



# EDITORIAL

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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# Commentary

## A personal perspective

The slate is full and choices are tough as Ward 2 heads to the polls Monday.

From one who has spent a mere five months observing the local scene, and attended last week's only Ward 2 all candidates meeting, here are some thoughts.

Gord Krantz's 29 years' political experience is daunting in the mayor's race. He knows the town, the issues — and the job.

However, Mr. Krantz was either rusty or napping as he failed to come across as well as he was dressed at last week's meeting, getting the figurative hook for a too-lengthy speech.

He voiced confidence about being re-elected, his commitment to tax base growth, and savings potential with single tier waste management, but escaped controversy by not jumping into the fray on questions shot at municipal council candidates.

Opponent Glenn Botting spoke well, but the candidate who rose above public controversy and a court crisis facing his family, merely talked a lot about the need for growth and leadership required by the mayor.

David Lloyd, the other mayoralty candidate, donned a suit and tied his long hair back, then spoke in a warm, fuzzy way about his longtime home of Milton. But he was soft on facts as he advocated preserving the downtown area, a clean-up of Pigment & Chemical and more ball diamonds.

The choice is much tougher for the ward's regional council seat — perhaps the most difficult of the election. Colin Best and Brad Clements are both longtime, respected councillors. Both were clear on their stands last week — Mr. Best favouring small, interim growth, Mr. Clements saying efforts in that direction are a waste of time.

However, both may have shown their substantial political experience by failing to take a stand on the next potential controversy brewing in downtown Milton — John Martin House's suitability as the Halton Region Museum site.

Both are on the museum feasibility study committee, however it appeared loyalty to the committee outweighed the need for the direct answers sought by the public. If one was looking for a candidate supportive of a specific stance before the issue likely blows open next spring, to whom would one turn?

Mr. Best certainly does his homework. Mr. Clements has an old-school savvy and manner that people seem to like. Both know Milton. The writer leaves the choice to voters.

### Municipal candidates

Enter the 10 municipal candidates — all competing for a mere four seats and three of them incumbents.

John Challinor didn't make it to last week's all candidates' meeting for business reasons, but no one could accuse him of not knowing his stuff or having the time for the job. He'd be a good choice.

Wally Hunter is an intelligent, able-spokesperson for Milton who has done more than his share defending residents' wishes on the Sib-Jel matter. He failed to take a strong stand on potential conflict between municipal council and his company, the Royal Bank, which is involved with Pigment & Chemical, but he's still worth considering.

Joe DiPalma spoke mainly of finances. He noted what he saw as disrespect for the views of Martin Street residents by the current council, but also warned that council, not

**Angela Blackburn**



special interest groups, drives Town decisions. He drew a bead on local issues and local dollars, not bad priorities for a local councillor.

For a fourth choice, the writer has two options.

Frank Wilson comes across as a common sense candidate with good business sense and a solid backbone. Despite not having the facts, he did come closer than council incumbents, who are privy to confidential legal discussions, in sizing up the Pigment & Chemical issue. However, his comment about growth bringing ethnic change to Milton, while realistic, could have been a step beyond the realm of political correctness.

Taking heat for his implication of Ron Furik's potential conflict between his council and real estate jobs, Mr. Wilson said, "I call it the way I see it." He could add spice to council.

If you swayed away from Mr. Wilson, you could look to Graeme Barrow. The newcomer, who speaks deeply and slowly, sizes up situations without fear of jumping into the fire on issues. Another possible choice.

### Five options

Unfortunately that's already five options to fill four available seats, but readers should look at everyone to make their own ballot choices. Here are others who failed to make my top four.

Anthony Allwood is on leave from his job as general manager of the downtown Milton Business Improvement Area (BIA). With sound platforms on preserving the downtown, improved communication and accountability, he raised my eyebrow when he said he withheld a letter from his employer to the Town advocating the Martin Street plan because he was personally opposed to it. You can't play both sides of the issue. I also questioned an implied shortchanging of those needing affordable housing, as Mr. Allwood said rather than "seas of townhouses", low rise buildings would use less land.

Incumbent Art Melanson's forthrightness about Milton being overplanned, and his warning that the town's future may be decided by other jurisdictions, was refreshing from a longtime councillor. He doesn't expect short-term growth and hopes to focus on downtown road works. Mr. Melanson, however, could have been as vocal at council and more active on the Martin Street issue.

Incumbent Ron Furik bills himself a quiet worker who stays out of the lime-light. He took the spotlight last week, defending his honesty on the point of conflict between his real estate job and council seat. But from an overall perspective, his approach in council chambers bears out the quiet profile.

Although Ray Stephenson advocated residents' ability to "say no" especially to uncontrolled growth, one has to acknowledge Milton isn't operating in a vacuum. It may not be that easy.

Bob Moreau wasn't able to attend the all candidates meeting. He focuses mainly on the need to cut government spending, or at least increase current efficiencies so retirees won't be forced to part with most of their savings in the future.

