

Candidate wants to get people involved in local government

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There's a disconnect between the residents and the councillors elected to represent them, according to Hugo T. Kroon, who wants to change that.

Mr. Kroon is running for councillor of Ward 3. He ran in 2006 and came in second to Clyde Smith, who is also running again this year.

"People are not involved in government enough. It's not the people's fault, it's government's fault," he said. "Anytime a decision needs to be made, the whole town should get together and decide. But that can't happen with 32,000 people.

"You need people who are just like you, but have the passion and ability to go out and find out what people want and bring it to council."

As such, Mr. Kroon is staying away from making promises to his constituents.

"You don't do anything until you get the approval of the people," he said.

However, if elected, there are some changes he would make.

The first is that all council meetings would be held in the evening. Currently, half the meetings are held at 3 p.m.

"Those meetings are so people can come out and voice their opinions and see their councillors in action," the 52-year-old married father of three daughters and self-employed landscaper said.

Since part of a councillor's job is to operate the municipality as economically as possible, according to Mr. Kroon, the annual debate on newsletters has to end.

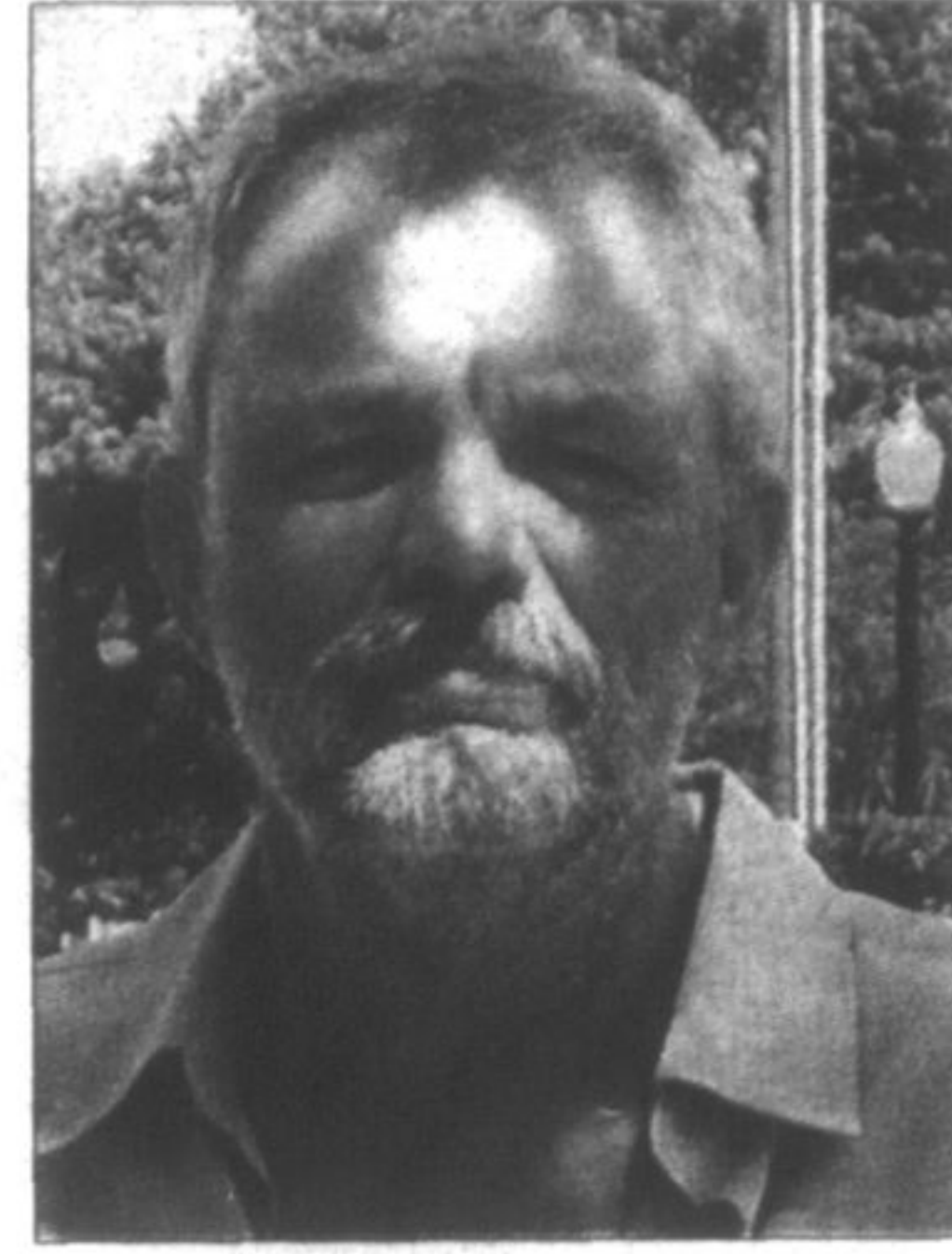
"It's 2010. ... Who sends out paper stuff anymore?" he said. "For councillors to be arguing issues that should have been dealt with in 1962, it shows the councillors aren't doing anything to get people involved."

