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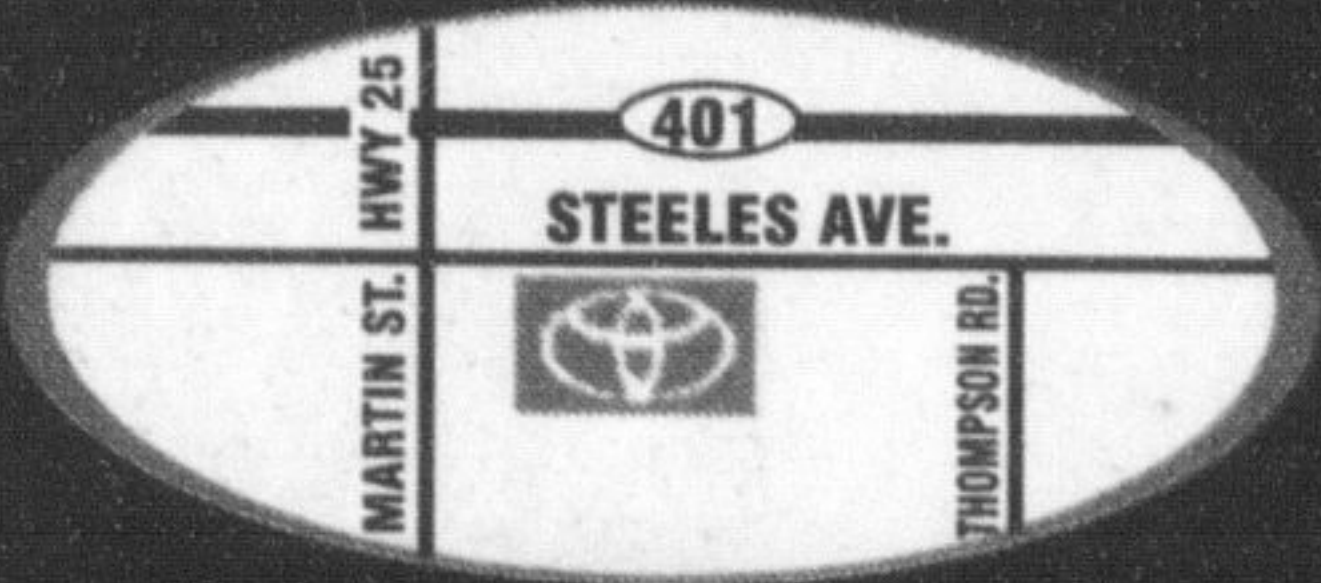
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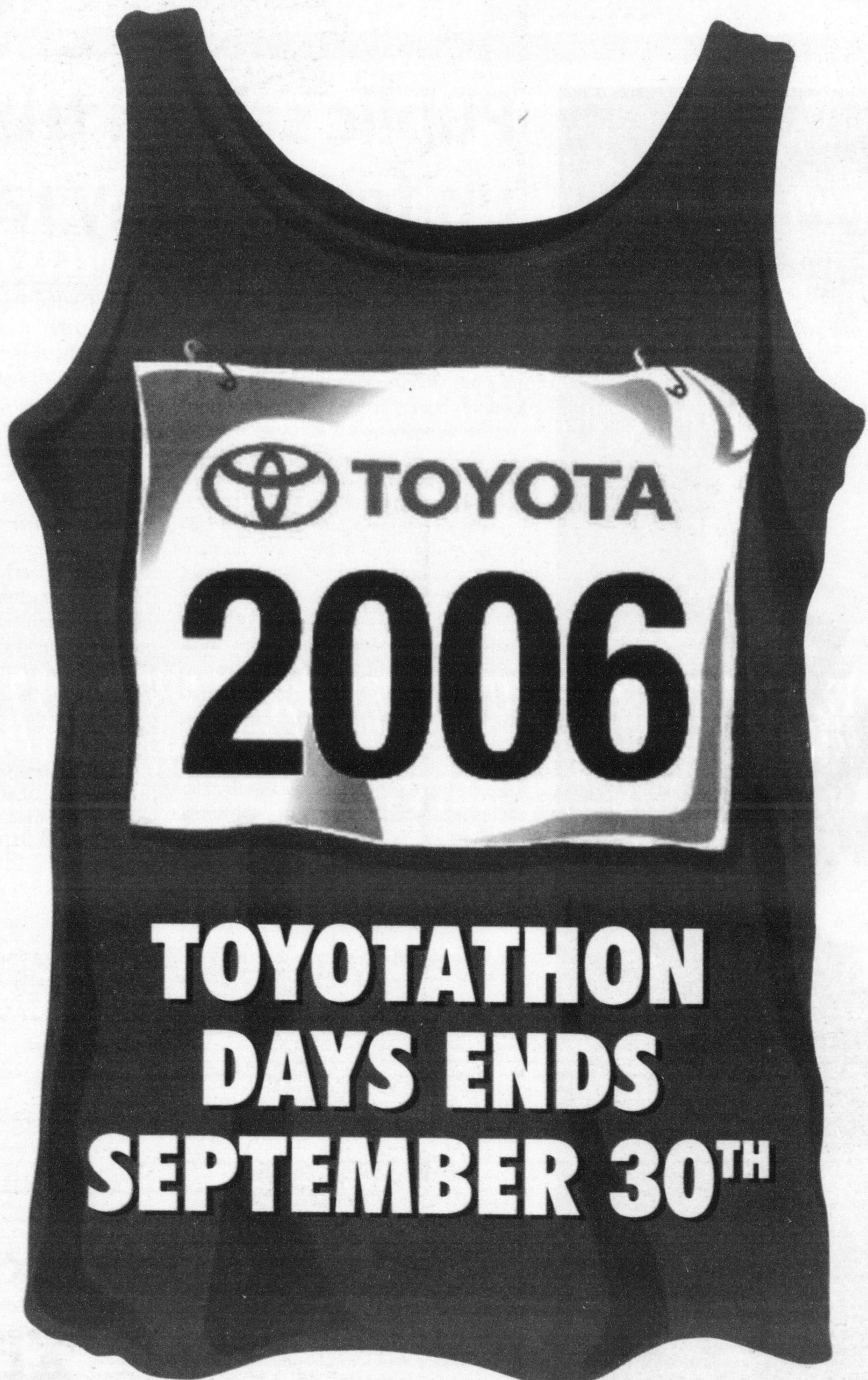
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# Ill former board chair not seeking re-election

