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By W. Brice McVicar

THE INTELLIGENCER

For 27 years, Rhonda Barriage has excelled in making people feel better and Wednesday afternoon the owner of Beauty Works Spa was feeling pretty good, herself.

Before 180 of her peers, Barriage was named the 2004 Intelligencer/Trentonian Women in Business Award winner. The luncheon, held Wednesday at the Ramada Inn, recognized the contribution all women make to local business.

Barriage was one of 11 local businesswomen nominated for the annual award. Norma Hitchlock, of Marsh Insurance, and Liz Knuude, of BMO Nesbitt Burns, were chosen as runners-up by a panel of judges from The Intelligencer.

Addressing guests who attended the awards luncheon, guest speaker Lynda Reeves shared her story of how she turned Canadian House and Home magazine from a struggling publication to the seventh best-selling magazine in Canada.

Reeves explained how the magazine was far ahead of its time when she took over as publisher, as home decoration has now become one of the hottest topics in magazines, prime time television and society itself.

"It's amazing and I really have to credit the timing of the venture," Reeves observed. She told her audience there is nothing else she would rather be doing and encouraged women in attendance to find a career they love as opposed to simply taking a job for the sake of having a pay cheque.

Reeves explained how her mag-

azine broke ground in Canada on many different levels from garnering national automotive advertising in its pages to being the first publication in the country to show a same sex couple at home. Taking risks is a part of business, she said, and it has paid off for her.

Reeves noted, with a tinge of sadness and as a cautionary note, that she is currently in her third relationship, after a pair of failed marriages, and that she has no children. Personal relationships, she warned, can suffer at the expense of a hyper-active career pursuit.

"I had some really bad years, but you've got to persevere," Reeves said. "But, to where we're at now, it's been great."

As for the business award winner, persevere is exactly what Barriage has done, as well.

It was back in 1977 when Barriage first started her business when she rented an eight-by-10 foot room in a hair salon. She outgrew that location in two years and moved to a larger location on Sidney Street, one her father, the late Mel Barriage, helped her establish. Seven years ago, she moved again into a 3,600 square foot commercial bungalow on Sidney Street.

Much as Reeves noted in her speech, Barriage advised women in the community to seek a career they will enjoy. That, she pointed out, has been a major key to her success.

"If it's their passion and they work very hard, then the long hours are definitely worth it," she said. "Even though you do hit pitfalls — which every businesswoman does — you just pick up and you surround yourself with

general manager of The Intelligencer and Trentonian newspapers, commented on the growth of the award.

"It's evolved to recognize the contributions of women in business in this community," he said. The Intelligencer is privileged to put this program together every year."

people who work very hard and share your passion.

"It's a great honour and a privilege to win this," she told The Intelligencer. "I remember listening to Georgina Thompson and I was just in awe when she won the award and this year it's me. I think it's a great honour to be recognized in your community for working at

something that you thoroughly love."

Barriage, as the winner, received a \$250 gift certificate to the Quinte Mall and a gift basket of kitchen essentials valued at \$250. Runners-up Hitchlock and Knuude each received a \$150 gift certificate to the Quinte Mall and gift baskets.

Michael Power, publisher and