## The Champion's choice:

# Best for Halton job

It is beyond the purview of this newspaper to offer comprehensive analysis of all the candidates running for municipal positions in Milton, yet we feel a responsibility to project views on certain races, given the degree of familiarity with circumstances and candidates.

Mayor Gord Krantz should be returned to office, based on his track record, commitment, and the far less substantial resumes offered by his opponents when it comes to municipal politics.

This is likely Mr. Krantz's last run for his position without extremely serious competition. When the time comes, the choice may be more difficult. It is not now.

Colin Best has our backing in the race for the Ward 2 regional council seat currently held by Brad Clements.

Mr. Clements is a man who displays compassion for the less fortunate and who has, on occasion, shown courage as an advocate for them when it would have been politically expeditious to remain silent. He is, as well, a man deeply committed to politics in Halton Region.

Yet he has not proven to be prevalent enough political force at the regional level, where Milton is under-represented with only three councillors (Halton Hills, in comparison, has five).

Mr. Clements has shown in this election campaign a quick wit and somewhat combative posture that would have served well at the regional level. Yet it has not been so much in evidence there. He has trouble giving voice to articulately formed opinion no matter the depth of his feeling — hence it is often difficult to see where he stands. Consequently, his ability to influence debate and events is limited.

Mr. Best is to some extent winning this endorsement by default given Mr. Clements' perceived limitations, yet we know Councillor Best to be an extremely serious and hardworking representative.

Although Mr. Best as well has at times shown a disconcerting inability to influence his council colleagues, we feel — sadly given our respect for the toil Mr. Clements has offered — the time has come for a change.

In Ward 2, we give a cautious nod again to John Challinor, a councillor who never shows up unprepared for a meeting. Would that this hardworking man could only overcome his temper. It causes him, as one supporter quietly and astutely noted last week, to vault into outrage when that is not an appropriate response. Also, Mr. Challinor shows a predilection for political polarization by harping against the federal and provincial governments at times in the municipal council forum. This threatens to drive ideological wedges between municipal representatives.

Yet he has always advanced positions eloquently, adeptly and generally forthrightly. He has taken his responsibility seriously. We would have substantial reservations about giving Mr. Challinor more political power — higher office — unless he shows some signs of overcoming his emotional difficulties. But in this place and at this time he has earned his keep.

We endorse Joe DiPalma as well. Mr. DiPalma appears to be a caring individual, with solid roots in the community, who performed well in last

week's all-candidates meeting. He was forthright, analytical, not afraid to be outspoken.

Wally Hunter has tendered a great deal of time to his neighbourhood in opposition of a subsidized housing project, and has demonstrated abilities that would serve him well on council. One of the few clanging notes to date was his refusal, during last week's debate, to see the logic of declaring a conflict of interest in the Pigment and Chemical controversy given that the Royal Bank is his employer. This lapse in judgement does not outweigh, currently, his perceived attributes. Mr. Hunter may well be a welcome council addition.

Frank Wilson may have shot himself in the foot last week with a suspect remark warning of a changing ethnic make-up in Milton when the population booms, despite well thought out positions on other matters and a genuine presence. Whatever Mr. Wilson may have meant, it could be construed as having racial undertones and the remark, made in isolation as it was, speaks to questionable propriety.

Mr. Wilson was also exceedingly difficult to pin down for media interview scheduling, which speaks to his organizational ability. We must stop short of an endorsement, although the candidate is obviously an independent thinker with initiative.

Anthony Allwood acted in his employers interests when they weren't his own, then his own when they weren't his employer's. That's a judgement mistake. He should have resigned his job instead. He's too young for council.

As to the remainder of a full slate of Ward 2 candidates, pick at your leisure as you see fit, gentle reader. All are likely good men. We endorse Mr. Chaffinor, Mr. DiPalma and Mr. Hunter. Incumbents Ron Furik and Art Melanson are fine citizens but have been somewhat peripheral in at least their public political force. They must take their chances with Bob Moreau, Ray Stephenson and Graeme Barrow.

In Ward 1 we endorse Brian Penman and Rick Day. They have proven track records. Mr. Penman is a leader in most forums where he cares to exercise his intellectual authority. Mr. Day has taken his council work more seriously this term than last. Candidate Don Pelz is running against about half a century of political experience and two very sharp minds. There is at this point no reason to desert the incumbents.

In Ward 3 we would be delighted to see Bruce Attenborough back on council. Mr. Attenborough is a person of ability, character and compassion.

Both Marion Howard and Gerry Brooks are intelligent, committed public servants. We trust Mr. Hunsinger would be as well.

Mr. Brooks sometimes misses the forest for the trees in his council work, it would appear, and has at times given up on an idea too easily. Yet he works hard and demonstrates real care and presence in his community.

Ms Howard may chide municipal staff, as she has said, but she has not been a major force often enough in council debate. Yet she too toils effectively for her constituents, and has innovative ideas.

Let the voters choose among these good people free from our influence.