



# Ward NEWS

# 4

Spring/Summer 2004

## Regional & Town Councillor Allan Elgar



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The first thing I want to say is "thank you" to the residents of Ward 4 for giving me a strong and clear mandate in last fall's municipal election. I will continue to be your voice on Council, and to work on the issues and challenges we face, here in the largest and fastest growing ward in Oakville.

When I spoke to so many of you at the door last fall, your message to me was loud and clear - "protect our environment, curb urban sprawl, spend our tax dollars wisely and push for open, honest and accountable local government."

The comments I heard at the door appear to be in synch with public opinion throughout Halton Region. In April 2004, Ipsos-Reid conducted a special 3-hour workshop with a cross section of Halton residents to get a sense of the mindset of the entire region. Here are some of their key findings:

- "Halton's quality of life (most valued regional attribute) is defined by the region's "family-friendly" community lifestyle with a "small town" or "country feel" and "big-city" proximity. A rural and envi-

ronmentally-based aesthetic is central to Halton's quality of life."

- "Maintaining this lifestyle - which is increasingly perceived to be eroding and under threat - is the primary driver behind participants' priorities and decisions."
- "Residents are concerned that growth is eroding the "green" aspects of Halton that are a key aspect of their quality of life in the region."
- "Thus, the key, overarching, top-of-mind regional priorities are growth management and the interwoven tandem issues of the environment and transportation."

Please note that the entire report is available on [www.elgar.ca](http://www.elgar.ca).

Although many people voiced concerns about the effect of growth on traffic and the environment, I am finding that many are unaware that growth also has negative tax implications. That's because growth is not fully funded by developers and it is the tax payer who ends up filling the gap between the actual cost of growth and money received from developers.

**(Cont'd on next page...)**

## Town Councillor Renee Sandelowsky



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As parents, we worry about our children becoming desensitized to violence because of exposure to certain TV shows and video games. I wonder if, as residents of Oakville, we're also becoming desensitized, to what we see happening around us in our own town. Do we react or even notice when we drive by a forest, or land that was still being farmed a short time ago, and see it moonscaped for another housing project or strip mall? Do we wonder if it *had* to happen, or if it could have been done in a way that was more sensitive to the landscape and the creatures who called it home just the day before? Do we still wonder what effect destroying that forest or field will have on our air and water quality, on wildlife, our future food supply and the health of our children -- or have we simply become accepting of it all?

On Council, we frequently talk about land-use issues including population targets, employment targets, OMB threats, deadlines, etc. I would like to see more discussion about the significance of the land itself. The lands for which we plan are often already in use--as

habitat, as air and water filtering systems, as part of a complex ecological food web with which our lives are closely tied. We have to remember that the decisions we make today will affect our children and their children for hundreds of years to come.

A few years back I had the pleasure of joining a small group for a late night walk through a forest in north Oakville. Standing still, we could hear the evening birds, and as they settled for the night, their songs were replaced by the mournful howl of coyotes. A nearby pond was exploding with the excited chorus of the spring peepers, and a small rock overturned revealed a toad, still cold and groggy from hibernation, ready to begin its renewed cycle of life. A biologist walking with us, shone his flashlight into the pond to reveal an ecosystem all of its own, alive with white newts and other small creatures, swimming in the darkness.

On the walk back, one couldn't help but feel the eyes of those who didn't reveal themselves, watching us as we stepped through their domain. **(Cont'd on next page...)**

## A NEW TWIST...

After speaking to a number of residents, we came to a conclusion about our Ward Newsletters -- an awful lot of people don't read them. That's bad news for us because we want our constituents to know what's going on in the community. So, we conducted an informal poll to determine what could be done differently. As usual, you, the residents, came through by zeroing in on the issues you'd most like to read about, ideas you'd like explored and questions you'd like answered.

So we've broken with the traditional town fare to offer you our own compilation of articles, information, thoughts and ideas to address your concerns as constituents of Ward 4. It's our hope that after you read to the end, you'll decide to become more involved in the events that shape our ward, which in turn shape our town, which in turn shape our world. Happy reading!

