

Community

Chamber News

Entitled to opinion

By DOUG PENRICE

Working for a public service organization like the Chamber of Commerce for the most part is a rewarding experience. On other days I feel there must be a better way. Today is one of those days.

A number of Directors of the Chamber attended the recent R.A.I.D.D. meeting and after the meeting sent an article to the local papers explaining some of the concerns as seen by the business community. We invited comments from the public and of course seeing as I answer the phone I was the one who received an angry call from a local resident. You might say I was verbally assaulted by the caller, which is fine, however lost on the caller was the fact that we are all entitled to our own opinion.

The caller stated in no uncertain terms that she did not agree with the Chamber's position and then went on to state that she might boycott local firms to show her displeasure and would encourage other residents to follow her lead.

Comments like that are very discouraging for me, it overshadows all the positive things that the Chamber of Commerce accomplishes in this town. Perhaps the caller will take the time to read this article. I couldn't tell her on the phone of the many contributions that the Chamber makes to this Town. The Chamber does not receive any funds or grants from any level of government to run our programs.

The Chamber operates a business and tourism office in the lobby of the Gordon Alcott Arena and from this modest location answers over 3,000 written and telephone enquiries per year in a positive cheerful manner. Many times the first contact that potential residents have of our Town is through the Chamber. We also help local consumers who are looking for information about local businesses or services and

help in the event of complaints.

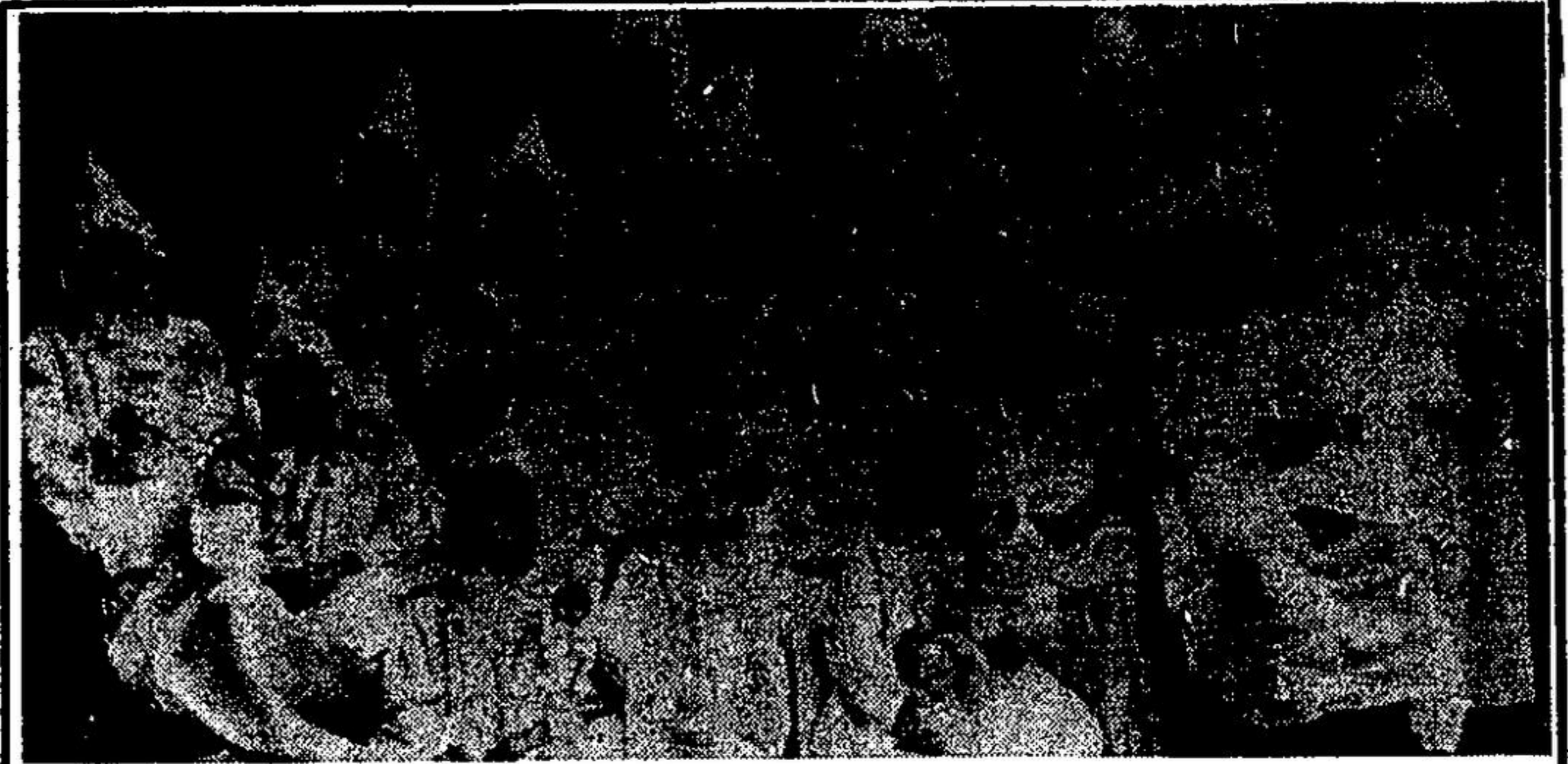
The Chamber has a policy of not making direct donations to charitable organizations, however our Directors work on specific projects where the funds go directly to charity. In the last three years the Chamber has helped to raise over \$45,000 for community groups and charities. In addition to money we have provided office services and supplies to groups such as the United Way, the Cancer Society, Acton firefighters, etc. The Chamber was an active proponent of the Town purchasing the abandoned rail line north of Georgetown and in fact offered to provide the \$5,000.00 to make the purchase.

