

Mad Hatter's Tea Party

By ANN KORNUA

It was a crowning event at the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre last Thursday October 13th when Canada's own Hat Lady Norma Shephard exhibited a part of her private collection. The luncheon event featured the Mobile Millinery Hat Museum fashion show along with a performance from the MSAC Drama Club.

Over 30 hats were on show ranging from the 1920's to present. The hats are part of the only hat museum in all of Canada. At the party, volunteer models, all active members of the Milton Seniors' Activity Center, did not see the hats before they were placed on their heads. Some of the effects created were hilarious to audience.

"I've always loved hats," Norma explained. "I started finding beautiful

used hats and had to rescue them." Her obsession has become her life and she tours across the country with her unique millinery fashion show. The hats have all been purchased or rescued by Norma. In the past year she has found fame with her self-published book, "Accessorizing the Bride", and is now widely known for her touring museum and performances with her friend Patricia Boyle. Norma's new book is coming out in the spring and will feature her museum collection of over 1,000 hats. For information on how to book a Mobile Millinery Museum fashion show or exhibit, you can contact Norma Shephard at nshephard@cogeco.ca.



Part of the fun is not knowing what hat you are going to wear at a mad hatter tea party.

Right: The Hat Lady Norma Shephard with her assistant Patricia Boyle are simply mad about hats.



Below: Getting into the spirit, these mad hatters are raising their cups to celebrate hat culture! From left are Doris Hand, Janet Rae, Beverly Thatcher, and Loraine Beverly.



