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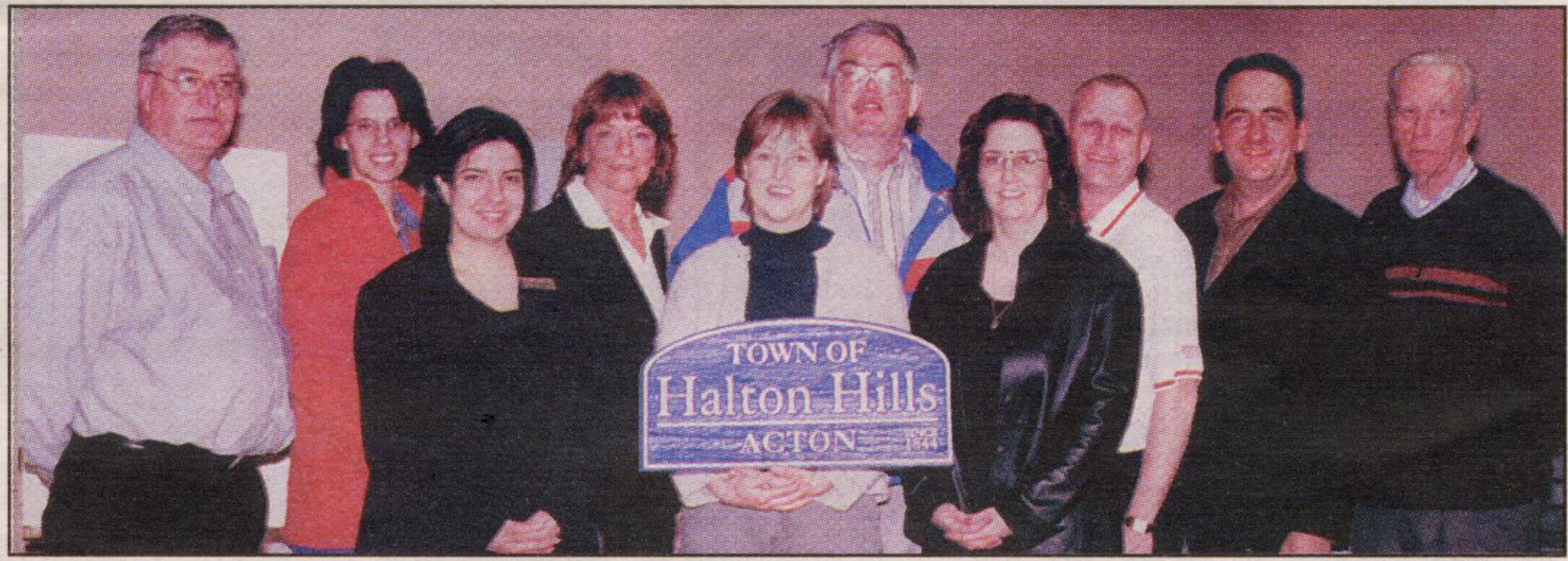
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SIGN OF THE TIMES: The newly reelected Acton BIA board of directors gathered with a mockup of the new Acton gateway sign at the BIA's annual general meeting at the Legion last Wednesday. The directors include, back, from left: Chair John McNabb, Monica Galway, Josey Bonnette, Gord Chapman, Councillor Clark Somerville, Norm Paulsen and Bob MacKinnon. Front: Kristina Andrews, Tracy Mitchell and Yvette Simpson. — Frances Niblock photo

Merchants will grin and bear reconstruction of Mill Street

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The New Tanner

Downtown merchants should be patient, positive and proactive, and Acton residents should shop locally during the reconstruction of Mill Street this summer.

That's the pep talk downtown merchants received from Mayor Rick Bonnette last Wednesday at the Acton BIA (Business Improvement Area) annual general meeting at the Legion.

The \$1.9-million dollar reconstruction of Mill Street, from the railway tracks to Main Street, begins next month, and Bonnette predicts closed roads will test the pa-

tience of a lot of people.

"This is the time, more than any that I can think of, that we should really pull together as a Town, get behind the businesses, the businesses get behind each other and let's make sure everybody has a prosperous summer," Bonnette said, urging people to shop locally and support small businesses, the backbone of the community.

The work on Mill Street should be completed by the end of June 30, and the remainder of the work on downtown side streets will be complete by the end of July.

Bonnette also briefed BIA members on industrial expansion plans in the 401-Steeles

Avenue corridor, the Acton water master plan and plans for a gateway sign on Acton's eastern boundary.

On behalf of Town Council, Bonnette praised the BIA for being proactive in promoting and beautifying Acton — joking he wasn't trying to get a raise for his wife, BIA coordinator Josey Bonnette.

In her overview of the past year, Josey Bonnette noted that 12 new businesses opened downtown last year, and six left (three relocating in other parts of Acton.) leaving the downtown with just two vacant stores.

