

OPINION

We've made our choice for chair

On November 13 Halton residents have multiple decisions to make about who will represent their interests in local and regional government for the next four years.

Among them is the choice of who will replace Joyce Savoline as chair of regional council.

As we see it, the role of regional chair is to help each of the four municipal governments reach a consensus on what's good for Halton.

In our opinion, there's only one clear choice out of the four candidates for the job.

Robert Plaschka lacks political experience and has lived in Halton for the shortest time among the four candidates (nine years). While we don't doubt his desire to make a real difference in regional government, we wonder if a run at a city/regional councillor seat might have been a more appropriate choice at this time.

Starting with his opposition to Oakville's OPA 198 development plan, Brian Burton has served on several volunteer committees in Oakville and at the Region. Next month's election will mark his second run at the regional chair's seat. In 2003, he finished a distant second to Savoline. We believe he too needs to get his feet wet as a councillor before making the leap to chair.

There's no doubt Gary Carr has the strongest name recognition among the four. He spent 13 years as Oakville's MPP — including a four-year stint as Speaker of the House — and a term as Halton's MP before losing his seat to Garth Turner in January. However, we seriously question whether Carr's candidacy is much more than an attempt to jumpstart a stalled political career.

Brent Marshall is a lifelong Halton resident who has worked 36 years for Halton Region, including the last eight as its CAO. To the chair's position the 56-year-old brings an intimate working knowledge of where the Region has been and the long and difficult road that lies ahead of it.

While Marshall may lack political experience, his last eight years as the Region's most senior employee have required a keen understanding of the political process at the local, provincial and federal levels. He has worked side-by-side with Savoline and members of regional council to achieve made-in-Halton solutions to unique challenges the Region faces.

Frankly we find Marshall to be the most logical choice.



Readers Write

Send your letters to miltomed@haltonsearch.com or drop them off at 875 Main St. E.

Turner will continue to be effective

DEAR EDITOR:

At the end of last Friday's editorial, The Champion questions how effectively the residents of Halton will be heard with MP Garth Turner now suspended by the Conservative Party.

I will wager that Turner will continue to be very effective. Can you name one other MP who has been more outspoken on their constituents' behalf, more reported on by the media or more accessible through his Internet blog? I really don't think you can.

I would further point out that in all that has gone on since the day he was

nominated by the Halton Conservative riding association, Turner has been consistent in everything he has said and done. He promised that he would represent the people of Halton to the government, and not vice versa.

If anything, it's the Conservative Party that has failed to live up to the commitments it made.

I'm a member of the Conservative Party in this riding so it pains me to have to make that observation. Turner continues to have my support.

ED BROOKS
HAYWARD CRESCENT

Aroundtown

Make sure you're safely prepared for Halloween on Tues.

Time sure flies, doesn't it? It seems summer just wrapped up, and now Halloween's upon us. Store aisles are lined with bags of candy and pumpkins are being carved with gusto.

If there's one holiday that warrants special safety precautions, it's Halloween. Just because a costume's cute, doesn't mean it's safe. And just because a display is the spookiest on the street doesn't mean it isn't a fire hazard.

Barry Kory, training technician with the Milton Fire Department, said the two biggest safety no-nos he encounters each year revolve around unsafe costumes and improper use of candles. He offers the following advice.

Costumes should be chosen that don't impair hearing or vision. The best ones are light coloured, or bright and reflective. They

should be kept short to avoid tripping and falling.

Also, to minimize the risk of contact with candles, baggy pants, loose frills and billowing skirts should be avoided.

Pumpkins should be lit by battery operated lights as opposed to candles.

If you just can't resist a natural flicker, try a tea light or votive candle in a non-combustible holder — and don't leave it unattended.

Also, parents should give each child a flashlight with fresh batteries, and should remind them of traffic safety rules.

And I have a tip of my own. Children old enough to trick or treat on their own should always go in pairs or, even better, in groups

of three or four.

Last year, a boy was beaten up by some older kids who wanted his candy, and we don't want a repeat of such a horrible incident.

While we're talking about safety, I might as well remind residents that Sunday is when we all set our clocks back an hour.

That means it's also time to check the batteries in your smoke alarms. It's something that might not seem like a big deal, but really is. Take it from Barry Kory, who's seen lives saved because of working smoke alarms:

"You want your smoke alarms to be in good operating condition should anything happen."



Stephanie Thiessen

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875 Main St. E.,
Milton, Ont. L9T 3Z3

905-878-2341

Editorial Fax: 905-878-4943
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Publisher
Neil Oliver

Advertising Director
Wendy McNab

Managing Editor
Karen Miceli

Production Manager
Tim Coles

Circulation Manager
Charlene Hall

Office Manager
Teri Casas

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