Keeping up with the kids

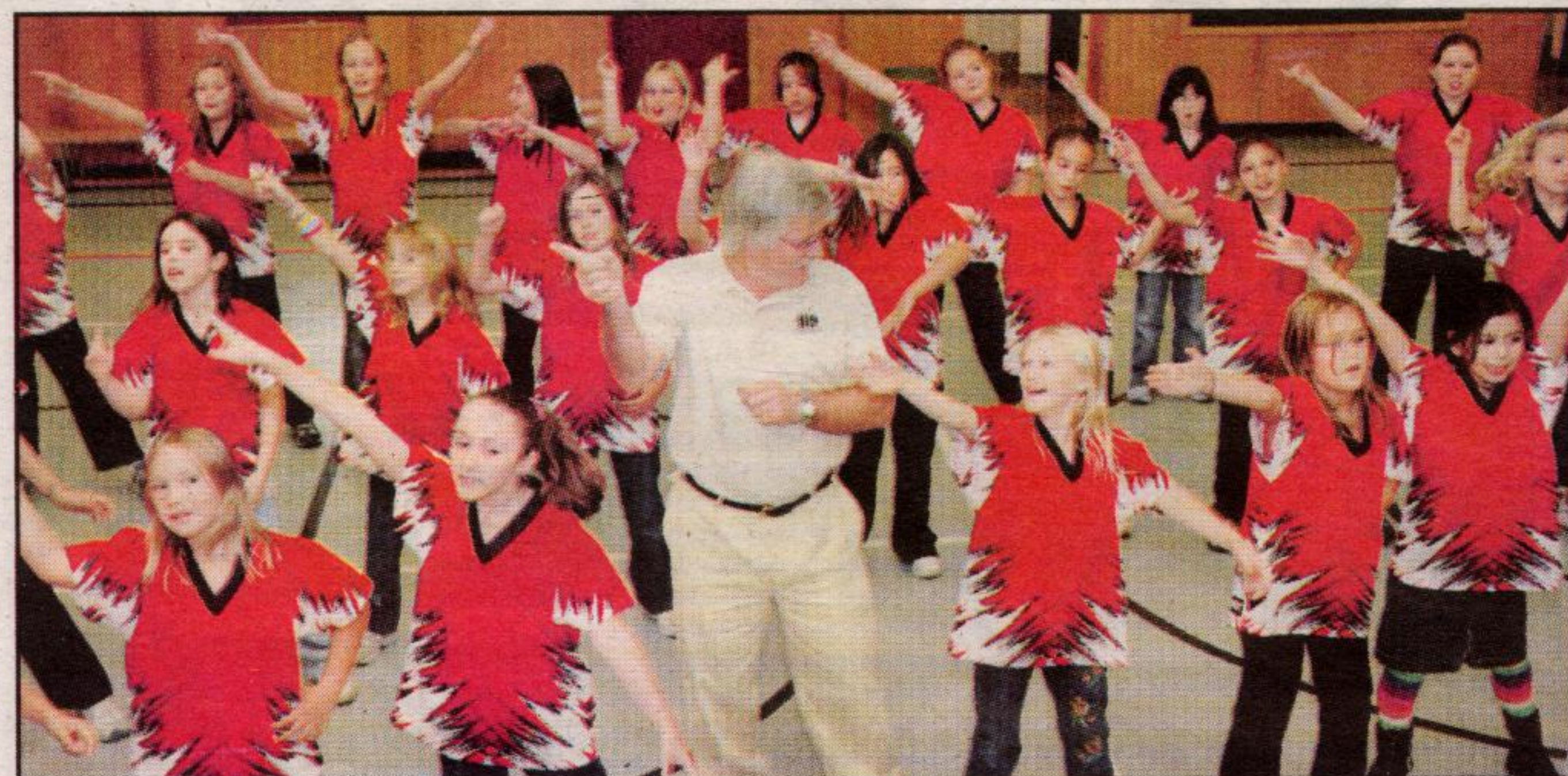


PHOTO BY PETER MCCUSKER

Halton Hills Ward 1 Councillor Jon Hurst attempts a workout with Acton's Robert Little School "QDF" Quality Daily Fitness crew Tuesday morning.

Playing chicken

By ANN KORNUA

When we think of chicken, often the images we get are McNuggets or that finger licking box of KFC on the dinner table. Kerry Kucharenko of Milton has another view of chickens; that is of feathered steeds racing to the sound of cheering fans. His mixed breed Bantam hen Lucky competes in chariot chicken races across Southern Ontario.

Lucky is famous in the world of chicken racing. In her 2003 rookie year, Lucky took first place in the Chicken Chariot Race Championship in Smithville, Ontario at Poultry Fest. In 2004, Lucky took first place again and set a new track speed record. Lucky is also a champion show bird taking home 2nd place AOV Bantam Hen at the Milton Fall Fair 2001-03, and 1st place in 2005.

