

Many local groups benefit from nominees' charity

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Big businesses with big hearts. That's a common theme among this year's nominees for Business of the Year (26 employees or more).

All three contenders — SKD Company, Wallace Pontiac Buick and Mohawk Raceway — not only thrive within their respective industries, but go out of their way to give back to the community that support them.

SKD Company director of operations Ed Cooray said he was pleased to hear about the nomination and that the annual Milton Chamber of Commerce awards are a positive reflection on the community.

As for his automotive assembly and supplies business, he stressed SKD's success lies in knowing what the future holds and being ready for it now.

"We're already planning for 2004," he said. "Working ahead is the key."

The 278-employee company, which is poised to add about two dozen jobs later this year, is an ongoing supporter of local public schools and blood donor clinics as well as Milton District Hospital, the Milton Santa Claus Parade and Halton Women's Place.

Equally supportive of the town is Wallace Pontiac Buick — whose main beneficiary is the local sports community. Roughly a dozen teams enjoy sponsorship each year by the downtown car dealership.

Others that enjoy a financial boost from Wallace include the United Way and Rose Cherry's Home.

Speaking on behalf of dealership owner Bill Wallace, general manager Peter Smith said he was "pretty excited" about the nomination, adding "I think recognition is more important in a small community like this than say in Toronto because everybody

knows each other here."

Mr. Smith said a team effort and dedication to service and building good client relationships is at the heart of Wallace's ongoing prosperity.

"I'd say it's the consistency in our service and staff that's the difference," he remarked.

Mohawk Racetrack not only enriches Milton as a favourable tourist destination, but also supports a number of local charities including Rose Cherry's Home and the annual Curl 4 Cancer Golf Tournament.

In addition, a portion of the gaming facil-

ity's slot revenues goes to the Town — and subsequently benefit a number of organizations.

Meanwhile, the addition of slots at Mohawk have boosted its popularity over the past couple of years, stated Ontario Jockey Club vice-president Hugh Mitchell.

"We're experiencing a bit of a renaissance at the tracks now with the new slot machines. It's a very unique facility and one that's very popular," he said.

The OJC vice-president was thrilled to learn of the nomination, stating, "We're all very grateful for the recognition."



Ed Cooray



Peter Smith

Five local schools are honoured

Five Milton schools will be honoured during the Blue Planet 2001 event today at the Ontario Place Cinesphere in Toronto for demonstrating leadership in environmental responsibility.

Martin Street, Percy W. Merry, Robert Baldwin, Our Lady of Victory and St. Peter's schools will receive the Environmental Achievement Award.

The awards formally recognize students, teachers and volunteers who have placed a priority on protecting, preserving and enhancing the environment.

Students will be shown the IMAX film Blue Planet — a film about Earth as seen from space. The film contrasts the natural forces that affect the planet, along with devastating results of human impact.

The master of ceremonies will be Halton Regional Councillor Joan Loughheed.

Keynote speaker will be explorer and entrepreneur Jeff MacInnis, who led the first team to sail the 4,000 km Northwest Passage. Mr. MacInnis was also a former member of the Canadian National Ski Team.

Musical entertainer Chris McKhool is also scheduled to perform.

Blue Planet is presented by Halton Region, in partnership with the Halton District and Halton Catholic District school boards.

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