

Naqvi gains some ground over 2004

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

The Champion

Disappointing, but not too surprising.

That pretty much-encapsulated Anwar Naqvi's reaction to Halton riding's election results late last night.

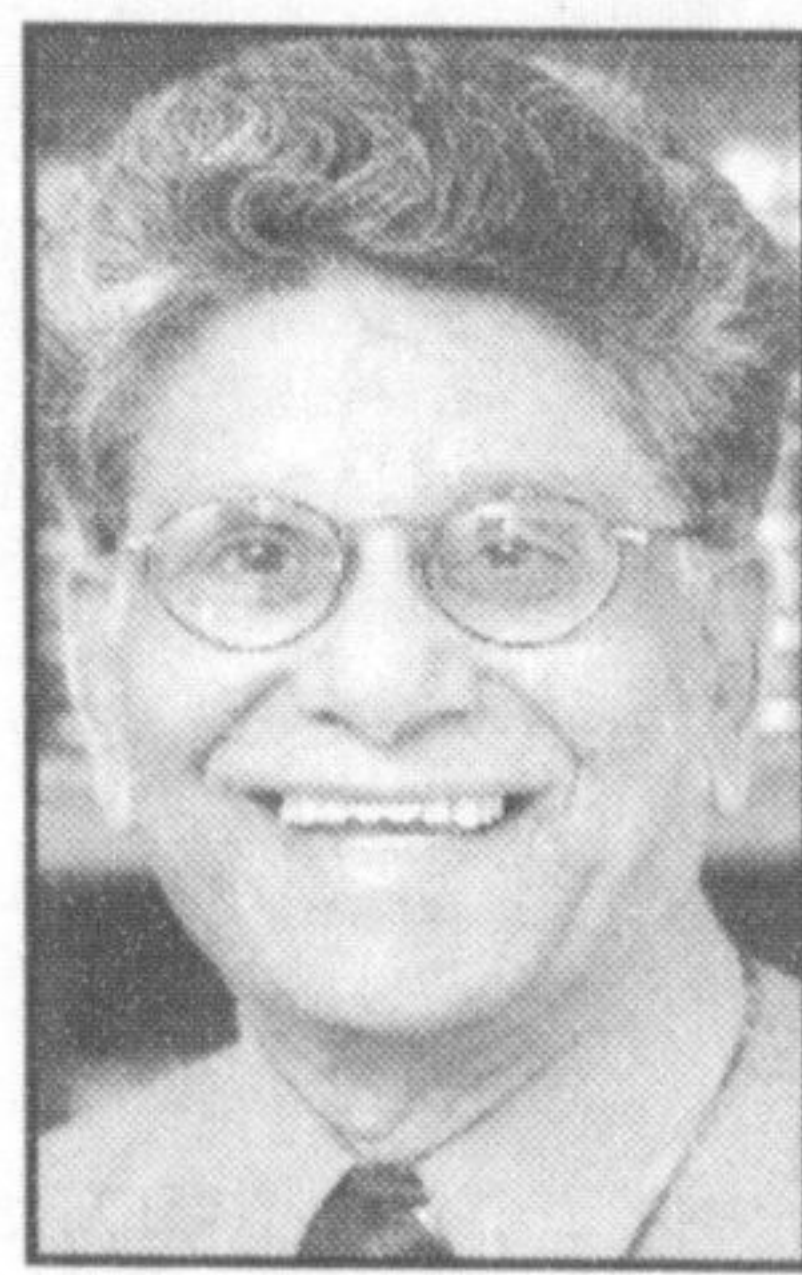
With a little more than two-thirds of the polls in shortly after 11 p.m., the NDP flagbearer looked to have gained at least some ground compared to 2004, but was still a distant third to the area's two big contenders.

"We did gain some votes and I'm hoping to get around 10 per cent of the vote, but that's not really satisfying," said the 69-year-old retired lawyer, who hovered around the nine per cent mark for much of the night.

"I tried my best, but I guess we didn't do an effective job of getting our message out. I'm not happy, but I'm but crying."

Mr. Naqvi said having to campaign in the winter didn't hurt his campaign as much as an inability to compete with the other parties in terms of signage.

"At one point I said 'My God, Garth Turner must have a factory full of signs'," quipped the two-time



Anwar Naqvi

Halton MP hopeful. "We couldn't possibly measure up to that."

Mr. Naqvi said that campaigning in such a diverse riding as Halton — which he

described as three very distinct communities — can be particularly difficult.

A chief stumbling block to his party's national efforts, he added, was former Prime Minister Paul Martin's claim that a vote for the NDP was nothing more than a vote for the Conservatives.

Said Mr. Naqvi, "Yes, that always hurts us. Mr. Martin tried to put a scare in voters."

The always-jovial candidate didn't entirely rule out the possibility of running again, but suggested that it wasn't likely.

"It's too early to say for sure, but I think no. It's probably time to let someone else take their turn."

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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Garth Turner — Halton's new MP — celebrates with his wife Dorothy (left) and his campaign manager Esther Shaye at the Ramada Inn last night.

Turner thanks Halton residents for support in his victory speech

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adding residents are saying they've "had enough" of the Liberal government.

Mr. Turner thanked everyone who was involved in his trek to the MP seat, with special appreciation going to campaign manager Esther Shaye and his wife, Dorothy, who he said watched him go off and campaign for eight months and also moved back to Campbellville with him in the midst of it.

