

Day says he's keeping up with community's issues

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 has been over the other terms of council," Day explained. "I think they're behind me now."

The full-time lawyer didn't wish to elaborate publicly on his personal issues, though he did acknowledge the much-publicized tragic circumstances surrounding the death of both his parents in early 2007 were still

exacting a toll.

On February 18 of that year, Day's 86-year-old Alzheimer-afflicted mother, Marg, died in bed at the family's home at Tremaine Road and Steeles Avenue.

Just two weeks later, a tragic fire in the home claimed Day's father, Bert, 88. It's believed Bert — suffering from short-term memory loss and unable to comprehend his

long-time wife had passed away — perished in the burning house while trying to find her.

Despite the tragedy, Day attended the council and committee meetings immediately after the deaths of his parents and the vast majority of meetings in the remainder of the year except for council's monthly administration and planning committee meetings. Day doesn't sit on the committee — he's on council's community services committee — and his attendance isn't mandatory, but most Milton councillors generally attend both standing committee meetings whether they have a vote or not.

Day's Ward 1 colleagues Brian Penman and Barry Lee declined comment on Day's attendance record.

However, Ward 4 Councillor Paul Scherer criticized Day's performance but stressed he wasn't attacking the man personally.

"That was absolutely tragic," Scherer said of the death of Day's parents. "But in all due respect, we've given Rick lots of leeway. Let's call it understanding. But I think there's a time where you have to get back to work."

"I'm very, very disappointed in his contribution to council."

Scherer said he raised the subject with Mayor Gord Krantz and the Town's clerk recently and was told it would be addressed.

In an interview, Krantz said he hadn't spoken to Day about the issue.

"Some people do more than their share and some people do less unfortunately," Krantz said. "Regardless of who it is, it really gives me concern."

By missing council sessions this year, Day was unable to vote on items ranging from deciding where to place 80,000 new residents in Milton between 2021 and 2031 to giving council members and other non-unionized staff a raise.

However, he said he has been keeping up with the issues along with continuing to work on behalf of his constituents.

"But in all honesty, I've never been what you would call a ward healer. I've never been as good at getting back to people on specific problems like if their mailbox has been knocked over or their garbage didn't get

picked up," he said. "As a lawyer, I'm issue-oriented rather than specifics like that."

He highlighted his successful battle in recent years against the placement of a natural gas power plant in Milton and his unsuccessful fight against Halton Hills' acceptance of the facility on Hwy. 401.

"Most of the work (of a councillor) is done outside the council meetings," he said.

Scherer said a councillor must still represent his constituency at the council table with a vote.

Day's absence from council is only part of the issue, however. Along with sitting on both council and one standing committee, Milton councillors sit on numerous sub-committees and boards. Day sits on no extra committees, though he said he had wanted to be on Heritage Milton and council's Interview Committee but let other interested councillors take the spots.

Penman, for instance, serves on Conservation Halton and its three sub-committees, Milton Hydro and its sub-committees and numerous other groups like the Milton District Hospital Foundation.

Penman noted that one day last week, he was supposed to celebrate his anniversary but his mother was seriously ill and his son was having a CT Scan, and he was asked by a Brookville ratepayer to meet him to discuss a conservation issue.

"That was a day where you might just say, 'To hell with the world,'" said Penman. "But I didn't. It's a duty. You're elected."

Day, who works full time out of his office in Oakville, said he doesn't have the same luxury of time as retired individuals or those who have their own businesses in Milton. "Some councillors are on seven or eight committees and I don't know how they spread themselves that thin."

"It's good politics to be on as many boards and commissions as you can," he acknowledged. "I have a rule — I don't sit on a board or commission in my professional life or political life or personal life unless I want to go to the meetings."

