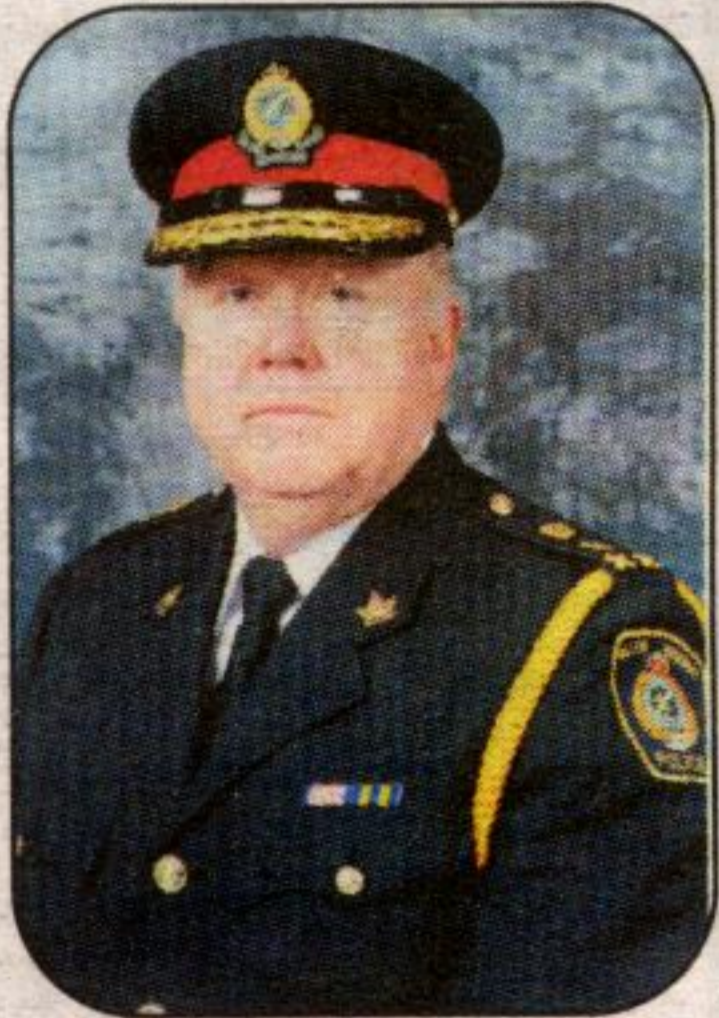


Civilians play a critical role at Halton Regional Police

BY CHIEF EAN ALGAR
EXCLUSIVE TO THE HALTON COMPASS



Behind the public face of Halton Regional Police Service, providing round-the-clock support to our uniform officers, are our civilian communicators. These are the women and men who receive, evaluate and process routine calls for service as well as 911 emergency calls.

The Communications Bureau at Police Headquarters is the primary answering agency for all 911 calls in the Region. In addition, communicators take all non-emergency calls that come into the Police. All calls for Police are then assigned to the dispatcher for the municipality from which the

call originated. Police communicators alternate between taking calls and dispatching calls to uniformed officers out on patrol. The Bureau is managed by a team of four supervisors who report to a uniformed Staff Sergeant.

I'm very proud of our communicators. Theirs isn't an easy job. People don't call the Police to say that they are having a nice day. Some callers are in distress and need immediate help. Other callers are reporting anything from a robbery to a noise complaint. Whatever life has to offer, our communicators are the first to hear about it. Like our men and women in uniform, our communicators work under pressure, quickly and effectively making critical decisions, applying complex information to a wide variety of circumstances.