"You would not believe how many brownie points I have to earn back," he joked.

To sum up his thoughts, the beaming Conservative held up a sign for

the cameras that simply said, "Thank You Halton."

Former federal minister

Mr. Turner is a former federal minister of national revenue, customs and excise who also ran for the leadership of the former Progressive Conservative Party of Canada.

Since departing from the political world in 1993, Mr. Turner authored a string of best-selling books on business and finance and became a nationally-known television personality.

He founded several companies, including Millennium Media Television — Canada's largest inde-

pendent producer of network television shows — and the Caledon-based Credit River Company, which restores and operates heritage commercial properties.

He's also a national spokesperson for the Alzheimer Society of Canada and is active on the environmental scene as a director of the Sierra Legal Defence Fund, a national organization dedicated to upholding and defending laws protecting the environment.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessey@miltoncanadian-champion.com.

Grice believes Green has good future ahead

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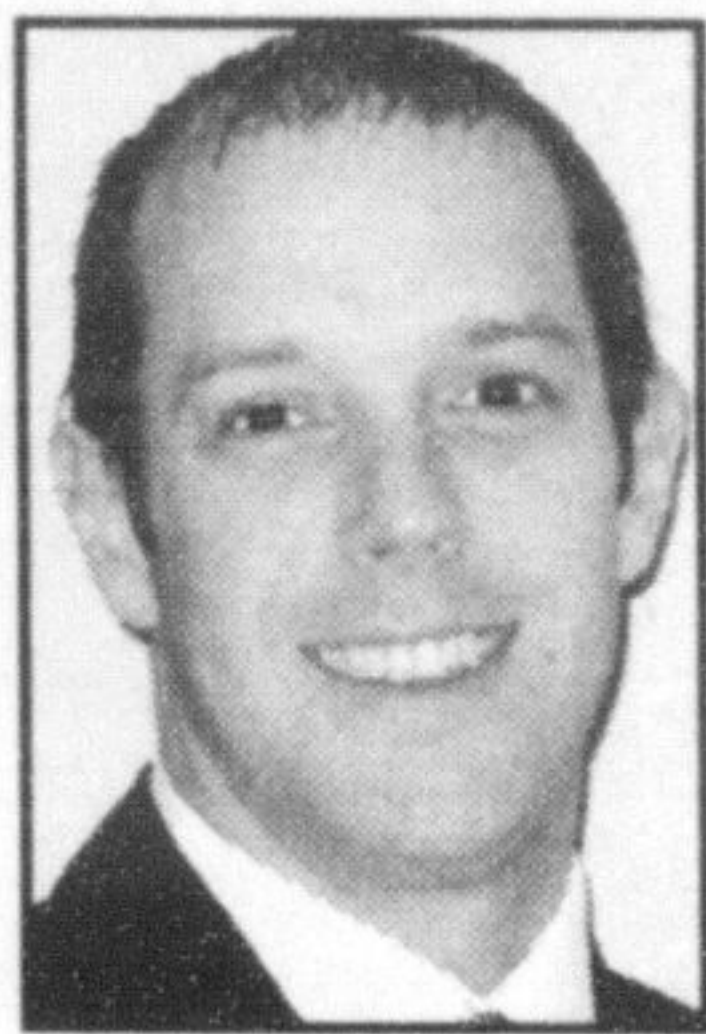
Dr. Kyle Grice was quite pleased as Halton riding results poured in late last night, with his Green Party having continued to enjoy an increase in support locally.

However, the 35-year-old chiropractor's greatest cause for optimism didn't seem to come from the votes he got, but rather from the ones that he believes are imminent.

"I can't tell you all the times I heard 'I would vote for your party, but...'," explained the first time MP candidate, who held steady with just under six per cent of the riding's votes throughout the night. "That gives me a huge sense that one day there'll be the courage to vote Green."

That encouragement was fueled by a recent mock election at an Oakville high school that saw his Green Party come out on top.

On a not-so-positive note, Dr.



Kyle Grice

Grice said he was rather disappointed that the environment was more or less ignored on the national stage — but figures that has a lot to do with his party not being part of the televised debates.

"I'm still watching to see if we get one MP in," he said around 10:30 p.m. "We just need that one seat in parliament and it'll be impossible to keep us out of the national debates next time."

Unlike his NDP counterpart, Dr. Grice left the door wide open to the prospect of carrying the Green Party banner again. "Yeah I think so. I gained so much experience during this campaign."

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Voter turnout better than last time

Given the circumstances, the numbers were particularly encouraging.

Despite a winter election that was expected to hinder voter turnout, a whopping 70.8 per cent of the eligible voters in Halton exercised their right and hit the polls.

A total of 69,212 voters — of 97,965 across the riding, which includes northern parts of Oakville and Burlington, as

well as Milton — cast a ballot.

That percentage — with all of the 260 polls accounted for at press time early this morning — is up from the 2004 election, when 65.4 per cent of eligible voters made their voices heard.


That follows an ongoing trend, as 63.2 per cent of eligible voters turned out for the 2000 election.

Numbers from 1997 were unavail-


able.

Halton's high turnout, up from the 64 per cent national average at press time, was due at least in part to a huge rise in advance voting.

A total of 9,430 Halton voters took advantage of the advance polls — nearly triple that of the 3,319 advance votes cast during the summer election of 2004.



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