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Not all York councils lack women

from page 1

Kadis, the incumbent in Vaughan's Ward 5.

"I think about that sometimes," she said when asked about the low number of female candidates. "It could possibly be that family issues are a factor."

However, it was because of her family that Kadis jumped into politics. With five children in the school system, she served two terms as a public school trustee before becoming a councillor.

"It would be great to have more women, but it's not just a gender question," she said. "Why aren't more good candidates, men and women, running?"

"I wouldn't say there are disadvantages to being a woman in politics," she added. "I believe we've moved forward in the past few years."

Mayor Margaret Black of King Township, however, believes there is still a long way to go.

"There's often a double standard for women," she said. "There's more expected of them in politics, just as there is in other professions."

Black, seeking her third consecutive term, said Canada's political parties need to do more to encourage gender balance.

"The political parties are doing nothing to train women for politics," she said. "I don't think a lot of them want women."

But she also offered that many females might not want the negatives that go with the job.

"Criticism that is received in municipal government is something that many might not want to endure," she said.

However, recent history indicates that's not a problem in King Township. The last two councils have been composed of four women and three men and, before that, three women and four men.

"We have a bit of a history of female mayors," added Black.

Fitz (Mary) Matheson, a first-time candidate running for regional council in Markham, appeared pleased by the number of women running.

"Prior to this, there haven't been any (in Markham), so it's improving," she said.

However, she agreed that her gender faces obstacles.

"Generally speaking, it's been tradition that females end up shouldering a lot of the time tasks," she said, pointing to such things as running the home, chauffeuring and raising children. "Women have a lot of commitments that take a big chunk out of their time."

During door-to-door canvassing Matheson said many women have told her how much they like the fact their gender is pursuing elected office. But it didn't necessarily mean she is receiving more support from women than men.

Margaret Jordan, about to enter her third term as a councillor, said she thought the number of females running for election is low.

"I'd like to see it increase," she said. "Very often, women are having to deal with home life, work and family."

"There are a lot of women dedicated to community issues, so it's not that they're not interested," she said. "I work with several groups with women that I try to persuade to get involved."

For Debra D'Souza, running as a first-time candidate in Georgina's Ward 2, it's a question of balance.

"There's a definite gender difference in problem solving," she said. "Men look at the big picture, women look at the details. We need a balanced approach."

D'Souza, who listed environmental issues and traffic problems as the reasons she decided to run, said one difficulty facing female candidates is credibility.

"People wonder how a woman will handle the duties. It wouldn't occur to them to ask a man the same question."

That may be why she sees a difference in the way voters deal with her.

"When I'm talking to women, they are supportive," D'Souza said. "You can see that men wonder if you can do it. They won't vocalize it, but you can see it."

Markham resident Rosemary Chau didn't see any problem with the number of female candidates, noting, "If there are 25 percent, I think that's a high number."

Chau said she thought it might be difficult for her gender to become involved in politics because "a lot of women don't have the financial resources."

The lack of female representation on Markham's last council bothered her, but she pointed out "I don't know of any who want to run."

Markham senior Marilyn Todd was of a different opinion.

"It doesn't bother me," she said of her town's all-male council, "but then I'm not of today's generation. If (women) want to run, I'm sure they can."

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| Acorn Acres | Crafty Creatures | Hen House | Niland | Sharon Country Designs |
| Angels In Lace | Creating Christmas Memories | Heritage Sign Company | Nor-Van Woodcrafts | Sharyn Donner Folk Art |
| Anything Country | Creations By Susan | Highlights & Accents | Northern Iron Art | Simply Country |
| Art Of Walter Campbell | Creative Illusions By Lynn | Homespun Designs | Northern Lights Rustic Crafts | Solas |
| Aunt Annie's Attic | Creative Innovations | Hooked On Rugs | Nova Scotia Folk Art | Something Special |
| Aunt Jessie's Shortbread | Creative Paintings Unique Items | Huckleberry Studio | Oak Mountain County Crafts | Sparta Glass |
| Barb's Gifts & Notions | Curved Table Linens | Hummingbird Studio | Oridak Mountain Country | Sparta Country Candles |
| Beans & Hares | Custom Kitchens & Furniture | Huron Sands Hotel Preserves | Collect | Spring Creek Pottery |
| Berry Ellen Reversible Coats | D & L Crafts | Inta Lights | Oil Southwest | Stenciled Creations |
| Blanketwear | Danny Polak Accessories | Irene's Pottery | Old Cart Co. | Stone Aged |
| BooN McCrae | Dat's All Folk's Art | Jeffrey A.K. Dickerson | Old English Cookie And Fudge | Tall Waggers |
| C.I.M. Enterprises | Dear Ladies | Jenn's Place | Old Fashioned Candy | The Bountiful Basket |
| Callaghan's Crafts & Treasures | Deer Ridge Farm | Karma Designs | Once In A Blue Moon | The Country Corner |
| Canadian House Sign Co. | Designs By Angels | Kathy's Country Creations | Original Wrought 'N' Pine | The Gallery Of Kincardine |
| Canadiana Classics | Deverys Beeswax Candles | Klimeny's Folk Art Studio | Ours Too Stained Glass | The Hen's Nest |
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| Carol B. Dolls | Eat My Shortbread | Kydd Quilts | Peddler's Postcard | The Shed |
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