

Milton • Means Business

Self-described local computer geek hooks up with Nerds On Site servicing company

By STEVE LeBLANC
The Champion

Hi, I'm a nerd. It's hard to picture this as a successful opening line in any facet of life — including the business world. But for hundreds of computer consultants across North America, it's a calling card that's gaining plenty of attention.

And it's the thinking behind this unusual slogan that attracted self-professed computer geek Greg Beaumont to Nerds On Site — a computer service firm blossoming on both sides of the border, as well as in South Africa.

The 41-year-old Miltonian was certainly no rookie to the computer consulting racket before hooking up with Nerds On Site earlier this year.

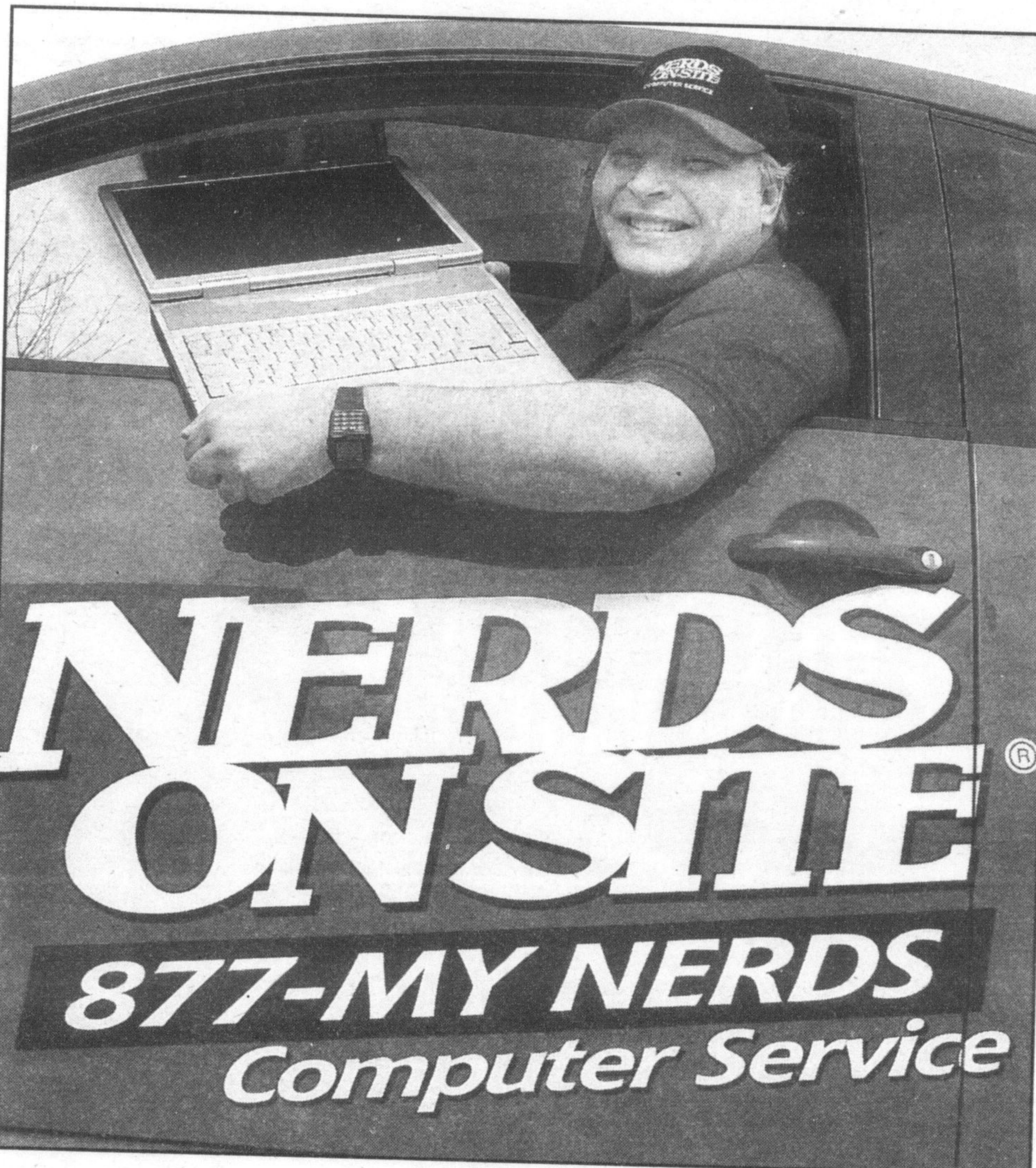
He's been involved in the industry his entire working life — after spending his teenage years building computers at home while his older brothers toiled away at a television repair business — and has serviced just about every client possible, from 'mom and pop' users to Fortune 500 companies.

But Mr. Beaumont liked what he heard during a recent encounter with Nerds On Site personnel. And it wasn't long before he was one of them.

