

Two hard-working women up for award

By IRENE GENTLE
The Champion

Milton Chamber of Commerce Business Woman of the Year nominee Melissa DeBrouwer loves it when a plan comes together.

Ms DeBrouwer, of the Bick Financial Security Corporation, is nominated for the honour along with Safe and Sound Children's Centre owner Edwina Doddington.

And after five years of dispensing her financial advice in Milton, Ms DeBrouwer is seeing her labour bear fruit as her clients reach their retirement years with enough money behind them to live it up in the future.

"It's really rewarding to see that," said the woman who originally hailed from Blenheim, Ontario, a 4,000 strong dot on the map near Chatham. "All this work is finally paying off and they can go live in Florida if they want."

Equally rewarding is her recent nomination, which comes less than a year after Ms DeBrouwer opened up her own shop at 575 Ontario St. S.

"I was shocked, very shocked," she said. "I was very surprised and honoured."

Ms DeBrouwer began her career by offering tax advice for farmers on a con-

tract basis.

That got her looking in the direction of full-time work as a financial planner.

"I had no experience, but I got into a company willing to train me," she said. "I started looking at related careers."

From there, she perfected her skills at the now defunct Donaldson-Bourgon company in town, and went out on her own last May.

"It's a much bigger challenge, but it's a good challenge," said Ms DeBrouwer. "I've really enjoyed it."

As her nomination can attest, she has also enjoyed community support.

"Things have gone very well for me," she said.

For Ms Doddington, opening up her own private daycare in the 1980s was a result of the frustration she felt as a worker in the industry.

