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Photo by Graeme Murphy

Sofia Christopher (left), Taso Christopher's aunt, gives her nephew a loving embrace after Christopher's mayoral election victory at Belleville's Greek Hall community centre Monday night.

Taso takes on task of mayor

By Graeme Murphy

"What time is it?" Taso Christopher calls over a thrilled assembly.

"Taso time!"

The slogan for Christopher's campaign gleefully echoes back to him.

After a close battle with Belleville's six other mayoral candidates, Christopher won the night with Pat Culhane trailing close behind by 161 votes.

Christopher takes over the job from Neil Ellis, a man now graduated to federal politics.

An eager Christopher was joined by many of his close family, friends, campaign team, and campaign supporters on Monday evening in Belleville's Greek Hall Community Centre. Celebrations rang through the night.

With 44.72 per cent of eligible electors voting, Christopher, a previous two-term city councillor from Thurlow ward, ac-

cumulated a total of 3,914 votes over runner-up Culhane's 3,753 votes. Christopher scored 25.98 per cent of the total number of votes.

"It's a fantastic feeling," Christopher said to reporters.

"I'm very proud of the campaign team, proud of all the residents of the city of Belleville and I am excited to get going."

Asked about fellow councillor and election opponent Culhane, Christopher regarded her with sincere words.

"Pat's a fantastic lady whom I've had the profound privilege of working with for eight years. She's an absolutely beautiful person.

"But the situation - when it comes to democracy, you can only have one starting goalie," he added in fitting words, because he and his brother Ike own a sporting goods shop in Belleville.

Christopher previously served as councillor for Belleville for eight years. He has been a key member of council, helping

with the orchestration of many of the city's projects including: the construction and inauguration of the Quinte Sports and Wellness Centre, the integrated court house building, the Veterans Memorial Bridge, Belleville's doctor recruitment program and Build Belleville's infrastructure deficit program.

Asked by reporters about his immediate action plans, Christopher recited:

"My first priority is to take it all in, celebrate with the campaign team and the residents here and my second priority is to get my feet landed on the ground and to start addressing some of the issues that were on our platform."

Asked by reporters about creating a stronger city relationship with Loyalist College, Christopher said in a profound tone:

"The biggest thing we have on Loyalist College right now is getting the trails engaged which is the bike trails. So

hopefully we'll go forward in the February budget, get that approved, get that project executed and connect Loyalist College."

"I want to talk a bit about the campaign and about the action items we talked about earlier. We mentioned we would like to go forward and get support from council for mayor's implementation team. I'll work on that ASAP. And that's the team that will get together, get build Belleville executed, get the plans going and get the jobs done and on time.

"Also very important of what I talked about earlier in the campaign was bus shelters. I think it's very important that we can do it as long as council supports me when I take it forward. Building bus shelters and a bus terminal for all the individuals that ride our buses."

Christopher then addressed his belief in building a stronger relationship with Belleville's OHL team, the Belleville Bulls.

"What I mentioned earlier also is our

relationship with the Belleville Bulls. I will make it a longterm priority to make a lease with the Belleville Bulls and the Belleville Bulls brand. It will be a priority.

"Something that will also be our priority and the first thing on our mind is our roads. Our roads are poached and I fully understand and accept full responsibility of it and we will address and move forward with a plan on that."

Christopher then briefly reflected on his position as a two-term city councillor.

"Summing things up, it's been a profound privilege to serve the residents and the city of Belleville for eight years as a councillor. Going forward, I would ask one thing: Please do not shut the door on the new council and the mayor's office.

"I think we need your support, we need your guidance, and we need your patience. We can do a job and we can do a better job by putting good communication and people first."

Pat Culhane places close second in race

Only 161 votes separates retired nurse from first-place finisher

By Adrienne Powell

Pat Culhane gave Taso Christopher a run for his money in Belleville's municipal election Monday night.

Culhane came in second place in the race for mayor with 3,753 votes, just 161 less than Christopher. It looked like Culhane would be the new mayor of Belleville, because she spent most of the night in the lead, until almost 10 p.m. when the final votes came in, when Christopher moved into first.

Culhane predicted Christopher would be her closest competition, because they have both spent two terms as councillors, and she wished him all the best.

"The only thing that would have saddened me was if I hadn't tried," said Culhane during her speech at the Masonic Lodge.

Culhane is a retired nurse who first ran for council in 2006 and then again in 2010, spending the last eight years serving the citizens of Belleville. Becoming a council member was a lifelong goal that Culhane never thought would happen.

After her children were grown up and moved out, she decided to go for it. Culhane decided to run for mayor and to keep projects, like the Build Belleville



Photo by Adrienne Powell

Pat Culhane (right) and her sister Anne Bunnnett watch as the results for Belleville's municipal election come in at the Masonic Lodge in Belleville on Monday. Culhane came in second place for mayor with just 161 votes less than Belleville's new mayor Taso Christopher.

project, alive and to help rejuvenate the downtown core.

Culhane said would have liked to address several other problems if she took office, such as the lack of care beds for the elderly, the fact that the area does not have enough hospice facilities for end-of-life-care, and the need for more family doctors.