By Lisa Tallyn  
 SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION



Citing health issues, longtime Halton Hills public school board trustee and former Halton District School Board chair Ethel Gardiner announced Wednesday she won't be seeking re-election in November.

Gardiner was recently diagnosed with cancer.

“That will be my battle for the next little while,” said the 69-year-old Georgetown resident, who will continue on as trustee until her term ends.

The decision not to run for a fifth term was a difficult one, but Gardiner said it was the only choice she could make at this time. She added, however, she hasn't ruled out the possibility of running as a trustee candidate again in the future or being a school volunteer.

“I plan to be back and involved in schools at some point,” said Gardiner, who was 90 per cent sure she was going to seek re-election before she learned of her illness. “I'd like to thank the people of Halton Hills for their support, encouragement and trust over the years.”

She said it's been an honour to serve Halton Hills for the last 11 years as trustee. “(Trustees) must be committed to public education that serves all children and advocate tenaciously for the success of every student. Over the past 50 years, 39 as an educator and 11 years as a trustee, including six years serving as the board's chair, I have learned a great deal. My life has been enriched by the fabulous people I have met, and I thank them for that.”

After retiring from teaching in June 1995, Gardiner was first elected as Halton Hills trustee that October.

“I had been involved in education all my life. To me it was just an opportunity to keep involved and be supportive of kids and public education.”

In 1997, Gardiner was elected by the other trustees to serve as the board's chair, a position she held for six consecutive years until 2003, earning her the distinction of being HDSB's longest-serving chair.

While she said it was an honour to serve as chair, “my work in Halton Hills was more near and dear to my heart.”

Gardiner said she remembers when she started as a trustee it seemed like there were 85 different boards of education in Halton with the schools all on different pages.

She said today, the strength of the Halton board system is that “we're all focused on the same thing — numeracy, literacy, school culture and improving student achievement.”

She has had many highlights over the past 11 years.

“Anytime I could get into a school to see the great work that's happening or

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