Mr. Kroon has been on the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum board for the past three years, which has been an eye opener.

"Councillors need to take more ownership of what happens on the boards," he said.

According to Mr. Kroon, when it comes to fundraising for various town committees and large projects, it has become the responsibility of either Mayor Wayne Emerson or that of the volunteer committee members to get it done.

"Without fundraising, a lot of these things wouldn't get done,"



HUGO T. KROON: Landscaper and married father of three running in Ward 3.

Mr. Kroon said. "(A councillor's) job is to provide the services as eco-

nomically as possible and I don't mean (getting money from) another level of government. If it means getting a private corporation to pay for it, then go for it. That's what a councillor should do.

"There are councillors (in Whitchurch-Stouffville) who believe fundraising is beneath them."


The town debt is on everyone's mind, including Mr. Kroon's.

"I think the debt, as it currently is, is manageable," he said. "But we need to be cautious. It can always blow up in our faces," he said, noting guarantees such as development charges and people wanting to move here are not guarantees.


"The housing boom could die tomorrow. Things change," he said.

The municipal election takes place Oct. 25.

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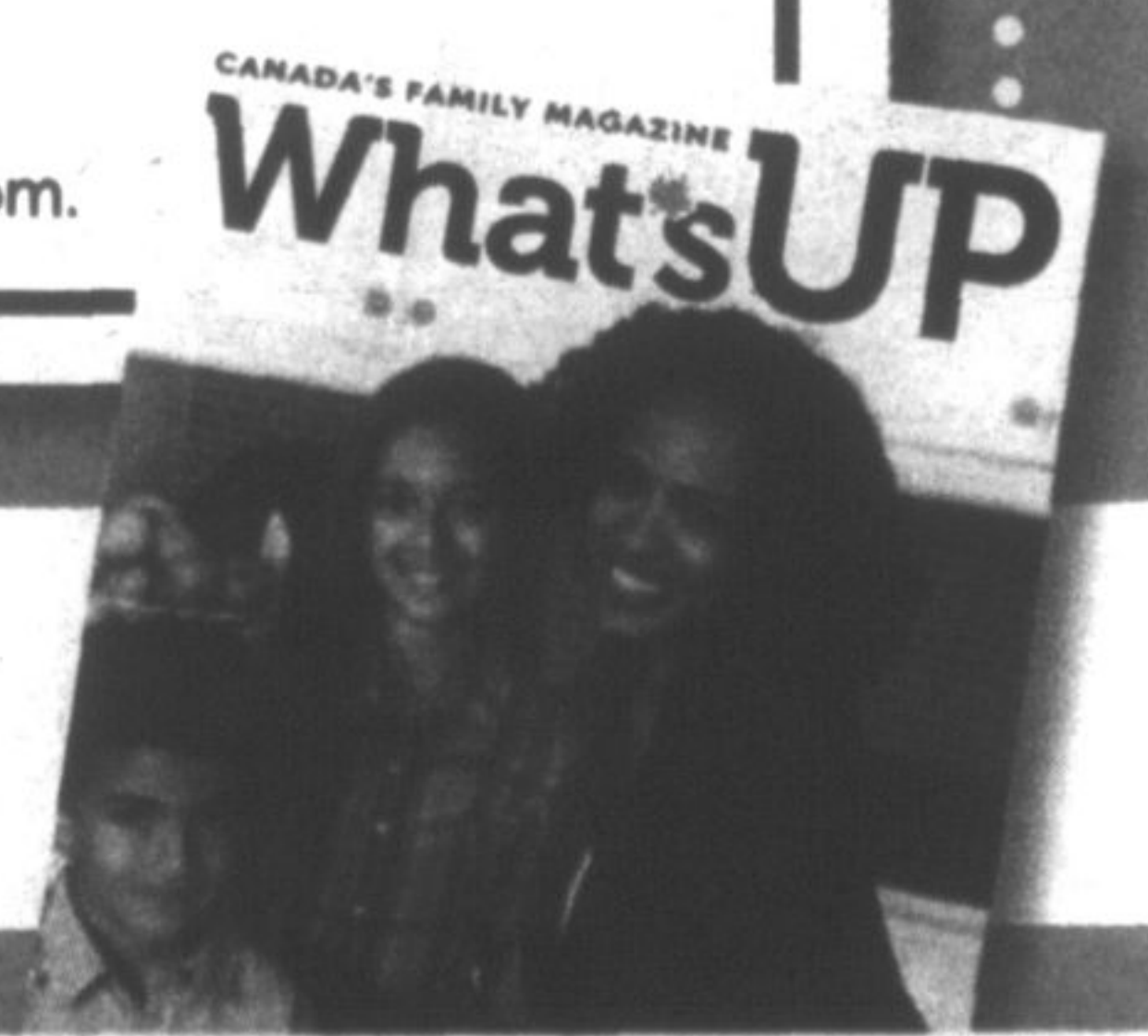
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