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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

BIG SHOES TO FILL: Three-year-old Jamie Morandin gets a little help from mom Jillian as she tries on a pair of firefighters' bunker pants during the Fire Prevention Week open house held at the Campbellville Fire Hall Saturday. The event featured fire prevention displays and a barbecue.

Turner ousted from caucus

By Melanie Hennessey
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Halton MP Garth Turner was ousted from the ranks of the Conservative Party caucus Wednesday after being told he breached its confidentiality with his controversial Internet blog.

Now the outspoken politician has to decide if he'll take the Green Party up on its offer to join the environmentally friendly group and become the first ever Green MP in the House of Commons.

Reporters from far and wide packed into Turner's downtown Milton office yesterday morning for a press conference where he addressed his suspension and the fact that he's now an independent MP.

"I'm a free agent right now," he remarked. "I've got the big number ripped off my sweater, I'm skating out to centre ice and I'm saying, 'Who wants to play hockey with me?'"

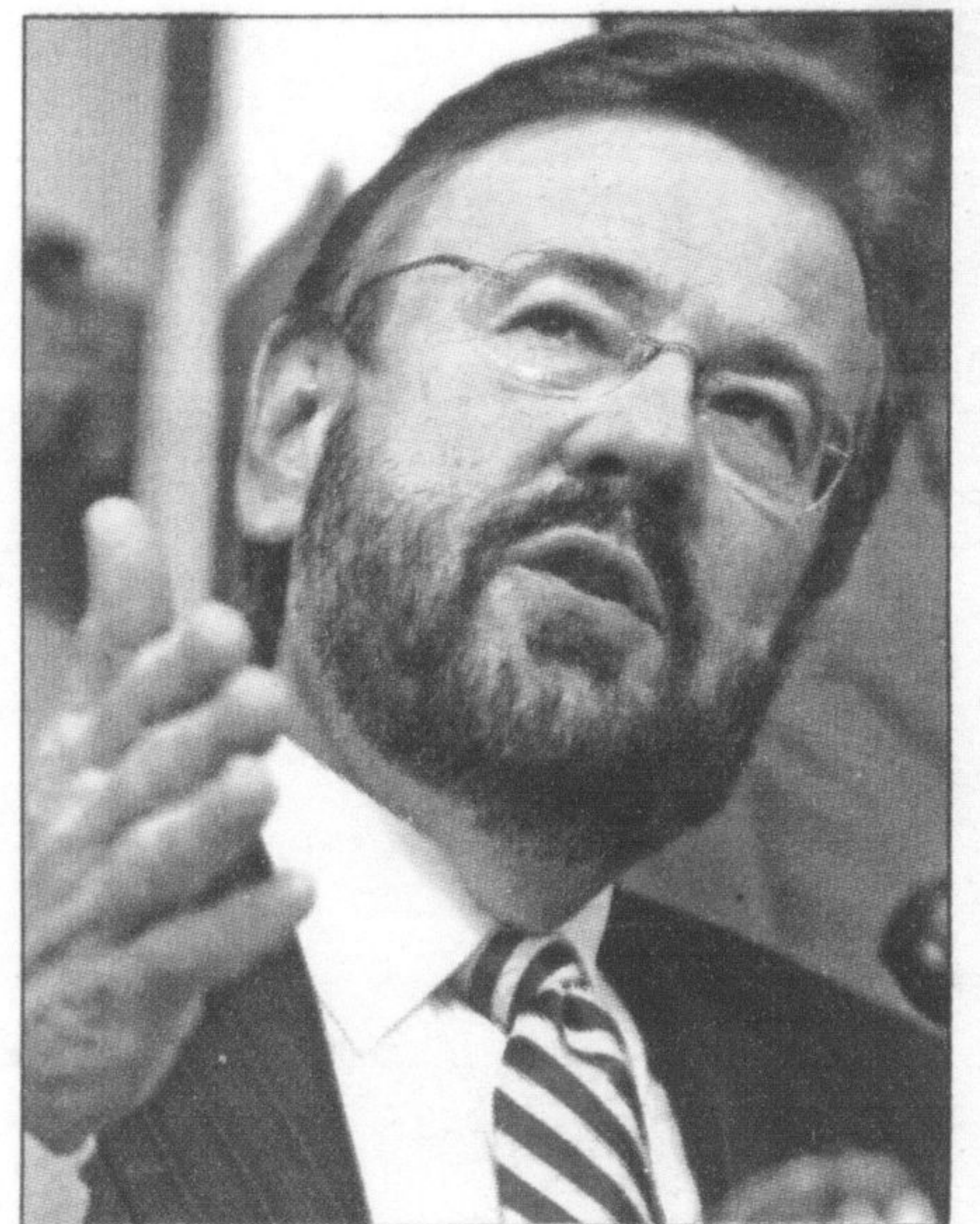
The rogue MP said he was surprised and disappointed by caucus' decision, which caucus chair Rahim Jaffer said was a result of details Turner was disclosing on his Web site and his heavy criticism of Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

"I do find it regrettable that it happened," Turner said. "Did I break caucus confidentiality? I do not believe so. I've seen people in caucus who were a lot more outspoken than I am."

He also said he has surmised his suspension is due to his colleagues' fear that he would speak out against the federal government's 'Green Plan' — the Clean Air Act — released yesterday.

When asked about a blog he posted in May that contained information brought up in caucus, Turner explained it was only on his Web site for one day

• see GREEN on page A3



BARRIE ERSKINE / SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION
Garth Turner speaks to the media at his press conference yesterday.

Inside Today's Champion

OPINION	A6
CLASSIFIED	A26
DATELINE	B6
REAL ESTATE	B7

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