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CHAMBER CHAMPS: Recipients of this year's Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce Business Achievement Awards were wined and dined at the Acton Arena and Community centre last Thursday. Shown here are Chamber vice-president Percy Macdonald, Doug and Mary Lou Brock of the William's Mill, Young's Pharmacy owners Ruth and Neil Young, Chamber president Pat Hatch. Back row: Entrepreneur of the Year winners, sisters Gail Cartwright and Deborah Foster of The Freckled Lion and Acton's Susan (McGilloway) Robson, the recipient of the Chamber's Employee of the Year. — Frances Niblock photo

Apathetic Acton businesses?

By FRANCES NIBLOCK
The New Tanner

Officials with the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce are "perplexed" with the apparent apathy felt by many Acton businesses towards involvement with Chamber activities and wonder if there is some lingering animosity from the amalgamation of the Acton and Georgetown Chambers in the late 1980s.

"There has not been a lot of Acton participation (in the Chamber) but there has been some," said Chamber president Pat Hatch, of Acton, in an interview on Thursday as she prepared for the Chamber's annual business achievement awards.

"We would like the Acton businesses to participate more. If there is something that the Chamber can do, or if there is a reason why they

are not participating then let us know. We're open, and if they want to meet, we're there," Hatch said. There were two Acton businesses nominated for the achievement awards but neither won their category.

Calling the Chamber the "backbone" of business in Acton and Georgetown, Hatch said she would also like to work closely with the Acton Business Improvement Area whose job it is to promote business in the downtown core.

Acton businesses seem unwilling to even toot their own horns through a Chamber program called Business of the Month. Local business can nominate themselves, or another business, for the monthly business promotion award.

Chamber executive director Anne Sidebottom said

that nomination forms have been handed out on numerous occasions to Acton businesses but there has been little or no recent interest in the program.

"Pat (Hatch) has walked up and down Mill Street handing out the (nomination) cards and still we aren't getting any nominees from businesses.

"We're concerned that perhaps maybe that the business community isn't aware that this is what they can do for themselves. We're aware that there seems to be this situation and are trying to see what we can do to try to encourage them to get involved," Sidebottom explained in an interview on Thursday, adding that they thought that they had done sufficient marketing and promoting to get Acton business to pat themselves, and each other, on the back.

Asked if Acton business might be reluctant to participate in Chamber activities because of past history Sidebottom said, "I don't know for sure. I would hope not, but maybe there is. I mean, when we see that there's not as much voluntary-type involvement, people initiating responses instead of us having to call them up, then we start to wonder, if there something that we're not doing that is maybe making people feel that they don't want to be involved," Sidebottom said.

Nominations sought

The Rotary Club of Acton is till accepting nominations for Citizen of the Year.

Rotarian Doug Fread said the club has received some nominations for the 1998 award but there is always room for more.

Anyone wishing to make a nomination is invited to submit it by March 6 either by letter to the club's post office Box 22, Acton or by letter to any of the club's members.



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