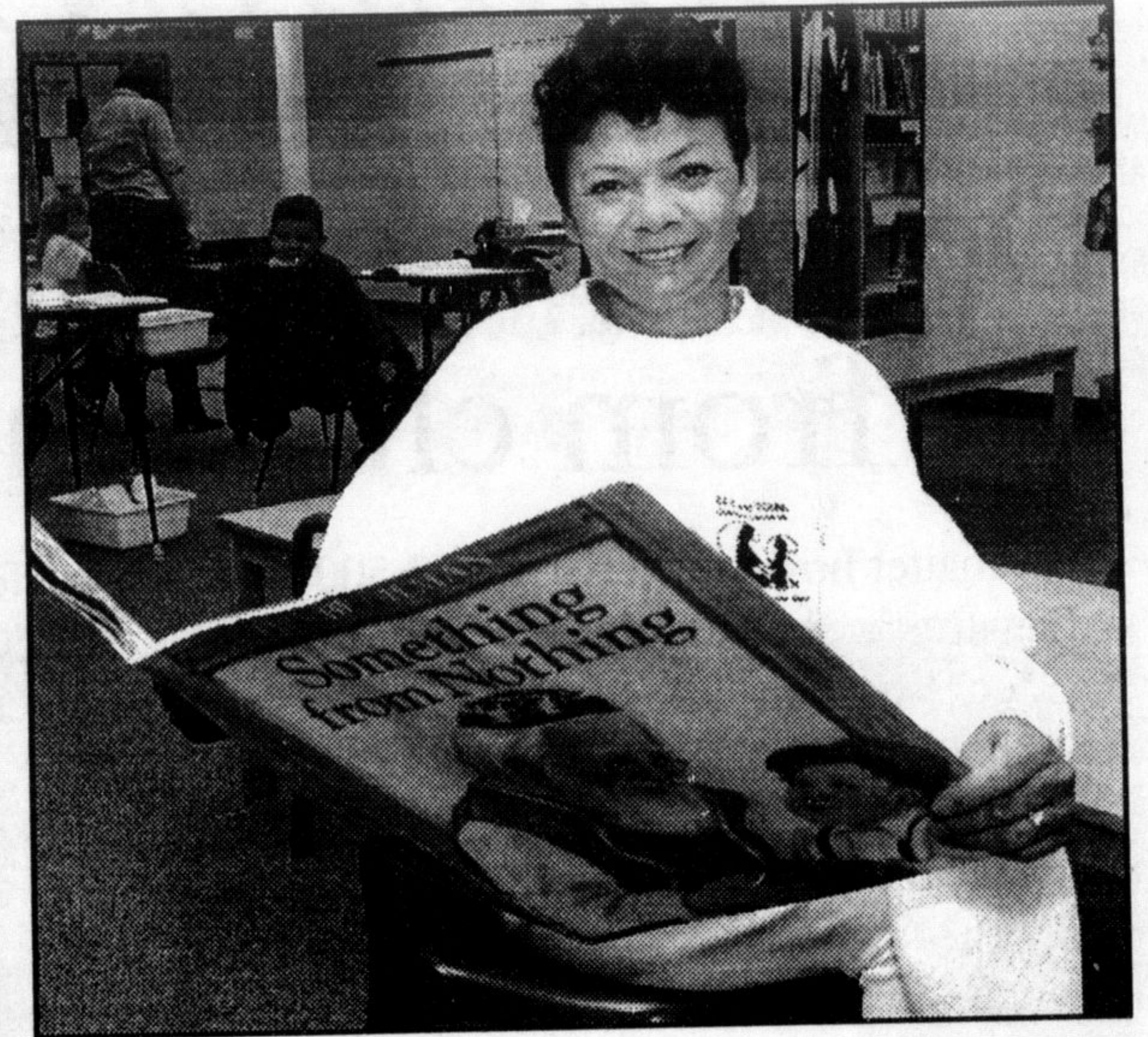
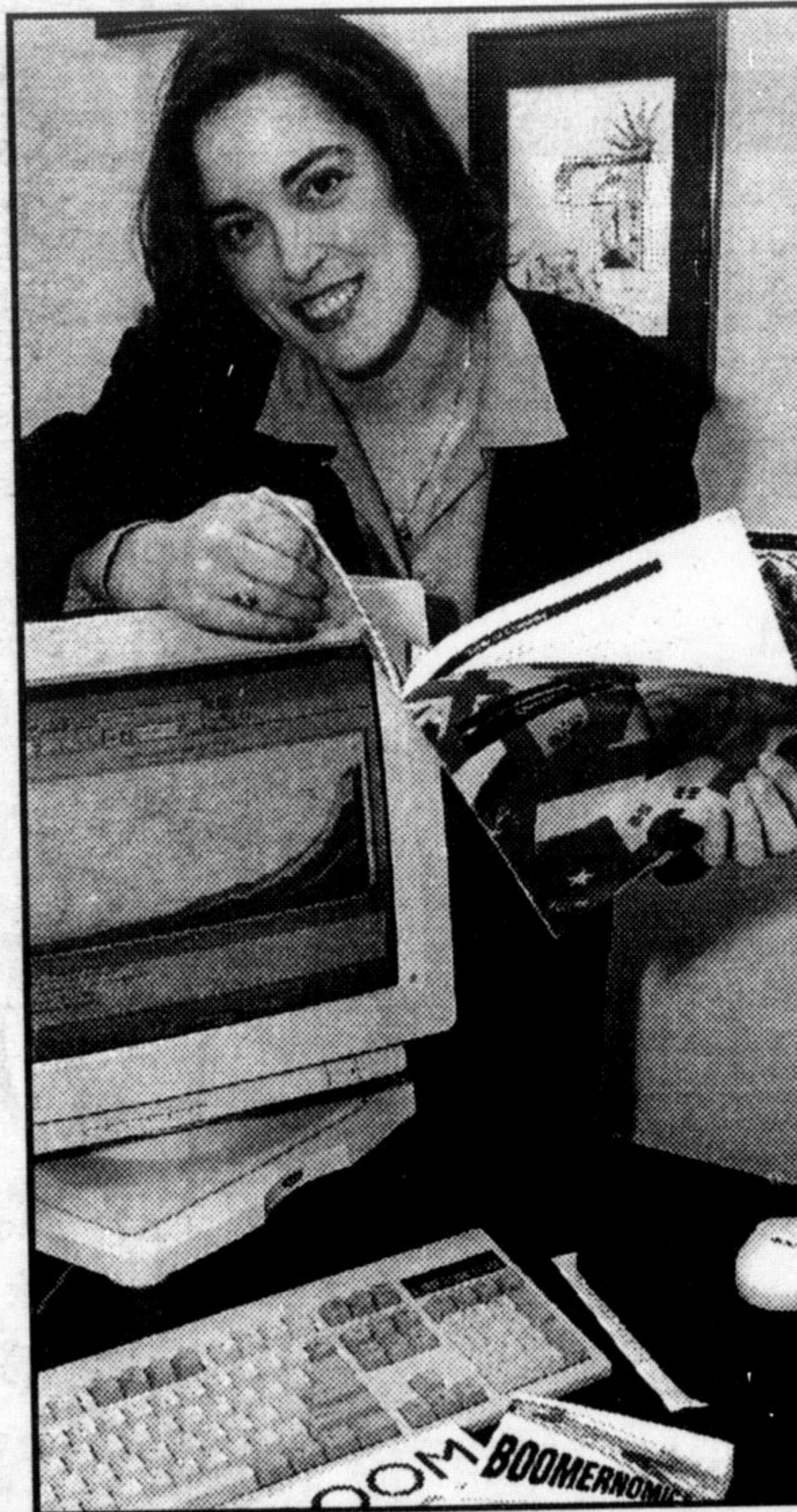
"I thought, I've either got to get out of the profession or try to change it," she said.

She chose the latter, buying an existing centre at the back of a church. When she took over the 65-capacity school, only 11 children were enrolled.

Within six weeks, that had ballooned to 50.

"We had no money, we had nothing," said Ms Doddington. "But you know when you know you can do it. We were taking a

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Photos by GRAHAM PAINE

Melissa DeBrouwer (left) keeps the golden years glittering while Edwina Doddington (above) helps childhood shine for local kids. The two are vying for the Milton Chamber of Commerce Business Woman of the Year Award.

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