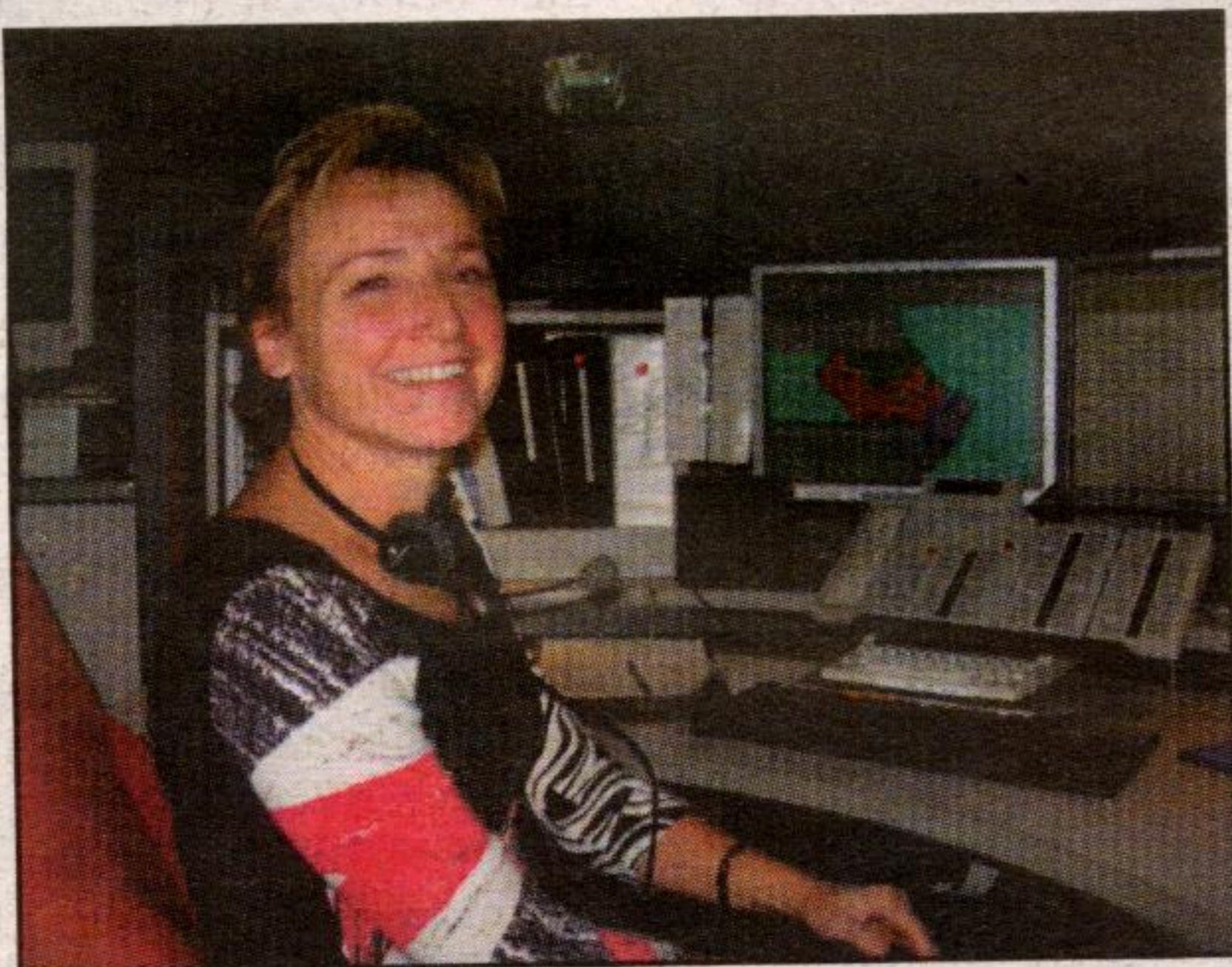
Terri Cordiner is a 17-year veteran communicator and one of four supervisors in the department. She admits hers is a high-pressure occupation. "All communicators must have good people skills, patience, be highly organized and have a very strong ability to visualize situations," she says. Supervisors sit at a workstation where they simultaneously monitor six computer screens, a telephone, security monitors, and the communications staff to see if anyone needs a hand.