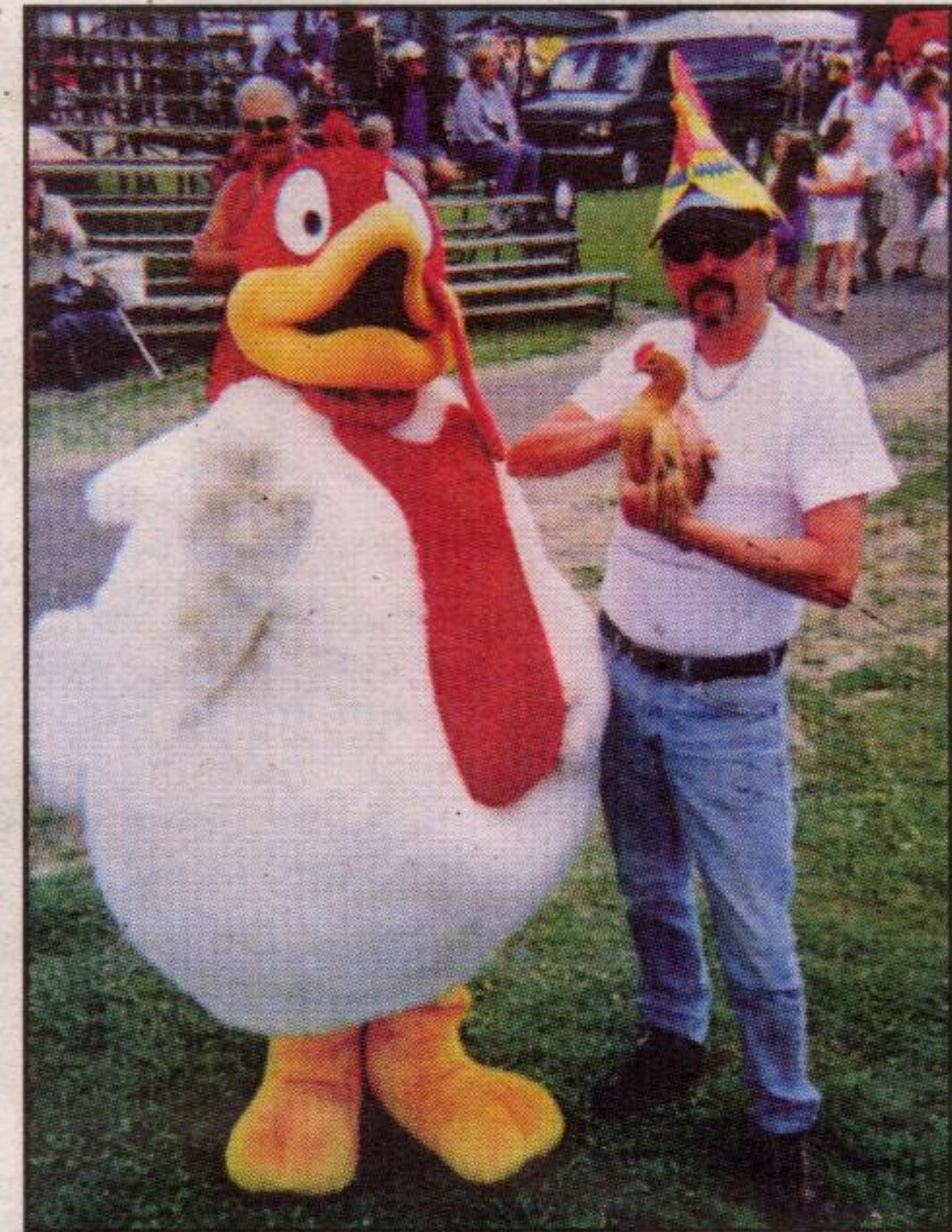
Her owner Kerry, a locksmith by trade, never dreamed he would race chickens. In fact, Kerry's involvement with chickens began one spring morning when Lucky found him. "Lucky was a stray who showed up in our garden in 2001," Kerry explained. "I have had cats and dogs as pets before, but I have never cared for chickens and when Lucky showed up I had to use the Internet to find out how to take care of her." He jokingly entered Lucky in the 2001 Milton Fall Fair and was astounded when the little Bantam took 2nd place.

Kerry discovered the world of Chicken Chariot Racing at Smithville's annual Poultry Fest. Kerry wasted no time in entering Lucky in the race and spent time creating "The Lucky Bucket" chariot, featuring an original advertising KFC bucket (circa 1954).

The Chariot race is the main event at the Smithville Poultry Fest where teams and fans cheer on their favourite chickens as they race down a 50ft track. The chariots are attached to the bird's tail feathers and they are rewarded with feed, or in Lucky's case sunflower seeds. There are strict rules as to the weight and axle width of the chariots that are enforced. Winners of each race go on to the final championship race for the gold trophy.

Lucky now shares her home with two Chinese Silkie hens, but she is clearly the favourite. "Lucky sleeps in our hallway in a large dog crate at night and is one very spoiled pet," Kerry explains. Lucky is featured on Kerry's home website. Online, fans can purchase stuffed mascots of Lucky and see her love for snowboarding and boat racing.

Now six years old Lucky is retiring from the race circuit. Kerry plans to approach local fairs to introduce the sport of chicken racing to Halton. To find out more visit <http://www.geocities.com/littlechicken-racingteam/index.html>.



Kerry and Lucky pose next to Smithville Poultry Fest's mascot after winning the Chariot Race.



Lucky displaying all of her awards, winnings, and her chicken chariot.