"We're definitely on the move — people were worried

at one point when IGA moved out (of the downtown) and the drug store moved out, about what was going to happen and that it was going to wither and die. Well, not so folks —

"we're in business," Bonnette said. She said they are looking forward to construction being complete in time for the Leathertown Festival in August.

The BIA is looking at new benches, garbage cans and tree guards for the downtown, and is investigating purchasing \$20,000 worth of banners, possibly with the help of a grant and sponsorships.

Bonnette detailed how they spent the \$60,000 budget they collected from BIA members last year — the same amount budgeted for this year — with almost half of the money being spent on administration and salary and the balance on office expenses, promotion and advertising, maintenance and snow removal.

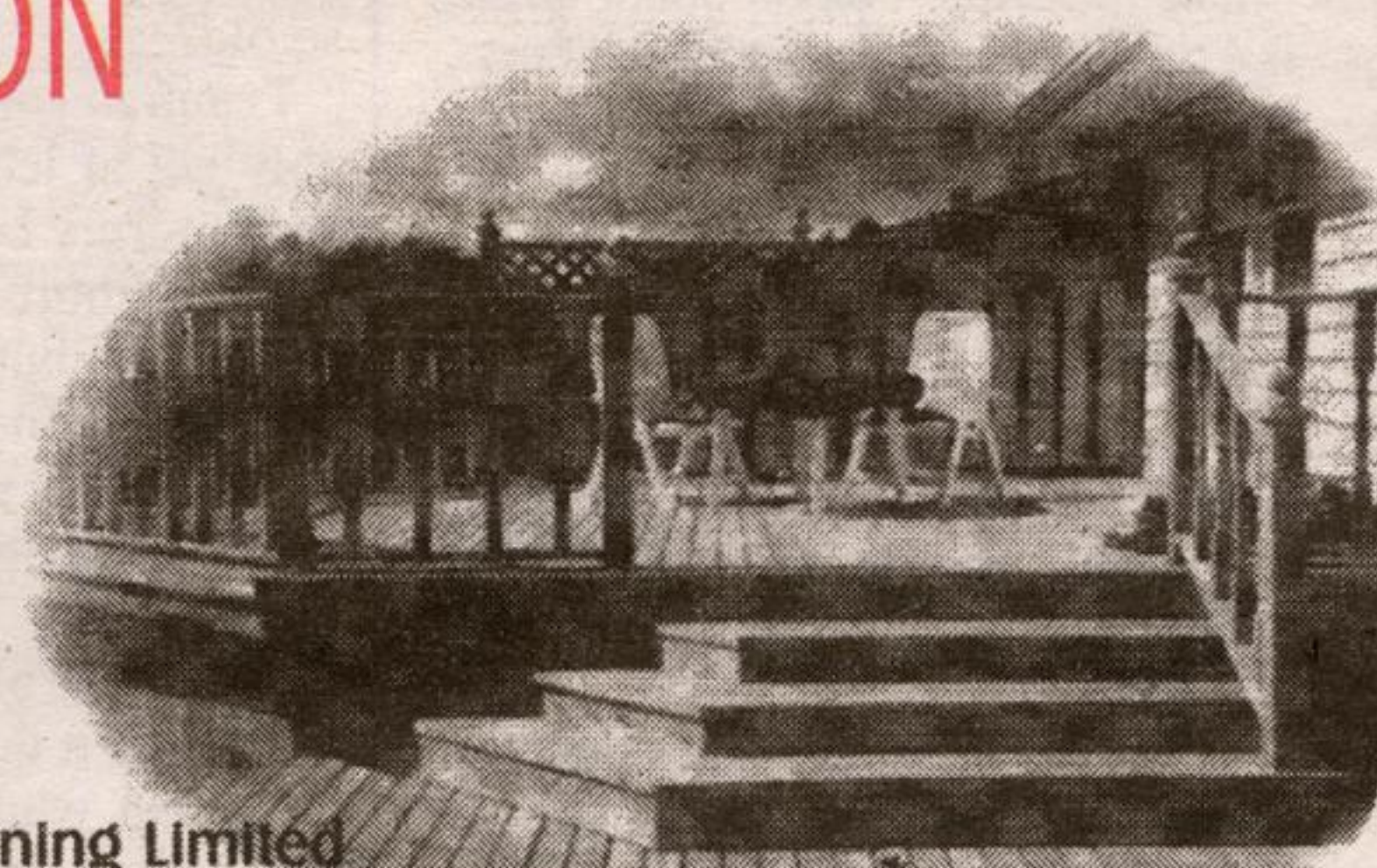
Guest speaker, Halton Constable Garry George, who recently was re-assigned full-time as Acton's Village Constable, urged BIA mem-

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