Culhane has been a strong supporter of ongoing projects such as sewer separation projects, Haig Road and Station Street extensions, the Catherine Street footbridge replacement, and the Sidney Street water main replacement.

Culhane is the third of nine children and is very close to her family. Ann Bunnnett, Culhane's sister, was Culhane's campaign manager.

"She is the best campaign manager ever," said Culhane.

Culhane said the hardest part about running for mayor was being put in situations where you have to answer questions about anything and everything. From July on, she tried to read up on everything there was to know about running a city and said she found it was impossible.

After losing the race for mayor, Culhane said she plans to take some time off and decide what she wants to do next.

"I want to do something, but I don't know what yet. I have been working really hard since July, so I'm going to take a few days off to rest and relax and get all my mess cleaned up."

New mayor, councillors for Belleville

By Adrienne Powell

Taso Christopher is the new mayor of Belleville as of Monday.

Christopher has been a city councillor for the past eight years and said he is excited to get started in his new role as mayor.

"It's a fantastic feeling," says Christopher.

Christopher won with 3,914 votes, edging out candidate Pat Culhane by a mere 161 votes. It was a close race be-

tween the two former councillors with a 44.72 per cent eligible voter turnout and a total of 15,207 ballots cast.

Culhane is a former emergency room nurse who spent the past two terms as a city councillor with Christopher.

Richard Davis Courneyea, a business owner, came in third with 2,520 votes, while Bill Glisky, a journalist, came in fourth with 2,284 votes.

Jill Raycroft, Lonnie Herrington, and Kenzo Dozono also ran for mayor in this year's municipal election.

There were many candidates for council this year with only six spots open in Ward 1 in Belleville.

Jack Miller got the most votes with 8,775 and has been a council member since 2006. Miller is perhaps best known for his play-by-play radio voice for the Ontario Hockey League's Belleville Bulls since 1981.

Next was Garnet Thompson with 7,259 votes. Thompson has a wide variety of interests and volunteer experience and said he hopes to promote

Belleville as a beautiful destination for vacation and retirement.

Mike Graham, a retired police inspector, gained a seat with 5,555 votes. Graham spent 32 years as an officer and says he will be the "watchdog for taxpayers."

Egerton Boyce made council with 5,492 votes. Born and raised in Belleville, Boyce graduated from Loyalist College with a diploma in law and security and promotes the importance of a strong commercial and industrial

base in Belleville.

Mitch Panciuk, a new city councillor, received 4,508 votes. Panciuk, owner and operator of Belleville Boston Pizza, wants to focus on making the municipal decision-making process more public.

Kelly McCaw is new to city council this year, gaining 3,067 votes. McCaw is a Loyalist graduate and a realtor with 20 years of experience dealing with bankruptcy and financial distress.

Constituents the focus for Davis Courneyea

By Andrew Meade

It was a hard fought battle for third place in Monday's municipal election in Belleville for first-time candidate, Richard Davis Courneyea.

After the election night results were tabulated, Davis Courneyea took in 2,520 votes, to runner-up Pat Culhane's 3,753 and Mayor-Elect Taso Christopher's 3,914.

After a campaign that unofficially started off this past July, Davis Courneyea and his team were eager to see if the results of their nightly canvassing and hearing the concerns of fellow Belleville residents could unseat the hotly contested race between campaign favourites, Christopher and Culhane.

A businessman in the downtown community and incoming president of the Belleville Chamber of Commerce, Davis Courneyea built the foundations of his campaign on trying to invigorate the city and attract resources to the city that will make Belleville an area where people, industry and small business can thrive.

His focus on getting out and meeting his constituents-to-be was an essential part of the last part of his campaign push.

"For the last few weeks, we've basically been knocking on doors feverously all though the city, in all different areas, engaging as many people as possible, wherever we could," Davis Courneyea said. "We really ramped up our social media, too."

Social media proved to be an important tool in the Davis Courneyea team's war chest. Asked about the place that Facebook and Twitter held in the plan for community engagement, he and his team praised their ability to reach out and easily hear and respond to voters concerns.

"Our social media strategy was the predominant force to get our message out there in the community," Davis Courneyea said. "It was strong; it was rich in content and it told the story of people in our community and what they're about."

After nine of the 13 polls had reported, Davis Courneyea and his wife/campaign manager Shawna Courneyea took to the podium to give credit to their supporters and volunteers at their campaign wrap-up event in the Belleville Club Monday evening.

"These are the people that under-



Photo by Andrew Meade

Mayoral hopeful Richard Davis Courneyea hugs campaign supporter Bernie Boucher after finding hearing the results of the municipal election at his campaign wrap-up party at the Belleville Club Monday.

stand the message and help grasp what our statement was as a community," he praised. "Without you, I'm just one guy, but you were able to amplify our message within this race and we can hang our

heads high as people will see what we've done as we move forward and I will give all the credit back to you guys. You were the strength for us in this campaign."

Although his bid at the top seat on city

council was unsuccessful for this term, it is not unthinkable to see Davis Courneyea's name on the ballot in four years' time.

