

# Halton candidates quick to get on campaign trail

By Melanie Hennessey  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

With only about a month to go before the federal election, Halton Riding's election candidates are hitting the campaign trail hard and fast.

The four local contenders — Liberal incumbent MP Garth Turner, Conservative candidate Lisa Raitt, NDP's Rob Wagner and Green Party newcomer Amy Collard — report it has been a busy six days for them since the election was called.

Turner officially launched his campaign Sunday afternoon and said so far, he's accomplished a tremendous amount.

"Our signs are up all over the place and we've done literature drops to tens of thousands of homes," he said. "I'm also out door knocking every day."

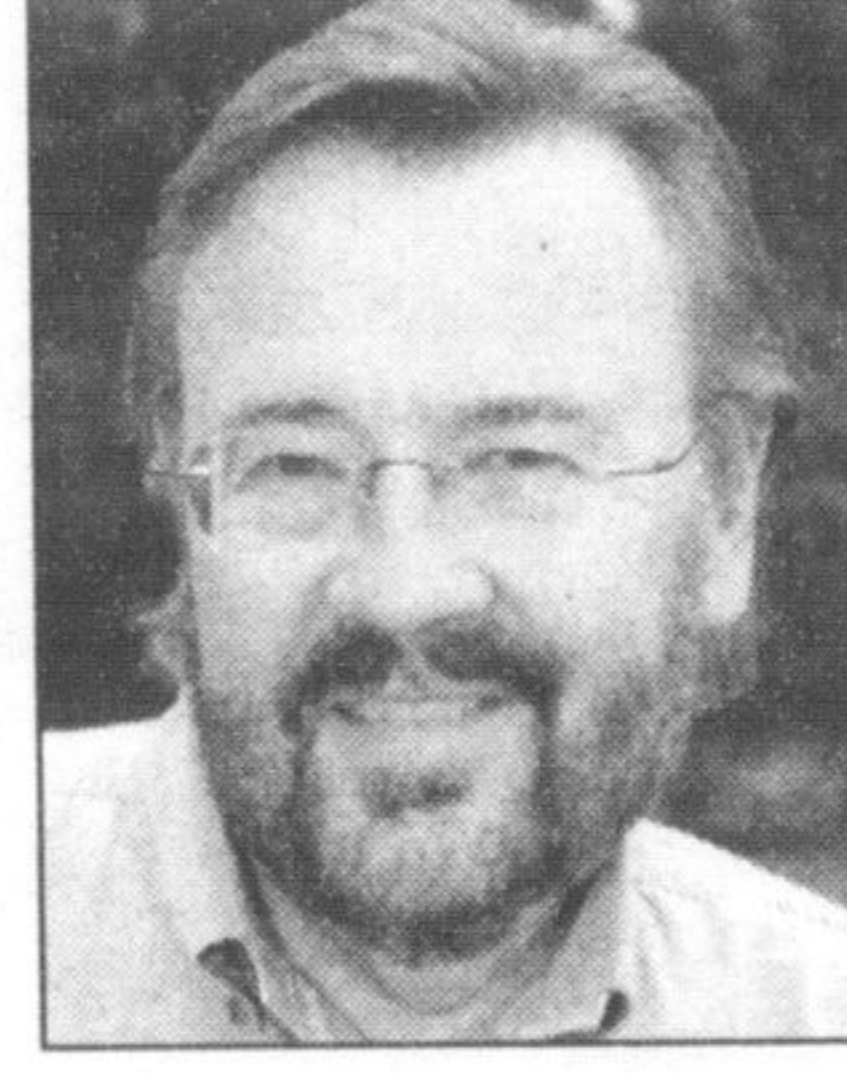
Wagner and Raitt said they've also been out knocking on doors and meeting constituents, while Collard — who was chosen as the Green candidate in an emergency



Amy Collard, Green



Lisa Raitt, Tory



Garth Turner, Liberal



Rob Wagner, NDP

nomination meeting Monday night — said she has been preparing literature and getting ready for debates among other things.

**Raitt's appointment an issue: Turner**

The candidates all had different takes on what issues will dominate the election locally, with Turner saying they'll be the economy, childcare and Raitt's appointment to her post as the local Conservative candidate by the federal party.

"This (appointment) is turning into a big

issue in Milton," said Turner. "I think the candidate has a lot to answer for."

Turner said he has been contacted by several members of the Halton Conservative Association who are "disturbed" about the way Raitt was chosen.

But Raitt said she and the local Conservatives are working well together, noting her campaign manager is even a person (D'Arcy Keene) who had sought the nomination before she was appointed.

"I think the people in Halton are more interested in the bigger picture between the Conservatives and the Liberals," she said.

Raitt said she expects issues like leadership and ensuring Halton's changing needs are taken into consideration by the federal government will also come up locally.

Meanwhile, Wagner and Collard concurred that the economy will be front and centre.

"I think the economy is the number one concern on everyone's mind," said Wagner.

For Collard, Ford's announcement this week that it's cutting another 500 jobs at its assembly plant in Oakville "furthers my belief that we need to start putting money into research and development to get away from carbon-based fuels."

Wagner said the booming growth in Halton and the effect it's having on infrastructure is also of concern to him.

The environment and preventative healthcare rounded out Collard's priorities.

The last federal election saw a close race between the Conservatives and Liberals in Halton, with only 2,000 votes separating them. Both Turner and Raitt said they don't know at this point if that trend will continue in the upcoming election.

Wagner said he expects the NDP to gain some ground in Halton this time because he feels he's the only left-wing option, while Collard said it's the Greens' goal to secure at least 10 per cent of the vote.

**How to reach the candidates**

- Garth Turner, 310 Main St. (905) 484-2784 or (905) 636-0779 www.garthturner.com
- Lisa Raitt, 13 Charles St. (Suite 104) www.lisaraitt.ca
- Rob Wagner, (416) 951-9508 www.robwagner.ca
- Amy Collard, (647) 210-2524 www.haltongreens.ca

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

## Increase hypocritical, says Raitt

• from TURNER on page A1

tion on the \$1,200 universal childcare benefit and it clearly demonstrates what's at stake in this election campaign."

She called the Liberals' announcement to increase childcare funds for parents a "knee-jerk reaction."

"This is something they (the Liberals) talked about as such a bad policy years ago, and now overnight it doubles?" she said. "It's hypocritical."

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

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