



Photo by TED BHOWN

Victory at last

A disgruntled Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller (right) and Halton Hills recreation co-ordinator Debbie Mlethig are outshone by Milton Mayor Gord Krantz and Milton recreational co-ordinator Barb Kwade (left) after they delivered the Town of Milton flag to the Halton Hills Civic Centre June 4. The flag flew at the Halton Hills Civic Centre for a week as a result of Milton beating Halton Hills in the Crown Life Participation Challenge.

Seven new homes constitute latest urban housing boom

The crack of hammers, the gridding drone of heavy machinery as tonnes of earth are clawed out of the ground, the counterpoint of keening power saws ripping wood — they're all the sounds of house building, an industry that has been silenced in urban Milton for most of a decade.

But in a small way it's coming back this summer.

Dick Marvin, a partner in Charleston Homes, will be building seven new houses in the Laurier Avenue-Holly Avenue area, roughly across from Sam Sherratt School in an easterly line along Laurier.

In what many builders at least would certainly view as a sad commentary, it marks the largest freestanding home construction project in urban Milton for years.

Although developers own land surrounding the town core and are anxiously awaiting the green light to build, they have already had their plans put on hold for years and it's still unclear when there will be any large-scale residential construction in Milton.

The community currently has a limited water supply

and sewage treatment capacity that have made it the slowest-growing centre in Halton Region. Milton's population of approximately 32,500 has grown by less than 50 people in the last five years, while Oakville, for example, has expanded by more than 27,000 residents — almost as many as live in Milton.

The only reason Mr. Marvin can build a handful of houses is because he bought the lots from a church after the church decided not to build there. That means the water and sewage capacity had already been set aside for the seven lots by the mid-1980s.

Asked if he was aware of how long it had been since anyone built homes in urban Milton, Mr. Marvin replied, "I know it's been quite a while. We do feel there is a pent-up market in Milton."

The houses are scheduled to be ready by Christmas. The various town approvals are already in place, Milton planner Robin Kitchen said.

Mr. Marvin said he expects to sell the homes in the \$200,000 to \$235,000 range.

NDP plan 'muzzles' opposition: Sullivan

By ROB KELLY
The Champion

While Halton North MPP Noel Duignan says new management-labour rules will promote workplace harmony, Halton Centre MPP Barbara Sullivan fears they are more likely to promote poverty.

And when Mr. Duignan argues that another recently introduced plan to shorten debate in the legislature will streamline government operations, Ms Sullivan says NDP bungling is responsible for most of the bottlenecks anyway.

Under recently introduced revisions to the Ontario Labour Relations Act (OLRA) the use of replacement workers would be banned in a strike, although managers, non-union workplace personnel and non-striking workers from other centres could perform strikers' duties.

As well, although other changes have been modified from earlier proposals, they basically tend to shore up labour's position by making it easier to unionize and expanding the scope of workers who may belong to unions.

As far as what the government likes to depict as its plan to make Ontario's legislature work more efficiently, Ms Sullivan portrays that as a gag law aimed at stifling outcries against such controversial changes

as the OLRA amendments.

"What we're seeing here is a unilateral decision in order to muffle opposition," she said. The supposed streamlining is in reality an attempt to "muzzle" government critics.

Mr. Duignan said the move to impose time limits on speeches by MPPs was a response to "Opposition filibustering", which was occurring to the extent the government had "no legislation in the works" despite a wish to pass more than 20 bills. Because of that, Queen's Park probably won't break for the summer in late June as planned, but instead sit through late July.

Ms Sullivan said the delays have been caused by "the absolute incompetence" of the government when it comes to writing new law.

"I'm frustrated, I really am." As Liberal health critic, Ms Sullivan said she is dealing with four bills at the committee level that are so "badly drafted" already there have been "200 amendments" proposed and "I will have another 50." Such texts are "absolutely impossible to deal with."

The recently unveiled labour legislation "takes away a balance in the entire labour relations structure. There's no question that in my constituency there is real concern with some provisions."

Ms Sullivan's riding, which con-

tains south rural Milton and a large swath of northern Oakville, contains "a lot of auto parts manufacturers," the MPP noted. "If one is struck, nobody could cross his picket line to get material out." Ultimately, it could mean even the giant Oakville Ford plant, through a domino effect, "could be shut down."

The bill "is clearly controversial and tends to frighten away new investment," Ms Sullivan said.

"I believe it will lead to more co-operation," Mr. Duignan said. It will forge a stronger "partnership" between business and labour, and hopefully "reduce conflict and confrontation in labour-management relations."

Mr. Duignan said there are "a number of groups firmly on the right wing of anything" which will oppose the legislation. He characterized them as the (former U.S. President Ronald) Reagan mentality people.

"Workers need a greater say in what goes on," Mr. Duignan said. They should be "legitimate partners" in any given enterprise.

Ms Sullivan said "there's no question" the bill will pass in the fall, thanks to the NDP majority. "The question is, will it pass with improvements?"

Mr. Duignan said "there may be some minor amendments" but that's all.

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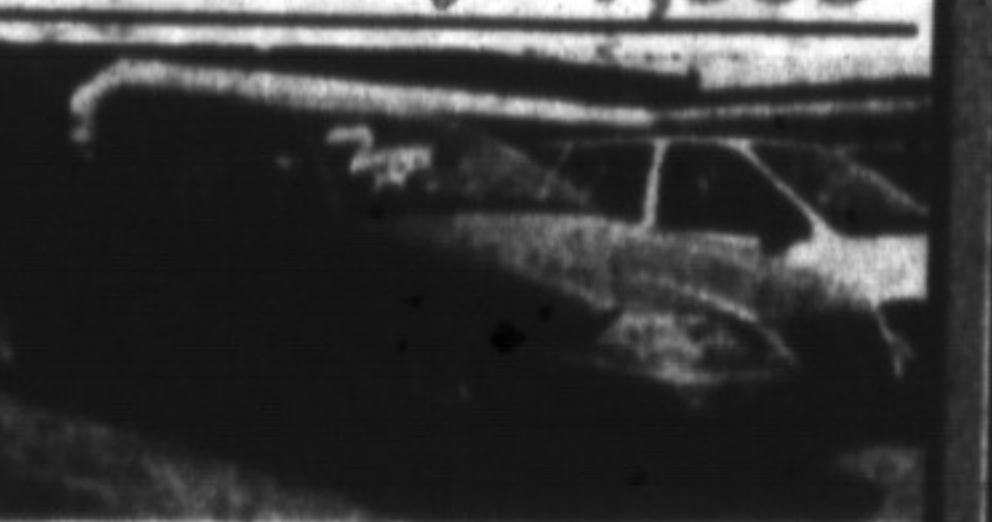
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