



Champion COMMUNITY Page

COGECO 14 finds a new home in Milton

Producers say response to move has been terrific

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

The Champion

"Hey, that parking lot looks awfully familiar."

Most Miltonians have no doubt uttered that statement over the past several weeks when clicking on channel 14.

Figured it out yet? It's the parking lot of Laurier Plaza — and just a couple dozen feet away, with a camera ever poised to capture local shoppers during non-programming hours, is COGECO's new base of operations for community programming in north Halton.

Moving south after a lengthy tenure in downtown Acton, COGECO has set up shop in the old Videoflicks storefront — which still features signage of the defunct movie rental franchise.

For those who've only seen it from a distance, the plaza's east corner might still appear vacant. But look a little closer and there may just be a beehive of activity — especially on Mondays at 8 p.m.

That's when co-producer Mike Hancock — who runs the north Halton programming line-up alongside longtime cohort Sandy French — hosts SportsZone Live, which since the move to Milton has enjoyed a new and intriguing backdrop.

New look for SportsZone Live

"We decided to shoot it out front so you could see the parking lot behind us," said Mr. Hancock, who hosts the show with fellow sports enthusiast Brad Houle. "It kind of gives you a skyline look like you see on talk shows. There was some concern the first night with people possibly milling around behind us, but for the most part there wasn't any problems at all."

In fact — judging by initial indications — the move has been nothing but positive. Mr. French said there's been a number of benefits, not the least of which is access to a large pool of high school volunteers, who traditionally keep any community programming operation plugged in.

Said Mr. French, "Now we're able to draw on three high schools instead of just one (in Acton). It's a lot easier for those Milton students who can't drive or don't have a car to help out. We've had a great compliment of volunteers this semester."

Volunteer availability is particularly important for a place like north Halton COGECO — which brings many evening events to its viewers, including council meetings and junior hockey games.

But community involvement isn't limited to volunteer cameramen — or camera women — at north Halton COGECO. Over the years a number of residents have come forward with ideas for new shows.

And that enthusiasm has mushroomed since the move to Milton. "In the last few weeks, we've had a big increase in the number of people pitching show ideas," Mr. Hancock explained. "We've had people come forward in the past, but never with this quality and quantity. And it's familiar faces in the community that we're seeing, which we tend to take a little more seriously."

Added Mr. French, "The response has been overwhelming. I think a lot of it is the accessibility. People walk by or come in and



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

COGECO 14 producers Mike Hancock (left) and Sandy French have been quite pleased with the response since their community programming operation recently set up shop at the Laurier Plaza in Milton.

are able to see what we're doing and that makes them feel more a part of it."

Last but certainly not least in the benefits department is the actual location of north Halton COGECO — which is a little smaller than in Acton but, according to both producers, a much better set-up.

Mr. French and Mr. Hancock now have a more appropriate 'green room' with which to greet guests and walk-in visitors. They also have their own individual work stations, designated storage space and a more efficient layout for all the technical toys used to

polish and broadcast COGECO 14's myriad of shows — which include everything from SportsZone Live and Plugged In! to Money Week, Swap Talk and Optimist TV Bingo.

"It's a smaller building but we're utilizing it a lot better," said Mr. Hancock.

Added Mr. French, "The difference is we had input as to this facility's set-up, which really helped. Overall, things have been very positive."

Those interested in pitching show ideas or becoming a volunteer can call north Halton COGECO at (905) 878-9306.

COGECO 14 Programming Schedule — April 8th - April 15th, 2002.

Keeping North Halton turned ON!

www.cogeco.ca

NORTH HALTON STUDIO
Laurier Plaza
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Proudly serving the communities of Halton Hills, Milton & Rockwood for 33 years

| Monday, April 8th | Tuesday, April 9th | Wednesday, April 10th | Thursday, April 11th | Sunday, April 14th | Monday, April 15th |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| 9:00am Plugged In! - Late Week Edition | 9:00am Plugged In! - Early Week Edition | 9:00am Plugged In! - Early Week Edition | 9:00am Plugged In! - Early Week Edition | 9am, 10am Plugged In! - Late Week Edition | 9:00am Plugged In! - Late Week Edition |
| 10:00am Sunday Replay | 10:00am Monday Replay | 10:00am Tuesday Replay | 10:00am Wednesday Replay | 10:30am Cogeco Sports: Halton High School All-Star Basketball | 10:00am Sunday Replay |
| 5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Early Week Edition | 5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Early Week Edition | 5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Early Week Edition | 5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Late Week Edition | 5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Late Week Edition | 5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Early Week Edition |
| 5:30pm The Issue Is... | 5:30pm Seniors Showcase | 5:30pm Osler Health Connection | 5:30pm Money Week | 5:30pm Money Week | 5:30pm The Issue Is... |
| 6:30pm Money Week | 6:30pm Optimist TV Bingo (Live) | 6:30pm Swap Talk (Live) | 6:30pm Neighbour to Neighbour | 6:30pm Seniors Showcase | 6:30pm Money Week |
| 7:00pm PeopleSpeak | 8:00pm Georgetown Hockey Heritage Awards | 8:00pm Travelling Through Diversity | 8:00pm New Life's 2002 Easter Cantata | 7:00pm The Issue Is... | 7:00pm The Issue Is... |
| 8:00pm SportZONE Live | | | | 8:00pm Neighbour to Neighbour | 8:00pm SportsZONE Live |

Keeping North Halton Turned ON!