# SAYING GOOD-BYE TO GRAND OAK WOODS

By the time you read this, approximately 80% of beautiful Grand Oak Woods may be gone -- bulldozed in favour of more development.

The decision of the majority of Council to pursue a settlement at the OMB was reached despite our two opposing votes, a petition from residents living in the area, and despite a report from local ecologist Paul O'Hara. His report stated that the woods contained several trees estimated at over 100 years old.

O'Hara went on to say, "There are indeed some grand Bur Oaks that dot the woods that I would estimate at 120 years old". His wildlife observations included the presence of numerous small mammal tracks, slate-coloured Juncos flitting in the trees and a pair of Red-tailed Hawk that soared overhead obviously preparing to nest in the area.

He also noted, "the meadow and thicket communities in the north section are critical habitats for small mammals, insects and a variety of

song birds. Meadow and thicket habitats are perhaps feeling the greatest pressures from the rampant development that plagues

Southern Ontario."

To us, the loss of this forest, one of the very few remaining in this

developing area, represents what we see as a "disconnect" between what residents want, and what ends up happening. Of course there are always justifiable reasons for voting a certain way, such as the potential to lose it all at the OMB or the cost of fighting to save it, but what are the true costs to the health of our community in the future as we lose more and more of these special areas, one decision at a time?

It's our hope that the more we as a society speak out on these issues, the greater impact we will have going forward.

**This just in:** We have just learned that a group of local residents have appealed the settlement. The OMB hearing is scheduled for June 23rd. Stay tuned.

*"In the end our society will be defined not only by what we create, but by what we refuse to destroy."* J.C. Sawhill, President of The Nature Society, 1990-2000.



Councillors admire century old Bur Oaks.

## WE NEED YOU!

Are you concerned about public safety? crime? traffic management? We sure are, and so we've been thinking about forming a Community Consultation Committee in Ward 4.

A Community Consultation Committee is a group of local, concerned citizens who want to bring about positive change in their community. They've been successful in

other parts of Oakville, and so why not right here in Ward 4?

The purpose of the Committee is to provide a vehicle through which residents can communicate their concerns to a variety of local organizations, including government agencies. The Committee identifies neighbourhood concerns and then partners with groups, such as the police, in order to find

solutions to the problems. The police work very closely with Community Consultation Committees, using their expertise in crime prevention strategies and enforcement capabilities, to assist in achieving Committee goals and objectives. In fact, there is even funding available for Community Consultation Committee activities through the Halton Regional Police Services Board.

The great thing about a Community Consultation Committee is that it can really make a difference in the day-to-day lives of the residents. If you are interested in making your community a safer and healthier place to live, give us a call.

### Elgar Editorial cont'd...

As Chair of Budget Committee 2004, I worked to minimize the resulting tax hike. However, in my opinion, if we continue to grow, our taxes will also continue to increase since development charges do not pay for the full cost of growth. I believe residents need to speak out against our current provincially mandated development charge structure.

As our region faces relentless pressures for growth and development, we must ensure that we carefully protect our natural environment.

That's why I now sit on the Credit Valley Conservation Authority in addition to Conservation Halton, as the need to learn how others are meeting similar challenges has never been greater.

There's more. Councillor Sandelowsky and I have been working on a number of ideas we'd like to share with you. So please find a cold drink, a shady spot and a few minutes to sit back to enjoy this very special edition of "Ward 4 News."

Allan

### Sandelowsky Editorial cont'd...

Recently I spoke with some local high school students about the opportunity we have to save over 1000 acres of provincially owned countryside in Ward 4. They told me why saving this land was so important and I knew then and there, I didn't have to worry-- the next generation is not becoming desensitized to the destruction. They do care, and they're ready to do what they can to make sure their future is a greener one. Let's do whatever we can to preserve our natural heritage for our children.  
Renee

### Acadian Flycatcher



The Acadian Flycatcher, a nationally endangered species was documented in north Oakville, spring of 1999.

*"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter"* Martin Luther King, Jr.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN NORTH OAKVILLE?