"Actually, I've been a Nerd all along," explained Milton's lone E-Nerd, who holds an honorary Ph.D. from Western University for his work with three-dimensional databases in the early '80s. "I'm truly a computer nerd. On each call we say 'Hi, I'm a nerd' and then wait for the laughter to die down. Everybody gets a kick out of it."

Now equipped with a little red Beetle, affectionately known as a Nerd Mobile within the business, Mr. Beaumont said his new company differs from many of its industry rivals in two key areas.

Firstly, Nerds On Site has dispensed with the more traditional hourly fee in favour of a flat-rate system — which not only helps ensure a



Long-time computer consultant Greg Beaumont is among the newest members of Nerds On Site.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

consultant's efficiency but often means savings for the customer.

And while some servicing firms merely rectify the problem, Nerds On Site explains why it happened to begin with and how it can be avoided in the future.

Added Mr. Beaumont, "We really try to demystify the computer in plain English. We've got normal speak and nerd speak. In fact that's one of the things we're graded on — did your E-

Nerd explain things to you and provide a better understanding of your computer? That's essential.

"We've got a motto here that there are no stupid questions."

That type of fundamental explanation is a much more necessary than many people might imagine. While computer use has filtered into pretty much every area of life since the Atari/Commodore 64 era, Mr. Beaumont said there are still many users without a genuine knowledge of how their machines work — or what they're really capable of.

"There are some people who aren't getting the real benefit out of their computer," he explained. "They buy one, bring it home and then think 'Oh, I better not touch this or something will break'."

That kind of apprehension can be a particular stumbling block nowadays, since the mainstream birth of e-mail forwards and digital photography.

It's uses like that which make personal computer owners feel just as reliant on their machines as business people who depend on them to run their operations.

"Mom and pop users are pretty passionate about their computers. It's really become the social norm rather than the exception," said Mr. Beaumont.

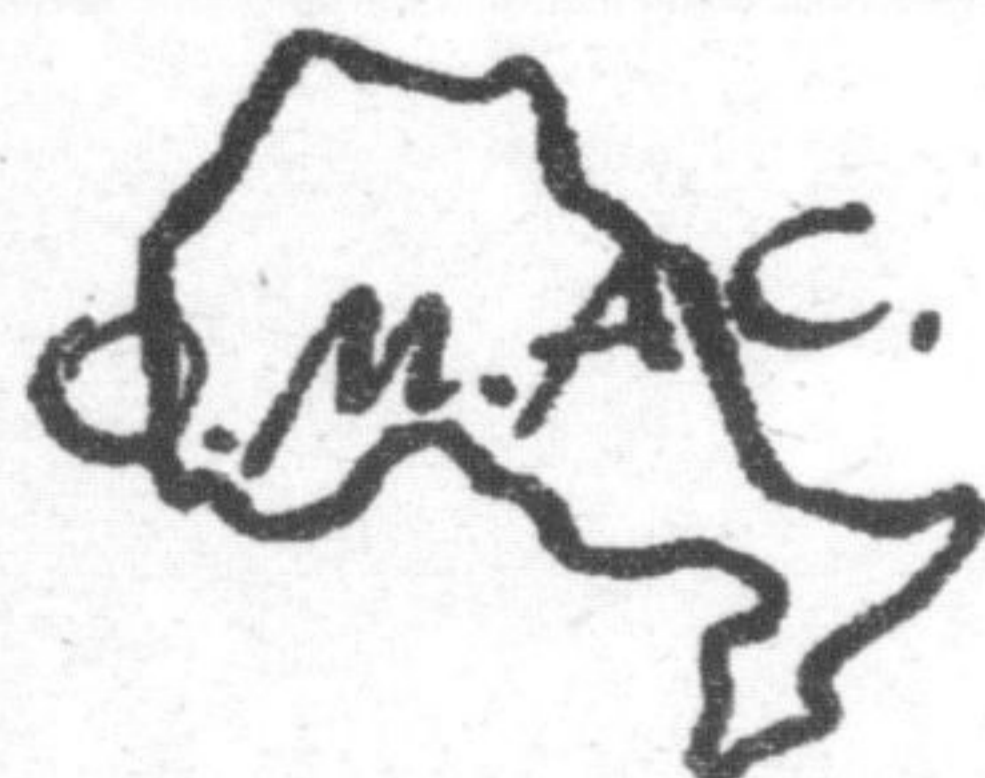
Now part of a three-man team that splits its time between servicing and cold calling, Mr. Beaumont and his Nerd Mobile is quickly becoming a familiar site across Halton.

But Nerds On Site is always looking to boost its visibility, and to that end its Milton newcomer is in the process of helping organize an E-NERD parade in town.

"The little red cars really create a stir," said Mr. Beaumont, referring to similar events he's witnessed and participated in.

For more information about Nerds On Site, or to book an appointment, call (416) 684-4885 or visit its Web site at www.nerdsonsite.com.

Steve LeBlanc can be reached at sleblanc@haltonsearch.com.



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