

Give them a hand

Superior Gloves dominates its industry in North America

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ANN KORNUA

When you think about work gloves, do you think of Halton? Superior Gloves may well be the largest manufacturing company of industrial gloves in North America. Driving into Acton on Hwy 25 it's hard to miss the 13,000 square foot building with its bright red glove sign.

Owner Joe Geng is proud of his company. "We produce a wide selection ranging from cotton, leather, Kevlar, to disposable rubber and latex gloves." The factory itself is a maze from expansions over the years. Boxes of stacked gloves abound. Strange metal hands are stacked row on row, making it look like a scene from a science fiction movie. No fiction here, what these workers produce are day-to-day work gloves. Gloves that keep the hands of welders in the automotive trade protected from heat and sparks, and gloves that keep dust and particles off sensitive silicon microchip production.

In 1910, Superior started as a small factory making gloves for retail stores. By the 60's, the company switched over to produce industrial gloves for the steel mills and the welding trade. For 20 years, all of the gloves were manufactured in the Acton location. Today, the labour is done in three manufacturing facilities located in Acton, Pt. Leamington Newfoundland, and Guangdong China. The Acton factory has

not changed much since the 60's. "We are always growing and changing and we are building a new warehouse that will have higher ceilings for more storage space," Joe explained. "Back when this place was built, the demand wasn't is to what it is now and you can see that we need to make more space for the demands of growth."

All of the gloves that come out of the Acton factory must go through a series of tests to maintain quality control. Machines test the gloves straight off the production line for abrasion withstanding pressure. Using the TDM-100 or Tomodynamometer Laboratory Test Bench Joe shows how the machine works by applying a constant cutting force on a glove off the production line. A new razor blade is loaded into the test machine at the beginning of every test. The machine measures the force necessary to cut the sample

glove material using computer software. "Our line of cut resistant gloves is reinforced with stainless steel no bigger than a hair and this machine tells us how much force they can withstand before breaking," Joe says. According to research conducted by Superior Gloves, knives, metal parts and sharp objects are responsible for nearly 30% of the lost-time work injuries in Canada. About 80% of these injuries involve the hands. Another machine, the S130 Abrasion machine can tell how well the gloves can withstand abrasive pressure. "We run these tests to keep the quality of our products and to experiment with new yarns," Joe explained.

The most extraordinary room in the building is the room where squeegees apply PVC and latex coatings to gloves. Gloves are fitted on hand moulds and pass through a tank of synthetic rubber, coating the gloves for grip and better wear and then pass through giant ovens. This machine bakes the moulds until the rubber has hardened, providing a layer of extra protection to the gloves. Gloves produced by this process include the PowerGrab Latex Coated String Kevlar gloves.

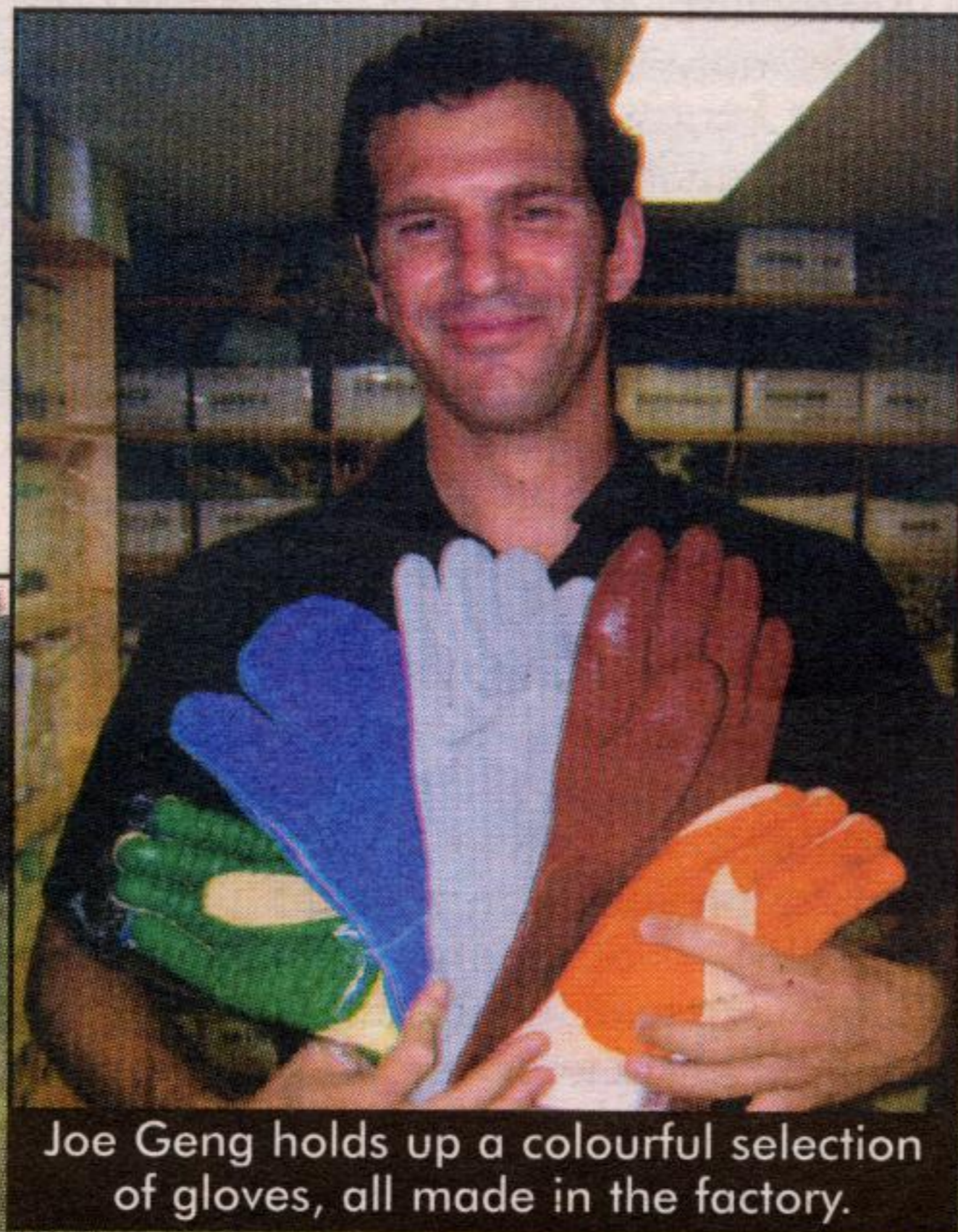
Down the hall is a large room filled with computer knitting machines chugging away producing yarn fibre gloves. Machines are first programmed with the glove pattern and