You may be wondering why there's so much talk about growth and preservation in our newsletter. Here's why:

We are living in a time that's unlike any other in Oakville's history. You'll remember Oakville's growth plan, OPA 198, that urbanized a staggering 7,600 acres of rural countryside north of Dundas? Well, development plans are underway and many decisions will be made that cannot be reversed later. These involve our most precious natural resources, including ones that are scarcely understood, such as the Trafalgar Moraine.

We are fortunate in Halton to have a technical advisory committee to offer expert advice relating to the environmental impacts of proposed land use changes. It is called the Ecological and Environmental Advisory Committee (EEAC) and is comprised of botanists, environmental planners, wildlife/aquatic biologists, engineers and even our own Councillor Elgar, who sits as a

representative of Council. In April, EEAC commented on Oakville's draft development plans, and they had some concerns that we'd like to share with you.

**About the Trafalgar Moraine:** EEAC stated that the growth plan showed extensive development, both residential and industrial, over a very sensitive part of the Trafalgar Moraine.

**About building a new bridge across environmentally sensitive Sixteen Mile Creek:** EEAC commented that the plan made no attempt to eliminate the need for the crossing in any of the development scenarios. They advise that further effort should be made for a community design that eliminates the need for this crossing.

**About the ORC lands (1100 acres of land owned by the provincial government):** EEAC recommends the timing of the approval of the Secondary plan should be delayed until the sta-

tus of the future ownership of the ORC lands is clarified.

**About Woodland and Wetland cover:** EEAC expressed the need to establish targets, recommending 30% woodland cover and 10% wetlands in the watershed.

Currently, Oakville stands at 12.2% forest cover (Gartner Lee Ltd. 2002), lowest in all of Halton, and that's before any development north of Dundas even starts! To read EEAC's complete report visit [www.elgar.ca](http://www.elgar.ca).

Yes, that's a lot of talk about growth and the environment all right, but with such concerns being expressed by the experts, we hope you'll forgive us for going the extra mile to keep you abreast of them. And if you are concerned too, please drop us a line. We'll do our best to let you know how these important issues will be addressed.

## TORONTO STAR

**Letter to the Editor:  
February 25, 2004**

Let's hope that Premier Dalton McGuinty acts quickly on his campaign promise to preserve 445 hectares of provincially owned lands -- 445 hectares of beautiful countryside, forests, meadows and streams on the Trafalgar Moraine in north Oakville.

As plans for the urbanization of north Oakville move rapidly forward, we worry that final development approvals could be given before the Premier makes good on his promise. We certainly don't want a repeat of the Oak Ridges Moraine debacle.

If the provincially owned lands in Oakville are truly to be protected, the province must make it clear to all stakeholders as soon as possible that these lands are off limits for the development and will become part of its proposed greenbelt.

Think about it -- where will we ever find another huge parcel of land like that in the GTA that's actually owned by the taxpayers? With the incredibly rapid growth we are facing, don't we need more parkland, as well as homes? Envision Bronte Creek Provincial Park North. Our children will thank us for it.

Renee Sandelowsky and Allan Elgar

## KEEPING PROMISES

It's a part of Ward 4 all residents should be familiar with by now. From Dundas Street in the south to the 407 highway in the north, and from Sixteen Mile Creek to the east, to Bronte Road to the west, the publicly-owned lands managed by the Ontario Realty Corporation, or ORC lands for short, have been a hot topic for some time now.

