

# Chamber recognizes Business of the Year

By BEN DUMMETT  
the Herald

The success of the Olde Hide House in Acton is attributable to the people of Halton Hills, president Steve Dawkins told almost 200 people attending the Feb. 28 Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce Dinner at the North Halton Golf and Country Club.

"They've been our greatest ambassadors," Mr. Dawkins told the audience after receiving a plaque in recognition of the Acton leather specialty store being named the Chamber's 1989 business of the year.

The award marks the first time it has been presented to a business by the newly formed Halton Hills Chamber. When Georgetown and Acton had separate chambers only the Georgetown Chamber handed out a business of the year award.

Mr. Dawkins also acknowledged the founders and staff of the business in his acceptance speech.

The Olde Hide House was founded 10 years ago by Don and Fred Dawkins and Ron Heller. Mr. Dawkins said the company is where it is today because of their "ideas, investment, initiative and energy."

In recognition of the staff, Mr. Dawkins pointed out to the audience that 60 employees paid out of their own pocket to attend the dinner.

"This is evidence of their dedication to the Olde Hide House," he said.

Mr. Dawkins also thanked local firms such as Goebelle MacAdam Alexander, and the Bank of Commerce for their support.

The chamber selected the Olde Hide House because of its contribution to the community and the town's tourist industry, the even-

ing's master of ceremonies, Doug Penrice, told the audience.

"There isn't a good cause it doesn't help out," he said, pointing to the United Way and the cancer society as two groups the business aids.

"I'd be up here for a long time if I listed all their involvements," added Mr. Penrice.

Another major accomplishment is the business's advertising campaign, "It's worth the drive to Acton." The slogan "is universally known in Southern Ontario" and as a result the Olde Hide House at-

tracts 500,000 visitors to Acton a year, he said.

The business is a major reason for the revitalization of the downtown core in Acton," said Mr. Penrice.

The accolades didn't stop with the chamber. Halton Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy, North Halton MPP Walt Elliot, a representative for Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner and Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller, all presented plaques of recognition on behalf of their respective governments to Mr. Dawkins.

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## Former Acton Principal...

# Reluctant hero

By ALAN MACKIE  
the Herald

Karel Sury, principal of General Brock High School in Burlington, where three students were shot Monday, considers being called a hero embarrassing.

Mr. Sury, who was also principal at Acton High School from February 1984 until August 1989, does not consider himself a hero. "It's the one part of it all (the incident) that's embarrassing to me," he said at a press conference held

Thursday morning at the J.W. Singleton Education Centre in Burlington.

He added that at the time of the confrontation with the youth holding the gun, he did not think "about the gravity" of the situation.

Mr. Sury also said there were other staff members who acted bravely under the circumstances. He noted that one staff member was tending to one of the students and telling the gunman to put the weapon away. "He was within several feet of the suspect" while shots were still being fired, Mr. Sury said.

Reflecting back on the shootings Mr. Sury said, "If he really wanted to kill me, he could have." He added the gunman appeared frightened.

He said the school was just at the end of a lunch period and going into the fourth period when one of the technical teachers phoned the office and said there was an emergency.

Mr. Sury and another staff member then rushed towards the problem area. "There was an attempt to reason with the gunman," Mr. Sury said.

The police were called almost immediately, according to Mr. Sury. He noted, "within minutes they (the police) were there."

He also noted that people have come from all over Halton to provide assistance to the school in any administrative way they can. The day of the shootings volunteers answered phone calls from worried parents.

Mr. Sury said staff were instructed to go to every single classroom to inform students what had occurred. After the students went home a staff meeting was called and the staff was commended for their efforts during the violent shootings.

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## Acton BIA supports tourist-town idea

By BEN DUMMETT  
the Herald

The Acton Business Improvement Area membership gave its executive a resounding show of support Wednesday to ask Halton Region that it pass a bylaw allowing BIA member tourist-oriented businesses to open Sundays.

The BIA recently surveyed the 85 businesses that make up the group about such a bylaw and results released Wednesday night show 70 members supported the idea.

"It looks like some sort of application will be made (to the Region)," BIA chairman Dan Dolliver said after the results were announced at the BIA annual general meeting Wednesday.

But Mr. Dolliver said the final decision to proceed with the application will be made at the next meeting of the BIA executive, March 22.

The survey, which was conducted in early February, came about because tourist-oriented business owners were quite concerned about the possibility of facing charges should they open Sundays, said Mr. Dolliver.

Seven business owners opposed the idea, some abstained from participating in the survey and others failed to reply.

The bylaw would automatically give certain businesses in the BIA a tourist designation under the provincial Retail Business Holidays Act.

It would also allow businesses presently open under the Act to expand their operations without potentially losing their right to open Sundays. The bylaw would also permit new stores servicing tourists to open Sundays without first having to get approval from the Region, said BIA treasurer Gord Chapman.

Business owners wanting to open Sundays under the current legislation must apply individually to the Region for a tourist designation.

In Halton Hills, only the Olde Hide House is now allowed to open Sundays under the Act's tourist designation.

The BIA's interest in pursuing the Sunday opening bylaw should not be interpreted by the public as a signal that the group supports wide-open Sunday shopping, Mr. Chapman said during the meeting.

The bylaw would apply only to tourist-related businesses and it would be left to the Region to define a tourist-oriented business, he said.

The BIA will have to prove that the businesses involved rely on tourists for most of their sales, before Regional council would pass the required bylaw, the Region's executive director for business development, Brent Kearsse said in a telephone interview.

The Region's staff, in making a recommendation to council, considers how much advertising a store does in areas outside Halton. It also looks at whether the business' customers come from outside the designated 50-km range.

A store's possible historical, environmental, geographical or cultural significance is also taken into account.

The Region passed a similar bylaw in the 1970s for Oakville's Bronte Village, said Mr. Kearsse. Between 30 and 50 stores come under the exemption.

Response to the BIA survey ranged from enthusiastic to apathetic support, to adamant opposition, said Mr. Dolliver. Several business owners stated that the livelihood of their businesses depends on them being able to open Sundays, according to Mr. Dolliver. But some wouldn't even consider the bylaw, he said.

One support was counted because the businessman wanted the bylaw to apply to all BIA members, tourist oriented or non-tourist oriented, Mr. Dolliver said.



Karel Sury, principal of General Brock High School in Burlington, and a self-effacing hero in the ugly shooting incident which occurred at the school on Tuesday, was the main attraction at a press conference held at the J.W. Singleton Education Centre in Burlington Thursday. (Herald photo)

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