Terri has a BA in English. She likens her job to a mental game of chess. "To be successful in this role you must be inquisitive so that you can ask the right questions of callers. You need to be resourceful, polite but firm, not get frustrated by constant interruptions, and remain focused so that you complete all tasks, no matter how often you're interrupted."

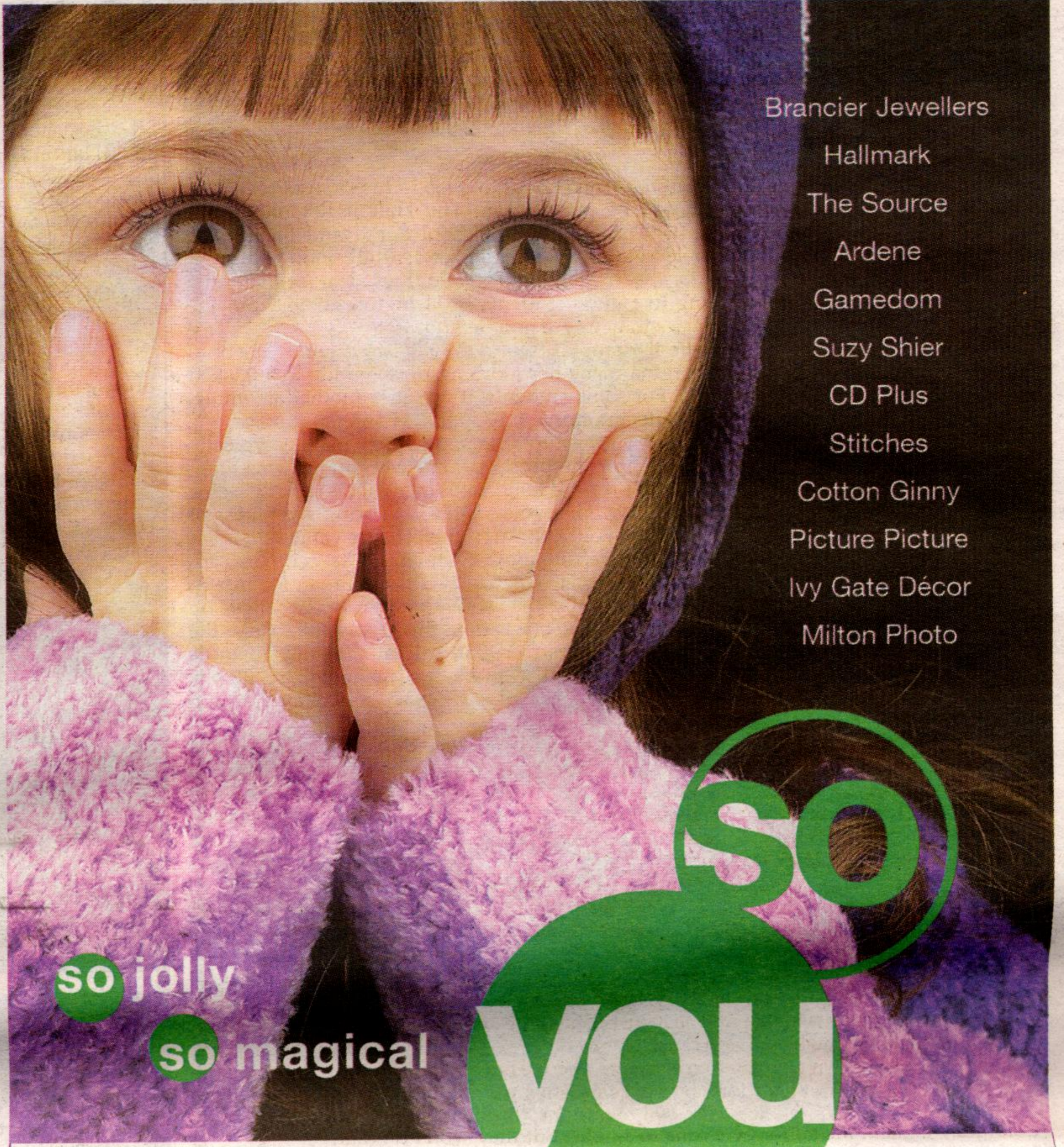
Like officers, communicators work 12-hour rotating shifts in a 24/7 environment, including weekends and holidays. "It's important not to let the mounting stress get the better of you," Terri says. "Our shifts are periodically injected with humour which helps us de-stress and continue with our work. A call comes in and we get a snapshot of someone's situation. Most of the time, that's the last we hear of it. It's like reading a book with the last page torn out. We don't often learn how the situation turned out."