"I'm a young guy; I've got great ideas and great opportunities in my life right

now. I didn't fake it to get here. I've been at the forefront of our community for years and my commitment to it was capped off with this discussion about it. Who knows what the future will hold."



Photo by Zachary Prong

Bill Glisky (second from left) watches results with supporters during the election Monday night at Sans Souci restaurant. Glisky, former editor of The Intelligencer, placed fourth.

Glisky hints at possible return to politics

Poverty one of major themes of candidate's campaign

By Zachary Prong

Despite his fourth place finish in the Belleville mayoral race, candidate Bill Glisky delivered a passionate concession speech to his supporters at Sans Souci on Front Street Monday night.

Speaking to a cheering crowd, the former editor of The Intelligencer said, "There are people in this city without jobs, who aren't eating, who aren't comfortable in their own homes...If the people who won tonight don't start dealing with these issues, you can be damn sure we'll be back in four years!"

Poverty was one of the major themes of Glisky's campaign, a key issue in a city where it has been reported that 34 per cent of children under the age of six live

in poverty, 16 per cent higher than the national average.

On Sept. 24 during a speech to the Belleville and District Chamber of Commerce, Glisky, announced that if elected he would set up Skills Belleville, a training program that would provide up to 200 individuals with skills sought by local businesses. According to Glisky, the goal of Skills Belleville would not just be to help the unemployed, but also the underemployed.

"We have too many temporary jobs and not enough permanent careers. We have too many neighbourhoods where the minimum wage is the maximum wage and we have too many young people trapped in low wage, low-skill jobs," said Glisky.

Another campaign promise was the creation of up to four community gardens to provide local families with affordable and healthy produce.

Among supporters gathered at Sans Souci on Monday night, a common con-

cern was the future of downtown Belleville and the waterfront.

Dale Holland, the commodore of the Bay of Quinte Yacht Club, said Glisky was the only candidate who really understood the importance of developing the city's waterfront.

"We need to give people with disposable income a reason to come to and stay in Belleville...If we don't do that, we're done. The other candidates don't get that," said Holland.

But in the end, it was former councillor Taso Christopher's promise of fiscal responsibility, low taxes and jobs from investment in Belleville's Industrial Park that won over most voters.

After his concession speech, Glisky reiterated that despite his defeat, he wasn't going away. Asked if he had already decided to run again in four years, Glisky replied, "If they don't listen to what people are saying, damn right I'll be back."

College's hydration stations keep bottles out of landfill

By Kayleen Preston

Loyalist College is one step closer to reaching a goal of diverting one million bottles from landfills, with the use of hydration stations around the college since 2011.

This includes the two stations located in the Pioneer building, and the recently installed stations in the new Skills Building at the college.

Over the fall reading week, student government officials were pleased to announce that the public relations students successfully reached their goal of 20,000 bottles at the hydration station just outside of their classroom.

The most frequently-used stations are the ones located near the exercise area, the gym and Club 213.

Carly Greveling, who works in the facility services department at the college, helps collect data from the hydration stations. She said the main benefit of having the stations around the school is to promote healthy choices.

"I think having good access to water around the school is good for students and the staff, to promote drinking more water. I think the less that pop, or drinks like that, are consumed is good, because of the health implications of it. Plus, all those drinks come in plastic or canned aluminum or something like that. So, if people could be filling up water bottles, and reusing and washing, then I think it's a lot better than just buying water and just throwing out the bottle after."

The stations help promote recycling, which in turn helps "reduce the negative impact that plastic water bottle production and recycling processes have on the environment," explained Chantel Johnston, president of student government, in an e-mail.

"Not only are we saving resources, we are saving money too. Student government consistently receives positive feedback on the hydration stations from

students, faculty and the community."

There are many different aspects about how the hydration stations work. First, for every litre that goes through the water bottle-filling area, the counters on the stations add a "bottle" to the counter. Second, the water itself is treated by the City of Belleville, where it goes through the watermain to the college. From Loyalist, it goes through a long charcoal filter and cooler within the stations, and out of either the fountain or the sensor area for the water bottles.

The stations have three separate buttons to activate the fountain and are set at different heights to allow some to be wheelchair accessible.

Steve Glover, a facilities services employee at Loyalist, explained that the stations are "very user-friendly." He mentioned that the only things that need to be changed are the charcoal water filters, and the piece on the bottom of the back wall that helps direct the water to the drain.

The piece on the back wall was only changed on the older designs of the fountain for sanitation reasons. The previous style captured the water in a small pocket, leaving space for germs and bacteria to collect. The current design allows the water to flow freely to the drain point, reducing the risk of germ collection.

The stations are cleaned thoroughly every night by members of The Hurlay Group cleaning services who are on a separate cleaning contract from the regular Loyalist custodial staff. They are not cleaned during the day.

Tara McGrath, is a custodial worker for The Hurlay Group.

She said coffee and soup that have been poured out in the stations quite often creating a real problem cleaning them.

All the cleaning products used to clean the stations are environmentally friendly and very safe. "You could almost drink it," McGrath explained.