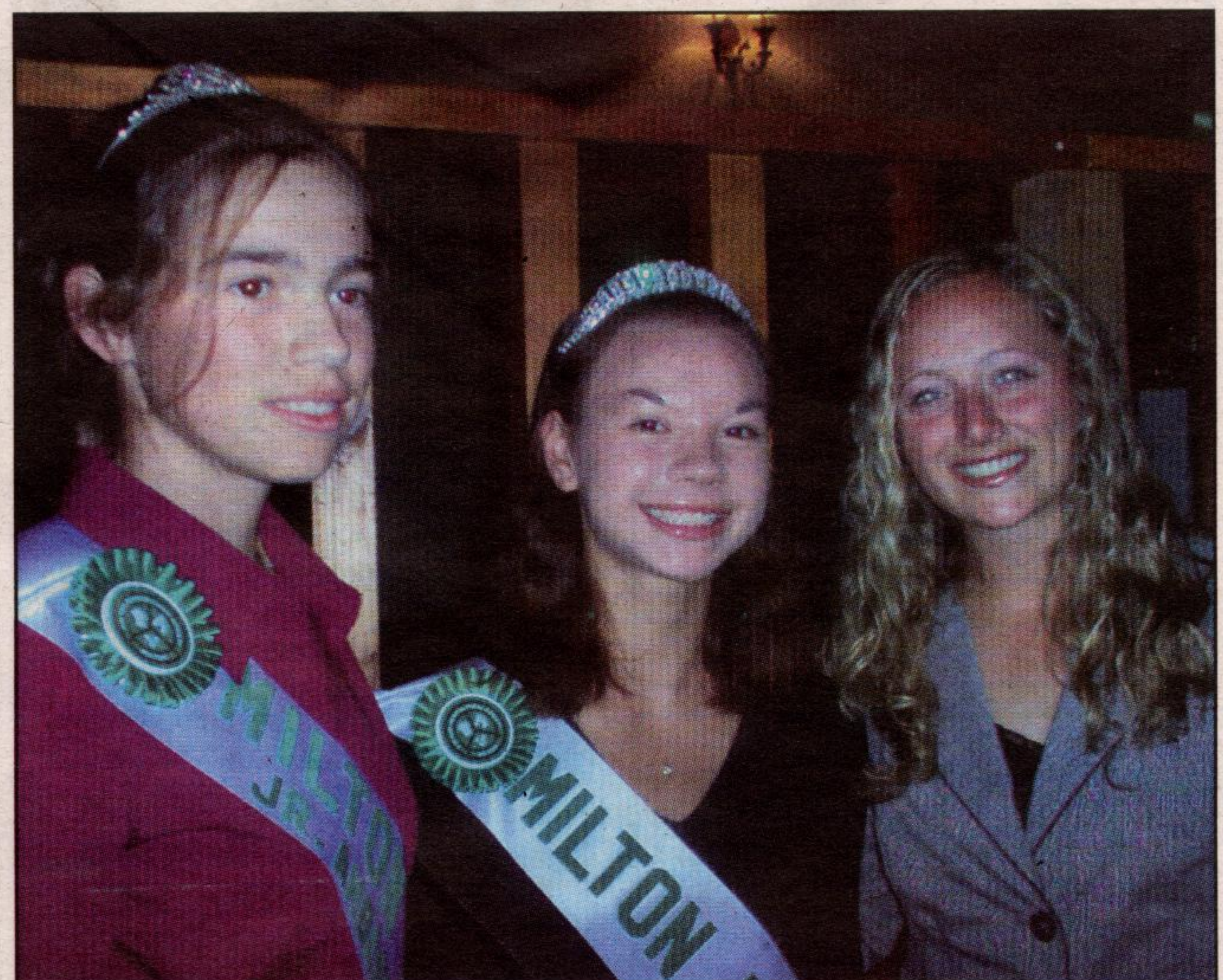


PHOTO BY STEPHEN BAKER

Looking pretty at the Milton Fall Fair sponsor's dinner last week are left to right, Milton Junior Fall Fair Ambassador Kim Fisher, Milton Fall Fair Ambassador Laurie Cameron and organizer and 1997 Fall Fair Ambassador Ember Johnstone.