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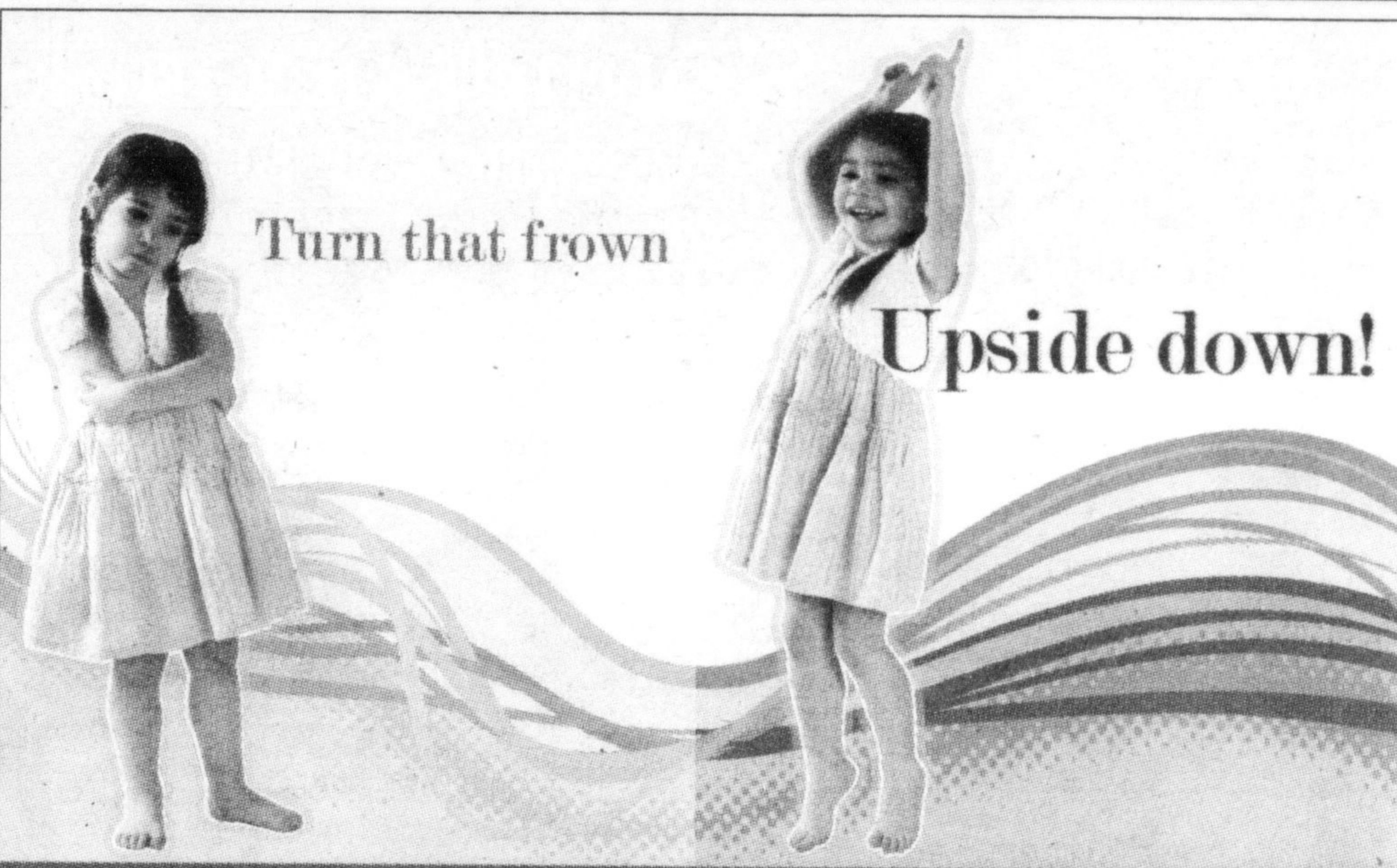
Public Invited to Comment on 2010 Budget Priorities

Milton residents are invited to attend the Budget meeting on Monday, July 20 to provide input into the priorities for the 2010 operating & capital budgets. A presentation will be made at the beginning of the meeting to introduce the 2010 budget process.

Date: Monday, July 20, 2009
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Location: Milton Sports Centre, Banquet Room

To provide your input, please register as a delegation by filling out a Delegate Request Form. The form can be picked up at the Clerks' Office (Town Hall, 150 Mary Street, Milton, L9T 6Z5) or on the Town of Milton website, www.milton.ca. Completed forms must be submitted to the Clerk's Office or faxed to 905-876-5022 by 10 a.m. on July 20.

Comments in writing are also welcome and may be directed to Sheryl Hill, Manager, Finance and Accounting at Town Hall, 150 Mary Street, Milton, L9T 6Z5, or at sheryl.hill@milton.ca.



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