Sometimes, though, communicators do learn how helpful they have been. As Chief, I receive letters of commendation from citizens asking me to pass on their thanks to the communicator who took their call. One gentleman, having recovered from a heart attack, wrote in his letter that the dispatcher was "extremely helpful to his wife, helping her remain calm so as to provide vital information."

Another Halton resident wrote me this touching line: "We were so thankful to know that help was as close as the phone."



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Terri Cordiner at the supervisor's station.



- Brancier Jewellers
- Hallmark
- The Source
- Ardene
- Gamedom
- Suzy Shier
- CD Plus
- Stitches
- Cotton Ginny
- Picture Picture
- Ivy Gate Décor
- Milton Photo

so jolly

so magical

so you

A Fairy Tale Pajama Party!

Santa arrives Friday, November 25 at 7:00 pm

Welcome Santa to Milton Mall! Wear your PJ's and enjoy a bedtime musical show performed by fairy tale characters Snow White and Sleeping Beauty!

Milton Mall



Visit Santa!

November 25 - December 24

Wednesday to Friday 5 pm - 8 pm
Saturdays** 10 am - 1 pm & 2 pm - 5 pm
Sundays* 12:30 pm - 4 pm

Capture your visit with a Santa Photo New & improved
4" x 6" high quality digital photos available in one hour from only \$5.99 plus tax!

*Sunday, November 27 Santa will not be in his cabin since he'll be in the Milton Parade.
**Saturday December 17, 10-1, 2-5, 6-8. Christmas Eve 10-Noon.
For Santa's complete schedule call the Special Events Hotline 905-878-3900

Free Teddy Bears! Friday, December 2 - P.D. Day

For the first 75 kids who visit with Santa. Santa will be here 10 am - 1 pm, 2 pm - 5 pm, 6 pm - 8 pm

WIN a SPIN with Santa! Oh what fun it is to ride....with Santa!

See the holiday lights of Milton as you, your parents and 2 friends take a spin with Santa in his Memory Lane Limousine on Sunday, December 18, 2005, 5 pm - 6 pm.

There will be plenty of holiday treats to eat along the way.

To enter for a chance to WIN simply complete the ballot below and drop it in the ballot box located next to Santa's Cabin in Milton Mall by 9 pm, Wednesday, December 14, 2005.

Limousine service provided by Memory Lane Limousine.

Enter to WIN a SPIN with Santa! on Sunday, December 18, 5-6 pm

Child's Name _____ Age _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____ Signature _____

Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

Ballots must be received by 9 pm, Wednesday, December 14.

Must be 10 years old or younger to qualify. One or more parents and/or legal guardian must accompany the children. For complete details, rules & regulations contact the Special Events Hotline 905-878-3900. One ballot per child per day. Some restrictions may apply. Draw will take place at Milton Mall 9 am on December 15, 2005. Winners will be contacted by phone. Chance of winning dependent on number of entries.



Mon-Fri 9:30 am - 9:00 pm
Sat 9:30 am - 6:00 pm
Sun Noon - 5:00 pm
Corner of Main and Ontario
(905) 878-3900