This certainly doesn't sound like an "irresponsible" organization that the caller accused the Chamber of being.

The Chamber has been generally supportive of new development in the Halton Hills area and has encouraged Council to look seriously at all new developments. This was true of the Georgetown South development. At that time the Georgetown Area Ratepayers had many concerns about the development and were actively involved in either stopping future growth or limiting it. Their position was the opposite of the Chamber's, however it should be noted while we disagreed with the Georgetown Area Ratepayers some of our goals were the same. The Chamber and the Ratepayers cooperated to run a program called "I Love Georgetown", one of the most successful public relations programs this area has ever seen.

One last point, any lobby group the Chamber included, must state quite clearly; who they represent and how many people.

The Chamber will continue to put our point of view forward in a clear, public manner and we will never resort to actions that would undermine our credibility in the community.



A Christmas past

The photograph above depicts a Christmas concert directed to the Esquesing Historical Society, P.O. Box 51, Georgetown, Ont. L7G 4T1, or by telephoning either 838-2109 or 877-2803. (Photo submitted by Esquesing Historical Society)

Alzheimer chapter proposed for Halton Region

Those directly affected with Alzheimer's disease are not the only ones who need support. Families and friends who must care for these victims also need support, says Andy Harris, a spokesperson for the Halton-Wentworth Chapter of the Canadian Alzheimer Society.

Mr. Harris is one of several people trying to establish a chapter that would service only Halton.

The chapter, like all chapters across Canada, would offer educational programs and family support services for those who care for someone afflicted with the incurable disease.

According to a Halton Regional report, there are approximately 1,500 people in Halton with Alzheimer's disease and this number doesn't include "family, friends, neighbors and the com-

munity at large who are also affected by this devastating disease."

Alzheimer's disease slowly "nibbles away at a person's brain," deteriorating the person's personality and memory, a process that goes on for 10 to 15 years, said Mr. Harris. "It's terribly difficult on families and friends," he emphasized.

Although Mr. Harris said the Hamilton-Wentworth chapter is adequately servicing both communities, Halton is spread out in such a way, better service could be provided to its residents afflicted with the disease if the Region had its own chapter, said Mr. Harris.

The existing chapter is more research-oriented because of its location in Hamilton, said Mr. Harris. McMaster University is a leader in Alzheimer's research and therefore the chapter focuses a lot of attention on that aspect of the disease, he explained.

Since Halton is more community-oriented and rural, its focus isn't in research.

As well, Halton's relative ruralness compared to Hamilton means support programs would achieve maximum results if they were geared specifically to the Region's geography.

In Hamilton, a day support program could be set up in one loca-

tion because of the availability of public transportation but this isn't true for Halton, especially in the North, said Mr. Harris.

A day support program offers families who have a member afflicted with the disease the chance to come together and share each others experience. "People need to know there are others like them," said Mr. Harris.

The lack of public transportation especially in the north part of the Region means a more suitable program would have to have someone from the chapter visit the family, suggested Mr. Harris.

Mr. Harris couldn't emphasize enough the importance of support groups.

The other group most likely affected by an Alzheimer's victim is that person's children, said Mr. Harris. The children are usually in their 40's or 50's when the disease afflicts a parent.

The children, therefore, not only must deal with the parent, but also their teenage children, said Mr. Harris. This group is referred to as the "sandwich generation," he added.

Mr. Harris said Halton wouldn't get its own chapter until a steering committee is established to organize the chapter. This committee is just being set up now and once that is done the committee will apply for the grant money necessary to operate it, he explained.

Duignan announces handicapped group to receive funds

Noel Duignan, MPP for Halton North, announced \$397,790 in grants and annual funding to the North Halton Association for the Developmentally Handicapped (ADH). The money will enable the agency to expand to serve 22 additional adults with developmental disabilities in the Georgetown and Milton communities.

The announcement was made on behalf of Zanana Akande, Ontario's Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Duignan said that the funding includes \$219,790 annually to provide residential and day programs for "people with developmental disabilities. The funding will also enable the association to serve a further 16 adults with developmental disabilities in the Supported Independent Living program.

A start-up grant of \$178,000 will pay for renovations to two residences to accommodate the needs of the individuals who will be moving in from nursing homes. This grant will also pay for minor renovations to day programs as well as new furnishings and equipment for residential and day programs. In addition, four vans will be purchased to provide transportation for the individuals in the association's residential and other programs.

"I am very pleased to announce this worthwhile assistance from Mrs. Akande's ministry to the North Halton ADH," said Mr. Duignan. "It will allow individuals with developmental disabilities to participate at their own levels in their communities, and at the same time, gain a greater sense of independence."



Laser transmits voices

Georgetown District High School Grade 11 students, (left to right), David Chambers and Jason Sober showed off their laser transmitter during a display put on by the school's Technology and Electronics Department. The laser transmitter uses laser light to transmit voices, said Jason. (Herald photo)