

# Lights, camera, action

## Halton Cable channels in on growing market

By BRIAN MacLEOD  
Herald Staff

Television is now an intricate part of Canadian life for many and Halton Cable Systems is doing its best to make sure its customers can receive as many channels as possible.

Halton Cable Systems moved into what was an old pool hall on Highway 25 in Acton in 1981 from their Armstrong Avenue location in Georgetown and the move has pro-

ven a productive one.

With 22 full-time employees, Halton Cable Systems serves more than 14,000 subscribers, said General Manager John DeJong.

That's a 92 per cent saturation rate. Huntsville cable company has the highest saturation rate in the area at 94 per cent but residents there can only receive one channel without cable, said Mr. DeJong.

Of that 92 per cent, more than 87 per cent subscribe to pay television

in Halton, he said.

The "Value Package" offer introduced by Halton Cable has really helped the pay TV market pick up in the area served by the company.

Milton, Halton Hills and the surrounding areas can now pick up six pay TV channels for only \$2.27 a month. The company lowered the price from \$9.95 per month for the package by automatically beaming the channels to all cable subscribers at the reduced price.

Those who didn't want the channels had to cancel the offer.

The offer worked. Now almost all of those who are hooked up to cable pick up pay television as well.

That offer was just one of a series of moves in the past few years in an effort to improve the level of service.

The growth of Halton Cable Systems can best be measured by the extended service it offers. In late 1967, Halton Cable went on the air with only one full time employee - John Olivier who is still with the firm as the operations manager - offering ten channels.

Within a year, they introduced the Community Channel. The firm has expanded with the technology over the past two decades to the point where it offers 31 channels.

Halton Cable Systems is currently adding new technology to its broadcasting system and within two years Mr. DeJong hopes to increase the capacity of the system to 60 channels.

Community television is one example of how Halton Cable Systems was ahead of the pack in offering service. Six years after Halton included the channel, the CRTC made the service mandatory for all communities over 3,000, said Mr. DeJong.



Halton Cable Systems General Manager John DeJong (left) and longtime worker John Olivier check out some of the newest equipment now used at the company. Halton Cable Systems has a 92 per cent saturation rate in the market with most of those cable subscribers taking pay television as well. (Herald photo)

## Blue box program to help us recycle

Some time this fall little blue boxes should be dotting the ends of driveways in neighborhoods throughout Halton Hills.

The town will be instituting the "blue box" program in Halton Hills by the fall, said Town Engineer Bob Austin.

Ten thousand houses in Halton Hills will have the boxes delivered to them for recycling when the program gets underway.

The blue boxes alone will cost the town about \$18,000.

The Provincial government will pick up the tab for another \$35,000 for the boxes.

When the blue box program gets underway in Halton Hills all the municipalities in Halton will be using the program.

Halton Hills was ahead of the other three municipalities in starting up a recycling program but now Milton, which started up the blue box program last year, has had good success with the blue box program.

When the boxes arrive at the doorsteps - the town will deliver them - residents can fill them with newspaper, tin cans and clear plastic containers and put them out at the end of the driveway with their garbage.

Right now, the town does have a recycling program in place but there are no blue box containers and town workers are picking up the materials.

When the boxes are distributed, a private company will be picking up the materials for recycling.

The Community Channel employs two full time people and several "hobbyists" who volunteer their time to the channel, said Mr. DeJong.

Many of them use the channel to gain experience and some have gone into broadcasting, he said.

Halton Cable Systems is also attempting to step up the service to rural areas of North Halton, said Mr. DeJong. But that's expensive. It costs about \$13,000 a mile to install a cable line. Houses on the First Line and Sideroad 5 were among the rural areas to pick up cable service last year, said Mr. DeJong.

Many people view cable television as part of their daily lives, he said. "Now people call to see if cable is available before buying a house," said Mr. DeJong.

The firm is looking forward to the proposed expansion of Acton and Georgetown South so they can expand their company. Anyone thinking about buying a house in one of those areas need not worry about cable. Halton Cable Systems plans to have the service lines in place before anyone even moves in, said Mr. DeJong.



Georgetown Answering Service has now expanded and changed its name to All Call Communications which can now service Brampton, Bramalea and Snelgrove. Here, Company President Al Dean works with daughter Carol on the newest technology available for answering services. (Herald photo)

## The message specialists

# Just what the doctor ordered is All Call Communications

By BRIAN MacLEOD  
Herald Staff

For many people who can't always be near a telephone waiting for important messages the Georgetown Answering Service is "just what the doctor ordered."

Doctors are understandably one of the main users of the local service and now it's expanding to increase its service area to Brampton, Bramalea, Milton and Snelgrove.

Al Dean purchased the answering service in mid-1964.

Now Mr. Dean, along with his daughter Carol, run the 24-hour-a-day, 365 days a year answering service out of their new location on Mill Street.

When Mr. Dean, a former sales manager for a plastics company, took over the firm it had just 70 accounts. Now it's up to 170 and the \$180,000 the firm "has invested recently in renovations and new Glenayre Canadian Computer equipment has opened up the door for more expansion.

As of April 1 The Georgetown Answering Service changed its name to All Call Communications Serving, Brampton, Bramalea, Milton, Snelgrove and Halton Hills. But Mr. Dean doesn't want the

firm to get too big.

Efficient answering services hold about 500 clients at the maximum to maintain personal contacts, said Mr. Dean.

The nine people who work at the service allow for two people to work during days and evenings and one night person.

The service broke even financially for the first time last June, said Mr. Dean.

"Slowly, over the years we've built it up."

The new equipment replaces the old switchboard system which Bell Canada is phasing out.

The new computer equipment is "state of the art" technology, said Mr. Dean. "We're probably the smallest outfit in Canada with this type of technology."

"It's the most efficient equipment the bank can buy."

The new system is "completely paperless," Mr. Dean explained.

All messages, from who's calling to what time and who received the call are recorded in the computer.

The new technology allows for other unique services as well.

If you have a bad memory All Call offers a "reminder service." All you have to do is call the service and tell

them about a special date, an anniversary for example, and it will automatically register on the computer screen when that date comes up and the service will call you with a reminder.

With almost 200 accounts and almost "200 ways to answer the phone" the new computers make it easy. When a number is dialed and it comes through the service the computer automatically displays the name of the person or business called on the screen.

Other services include a voice mailbox and an extensive paging system, said Mr. Dean.

All Call Communications is the exclusive agent for Page Canada which supplies pagers with voice, tone, numeric or alphanumeric contacts.

Some pagers can range from as far as Windsor to Ottawa, said Mr. Dean.

The firm also offers a residential service so someone will always answer the phone if a house is empty and residents are on vacation.

Georgetown was a tough market because of its size, said Mr. Dean. Now with capabilities of expanding, he hopes his new base on Mill Street will lead to better service in a bigger coverage area.

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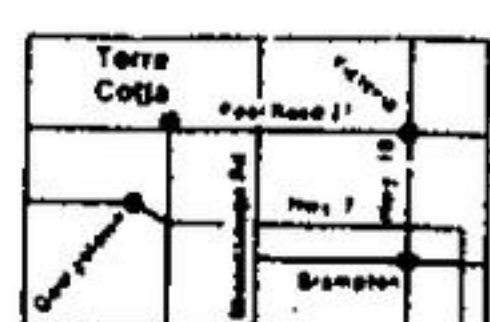




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