they knit out the product. "Often, custom orders are filled such as an order for a man who works in an automotive factory with only four fingers," Joe says, taking one of the work gloves that spits out of the machine and modelling it. One person can run the whole room of machines and the knitter machines can pump out one glove every two minutes.

A special line of gloves used in the production of silicon microchips are manufactured in the Superior factory in the special clean room. Workers in bunny suits work in the enclosed area where the air is filtered through hepa filters so nothing can come out or go in. Even the water they use in the manufacturing of these special gloves is from reverse osmosis.

Ending the tour in the massive factory is the sample room topped to the ceiling with just about every kind of glove Superior makes. Besides gloves, Superior manufactures and distributes a range of safety glasses, safety aprons and a line of wool gloves for winter activities and fun. With over 2500 styles of gloves to choose from, the selection may be overwhelming. There is a work glove for any need behind the walls of the Acton factory.

For a complete selection of all the gloves manufactured by Superior Gloves, visit their



Joe Geng holds up a colourful selection of gloves, all made in the factory.



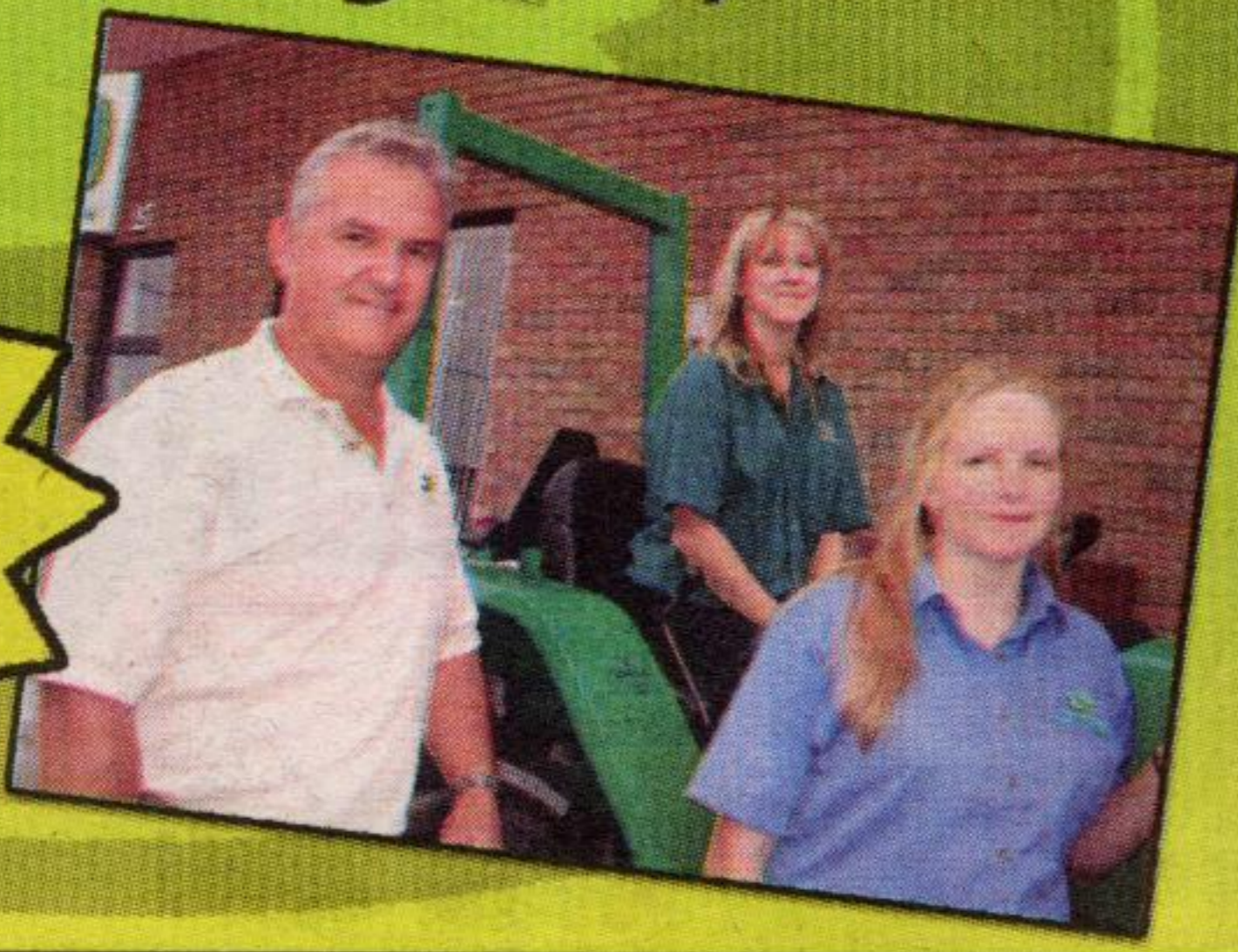
BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

It's a Deere!



Stonemead Farm of Milton is pleased to announce the arrival of its new baby. Delivered on August 16, 2005, Baby 990 measured 123" and weighed 2,954 lbs.

Thanks go to 'Dr' Steve Marshall & 'Nurses' Cecile Legacy & Sherry Guitard of Halton Turf & Tractors.



the mayor's column



PSSST! Do you live in Ward 2, and want to save money on your home insurance? Check out your home insurance plan! Mr. Neil Raycraft did, and he got an interesting result. Mr. Raycraft read about the Superior Tanker Shuttle Service Accreditation in the Town's recently published Community Safety Guide. As a result of this Accreditation, Mr. Raycraft received a 25% reduction in his home insurance premium, and generously donated these savings to the Town's Fire Service. While not everyone will qualify for a premium reduction resulting from