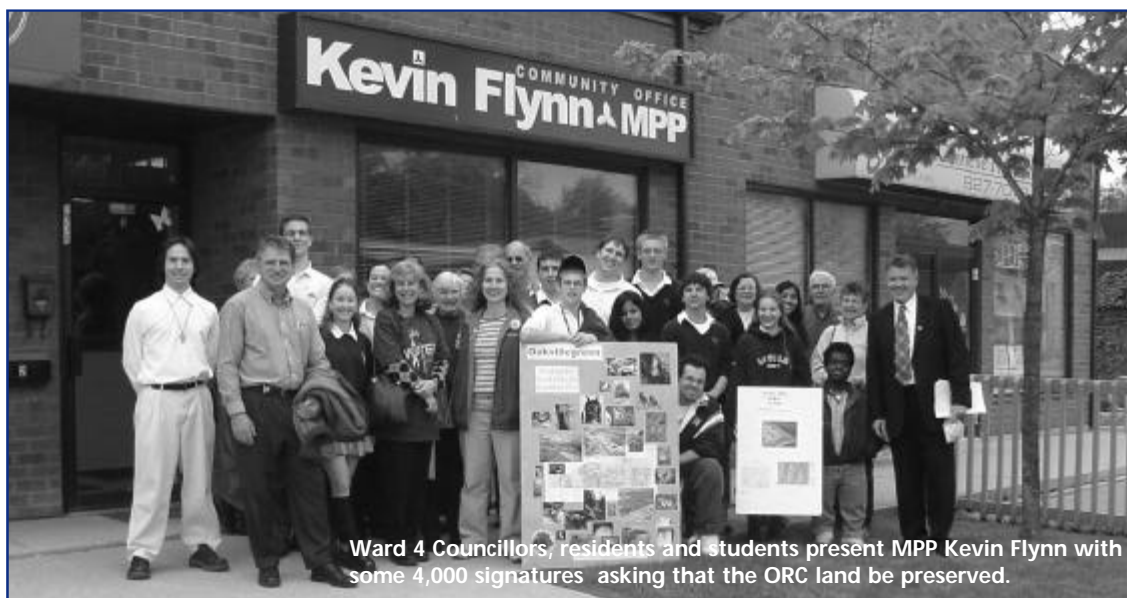
Under the town's growth plan, they are currently slated for future employment/industrial uses. Yet many have argued these 445 hectares of unspoiled countryside should remain in public hands -- as a kind of wilderness parkland, to provide a refuge from the intense urban development that will move into north Oakville and south Milton in the coming years.

On May 25, Oakville MPP Kevin Flynn was presented with over 4,000 signatures of residents who want to see the ORC lands preserved for future generations. Mr. Flynn promised the local high school students

and residents who crammed into his office, that he would personally remind Premier McGuinty of his campaign promise to preserve the land!

There's more good news. If the Provincial government follows through and donates the land for preservation, it will be in good hands. On April 29, Conservation Halton stated the following, "should the Province decide to exclude the Ontario Realty Corporation lands from urban development, Conservation Halton would be receptive to receiving ownership and managing lands currently owned by the ORC in North Oakville and South Milton associated with the valley and tableland areas of the Sixteen Mile Creek to ensure the long term protection of these significant lands."

Let's hope we have an announcement from the Province soon.



Ward 4 Councillors, residents and students present MPP Kevin Flynn with some 4,000 signatures asking that the ORC land be preserved.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**July 16 Midnight Madness** -- Celebrating 27 years of madness! This is Downtown Oakville's largest retail event of the year! Enjoy a variety of community performers, bands and of course... great food!

**August 6, 7 Downtown Oakville Jazz Festival** -- Come and experience a taste of Bourbon Street.... in Downtown Oakville. This year the festival is celebrating its 12th anniversary of great music, great atmosphere and great food! Come out and enjoy some cool jazz in the hot sun! The Downtown Oakville Jazz Festival - Small Town Charm...Big Time Jazz!

## September 18 Autumn Festival

With the changing of the seasons comes the annual Autumn Festival in Downtown Oakville. Come celebrate the harvest in style while enjoying a pancake breakfast, corn roast, a one-day sidewalk sale, an art expose, free hayrides, live entertainment, wine tasting and much much more! Autumn Festival is a great day for adults and kids of all ages.

For more information on any of these exciting events, visit the Downtown Oakville BIA website at [www.oakvilledowntown.com](http://www.oakvilledowntown.com).

