

Few complaints about state of downtown

By **KAREN SMITH**
The Champion

Miltonians are generally satisfied with the Town's upkeep of the core area, an informal street survey shows.

The majority of people stopped on the street by The Champion Friday said they have no complaints about excessive garbage or poor maintenance downtown.

"We were just commenting that it's nice and I'm down here a lot," said Deb Young, 35, a banker who was shopping with a friend from out of town.

Waitress Taunya Walters, 21, said she's never thought of Milton as dirty.

"I think the Town does a good job keeping it clean. I wouldn't complain."

In the small sampling, 18 out of 20 people stopped thought Milton was as clean or cleaner than other towns.

Laura Earl and Brenda Hilson came north from Oakville Friday to shop in a "small town atmosphere."

"We like Milton's country atmosphere. It's like Oakville used to be," said Ms Earl, a 28-year-old school teacher. "If I opened a store it would be down here."

The question arose following complaints by the Milton Downtown Business Improvement Area that the Town doesn't spend enough time and money maintaining the core, and it's turning off shoppers.

Two youths surveyed tended to agree that the downtown needs to perk up.

"It looks like crap," said Steve Oleszkowicz, 18, a part-time landscaper.

He said he wished Main Street was more lively and had youth clothing stores.

His buddy Rich Gougeon, 17, said Milton's centre core is clean, but humdrum.

"It's pretty clean compared to any other town, but it's all getting dull now," the student said.

A local sheet metal mechanic said he's noticed too much litter on the streets.

"It needs to be cleaned up a little bit," said John Smith, 42.

He added that he believes it's the Town's responsibility to dispose of litter from sidewalks — a job it leaves up to businesses.

"They (business owners) can't help that people dump it there so why should they have to clean it up?"

Krug's coffee shop owner Kirk Krueger, 30, said he believes ensuring a successful main core is everybody's responsibility — businesses, the Town and the public.

"The Town and the people have to have respect for their downtown core."



Program suffering

• from DARE on page 2

dents will have graduated from it.

It started as a pilot project in 1989 and was well received by students, teachers, principals and parents, Ms Slomka said.

When a lack of finances threatened the program's existence in its early years, outraged parents, including Ms Slomka, jumped on board to help raise funds, she said.

Run by a 15-member volunteer board of directors, DARE is designed to provide children with self-esteem and the willpower to refuse alcohol and drugs.

Students also learn life skills such as positive ways to deal with stress and peer pressure as well as the means to deal with problems without resorting to violence.

The 17-week program is taught twice a year — in September and mid-January.

Ms Slomka said DARE plans to hold a press conference at Halton police headquarters in the next couple of weeks to make a formal appeal to the public for donations.

"The program benefits everyone's children. Many parents don't know about it until their kids are in grade 6."

Tough bill is proposed

• from YOUNG on page 3

vene at the first sign of drug use, and with a social worker or guidance counselor, develop a plan to help their child to deal with the problem.

It would also crack down on tobacco use, making it an offence for a minor to possess tobacco on school property. "The experts say it is possible to begin an addictive lifestyle after trying your first cigarette," said Mr. Young.



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