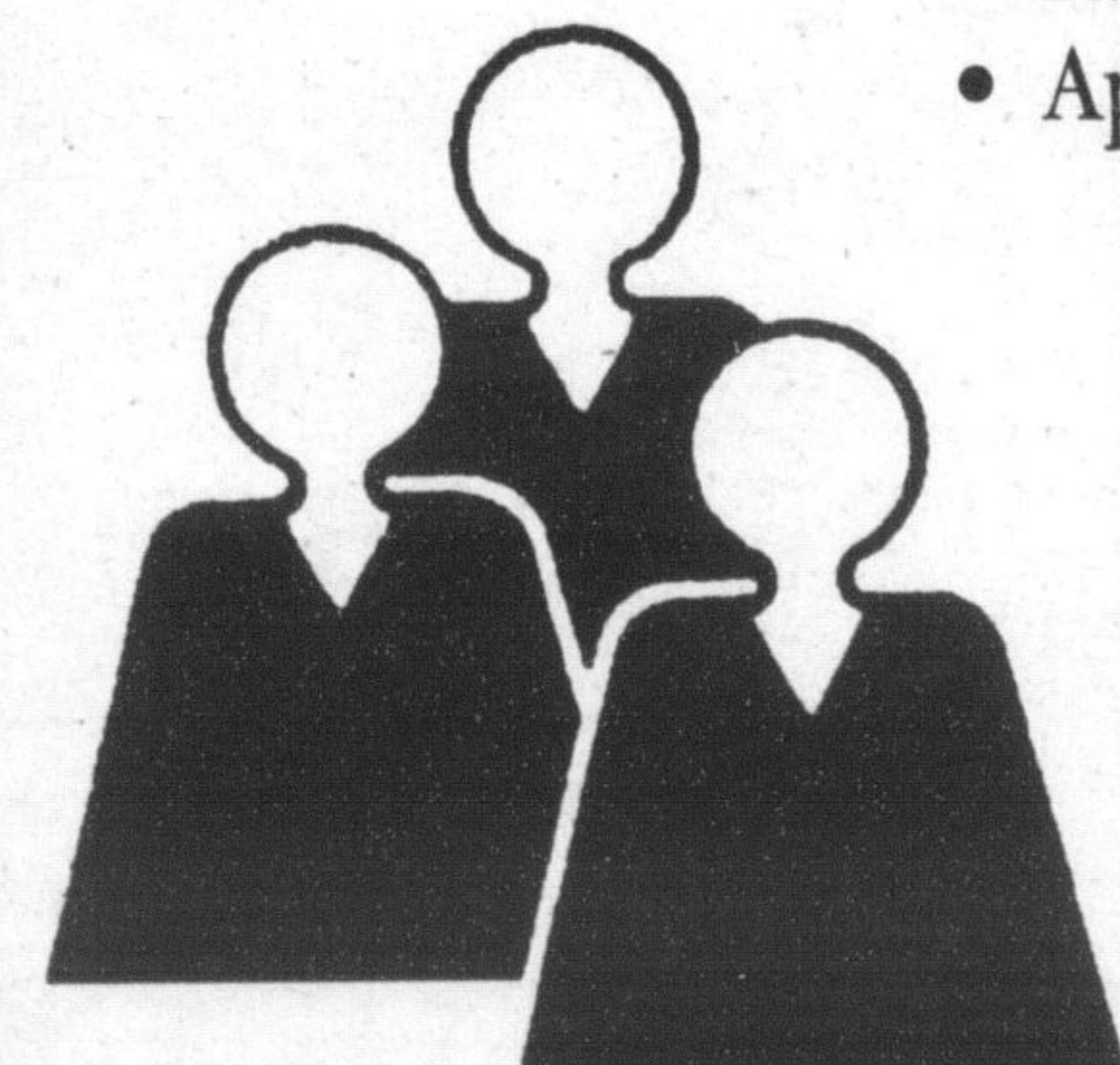
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