## COUNCILLOR IN THE NEWS

**Elgar Receives Provincial Appointment:** Ward 4 Councillor Allan Elgar has been selected by the provincial government to represent Halton Region on the Niagara Escarpment Commission. The Escarpment, considered one of Canada's most important landforms, was declared a World Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1990. The massive ridge of fossil rich sedimentary rock stretches over 700 kms from Niagara Falls to Tobermory and includes Canada's famous Bruce Trail. The Niagara Escarpment Commission is the provincial agency that controls development along this environmentally sensitive landform.

**Environmental Watchdog Group Applauds New Face of the Niagara Escarpment Commission:** The Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment (CONE), an environmental watchdog group that has been monitoring escarpment development and NEC decisions for over 25 years, looks forward to a new era of NEC decisions that are consistently supportive of the policies in the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

"Our knowledge of the integrity of the individuals whom Cabinet has appointed allows us to breathe a sigh of relief," says Linda Pim, CONE's conservation policy analyst. "CONE'S overriding criterion for a good Commissioner is that he or she fully supports the Niagara Escarpment Plan, the first large-scale, environment-first land use plan in Canada, initially approved in 1985. We are confident that the government has chosen 13 pro-Plan members and we hope these choices are a harbinger of better times for Niagara Escarpment protection overall."

CONE found that several Commissioners appointed by the previous government over the period 1996 to 2003 frequently ignored the policies of the Niagara Escarpment Plan. As a result, during that period, new development crept into the Escarpment countryside in clear contravention of the policies in the Plan.

The 17 member Commission meets as a corporate body once a month to consider permit applications, plan amendments and comment on development proposals. They report to the Government of Ontario through the Minister of Natural Resources.

For more information, visit [www.escarpment.org](http://www.escarpment.org)

## COMING UP!

- Watch for a new entrance sign to Glen Abbey at Nottinghill Gate
- Parks and Rec Master Plan: If you have concerns about availability of recreation, arts and library facilities & services, now's your chance to speak up because the Parks and Rec Master Plan is underway. E-mail your comments to Frank Cooney at [fcooney@oakville.ca](mailto:fcooney@oakville.ca) and copy your Ward 4 councillors.
- The Town's website will soon be including access from its home page to a "rolling calendar" of council, standing committee, and other public meetings so that it's easy for the public to find out when meetings are scheduled in order to be able to participate and give input.

## REMINDERS

### Third Line/QEW Interchange:

Due to a construction strike, we are unable to provide an accurate schedule of expected closures on Third Line over the summer, so please check the Town's website at [www.oakville.ca](http://www.oakville.ca) for information and updates about the project and schedule.

### Don't Get Caught:

Oakville's anti-idling by-law is in effect. It is an offence to permit a vehicle to idle unnecessarily for more than five consecutive minutes.

### Keep our Trails Beautiful and Safe:

Please refrain from back-washing your swimming pool into our delicate ravines. Both erosion and harmful chemicals can damage them. Notice anything unusual happening in our trails? Please report any acts of vandalism you might see to the police at once to nip problems in the bud.

### Mid-Halton Sewage Treatment Plant:

For updates on the Sewage Treatment Plant expansion in Ward 4, please go to [www.elgar.ca](http://www.elgar.ca) or visit [www.region.halton.on.ca](http://www.region.halton.on.ca).

## SPECIAL PEOPLE IN WARD 4

Three cheers for Ward 4 resident Larry Gelder (third from right) and his host of volunteers who have been meeting on Saturday mornings to clean up garbage in our parks and ravines. What a difference you've made! And then there's Laura Bodner and Graham Brand, who on behalf of the residents in their neighbourhood, are appealing the settlement to destroy approximately 80% of the Grand Oak Woodlot. Also, we want to thank Amy Rolf von den Baumen, who is working tirelessly to see a community flower garden created at a busy intersection in our Ward. We thank you and every one else out there who is working to keep Ward 4 a wonderful place to live.



*We'd like to thank you for your continued encouragement and support. It means a lot to us. And special thanks to those who came to our "meet & greet" and our Ward 4 beautification meeting. Please stay in touch and have a wonderful summer.*  
*Sincerely, Allan and Renee*

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