the Superior Tanker Shuttle Service Accreditation, I would encourage all rural residents of Halton Hills to inquire about it with your insurance agent. A copy of our Community Safety Guide is available at our fire stations, the Civic Centre, the Fire Service information kiosk at the Georgetown Marketplace Mall, and on the Town's website at www.haltonhills.ca under Fire Protection and Prevention Services.

On August 8th, Council approved an Idling Control By-law. This By-law will go into effect following adoption at the September 6th Council Meeting. We hope to see self-enforcement throughout Halton Hills. This will be the easiest and most cost-effective manner in which to have the By-law enforced. Why do we need an Idling Control By-law? If nothing else, this will educate people that idling a vehicle is harmful. We have had more smog alerts in 2005 than in all of 2004. Air quality, climate change, and energy conservation continues to be a

problem for all municipalities. Idling vehicles increase the level of smog and contributes to poor air quality. Natural Resources Canada states more people are experiencing respiratory and cardiovascular illness every year due to air pollution. Diesel and gasoline exhausts contains over 40 hazardous air pollutants. Another interesting point, a vehicle idling for 10 minutes per day wastes an average of 100 litres of gas per year. The last time I filled my vehicle's gas tank, the cost per litre of gas was ninety-five cents. Now, I just saved you a few more bucks by telling you this, and together we can help our environment.

I hope you are continuing to join me in the "Walk the Hills' Challenge", a campaign designed to get you physically active. Don't forget to pick up your Personal Walking Log at any Town facility or by downloading it from the Halton Hills website at www.haltonhills.ca to post your weekly results.

The Fall Fairs are coming soon. Mark your calendars:
Georgetown - Sept. 9, 10, and 11
Acton - Sept. 16, 17, 18

On behalf of Council, I welcome the following new businesses:
 Pat's Prime Cuts & Deli,
 Georgetown South
 Papillon's Purification Systems Inc., Acton

Keeping it real! I can be reached by telephone at 905-873-2601, ext. 2342, or by e-mail at mayor@haltonhills.ca