

Affinity for, contact with voters

by MURRAY MOORE

Al Roach says his virtues as mayor of Midland for three years have been having an ear for what people say, and supporting community oriented legislation that benefits the whole community.

His re-election committee consists of himself, and about 18 relatives and friends. Roach said in an interview last week that he has one-tenth of his opponent's money, and 10 times his opponent's time.

His platform flyers are delivered door to door by others. Roach's approach to being re-elected is to meet the voters, on the town's main street, at public gatherings, at factory gates and in bingo halls, and at the municipal arena.

Roach's competition for the mayor's chair in his second election is lawyer Ted Symons, who, like Roach 1982, has not been elected previously to municipal office.

"He belongs to a profession which is respected, but I do not feel that he would be able to forfeit his law practice to serve as mayor. Being mayor would take all his nights and days seven days a week to serve the community."

Roach said he took office in 1982 with the announced intention of being a full time mayor only for the first year, in which time he expected to be able to become familiar with the job. The reality, he said, is that he was a full time mayor for three years.

He is not old enough or wealthy enough to be retired, he said. His personal income is the \$12,000 a year mayor's salary.

Roach answers criticism about his qualification to be mayor of a corporation representing 12,000 people by saying that he took business college courses in accounting and costing in Windsor, after he left the RCAF following the Second World War. "I can read a general ledger. I can do a trial balance of accounting books."

Because he can understand a set of accounting books, he says, he is concerned about the height of the town's debt: \$5.5 million, which will cost \$14 million to wipe out through the years.

The debt represents 14 percent of municipal annual revenue. The maximum level of debt allowed to a municipality by the province is 20 percent of its annual revenue.

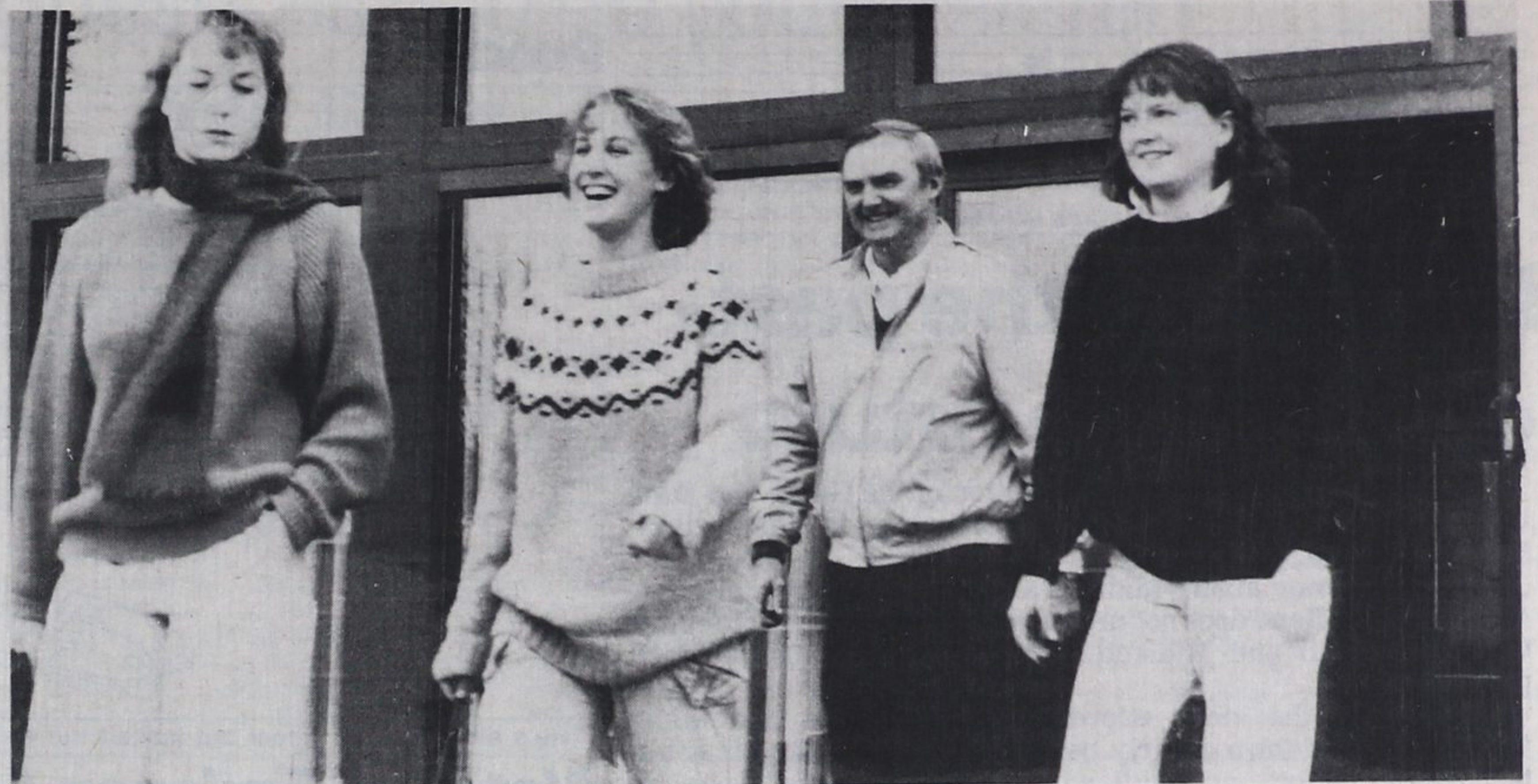
The town might want to borrow money if the chance to attract a new industry comes along, he said, but the present debt is a problem.

One-third of the town's capital revenue goes to service the debt, he said. In 1982 the town's debt was \$6.2 million.

Roach came to Midland to live 40 years ago. He has seven children but not a mortgage. While talking about the town's debt he says, "The most exciting thing next to buying a home is to retire the mortgage. A new life begins for you."

Between the age of seven and 14 he lived with grandparents in Victoria Harbour. While in Midland he has owned two businesses, a combination restaurant and service station, and a used car lot. He has been a car salesman, and a real estate salesman.

While mayor, Roach has had one heart attack. He is scheduled to appear in provincial court on Nov. 18 in connection with a charge of assault laid against him by a councillor, in connection with a late evening incident during a closed council meeting.



**More than 300
voted in Midland**

Michelle Koenigsberg, Cathy Hutton, Miles Blackhurst and Alison Blackhurst were four of the 308 people who cast their vote in

Midland at an advance poll last Saturday. The turnout for the early poll was reported as 40 percent greater than for the 1982 poll.

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