

Milton Means Business



Getting in shape

Inches Away Fitness and Toning Studio manager Bonnie Nowak (standing) discusses getting in shape for spring with owner Hedi Nowak. The business is located on Bronte Street.

New professional women's group officially formed

By MELANIE CUMMINGS
Special to The Champion

It seems fitting that a newly-created women's advocacy group would invite to its inaugural meeting a woman who has taken a lead role in improving lives.

Before Mary Anne Chambers became the MPP for Scarborough east and Ontario's minister of training, colleges and universities, she was an active and vocal proponent of several educational, healthcare and human rights agencies.

The award-winning philanthropist was the guest speaker at the Halton chapter of Business and Professional Women (BPW).

The local organization with 15 paid members so far, celebrated its formation with 150 guests at a gala dinner last month.

While the international group's roots date back to the 1930s and has long held status at the United Nations regarding women's issues, Halton BPW is still laying the groundwork to determine the type of projects on which it will focus.

According to BPW Halton founder Helen Lomax, "We're so new, we don't know what issues we'd like to tackle first."

Encouraging more women to join the ranks of political representation — as Ms Chambers has done — is among the ideas local members have floated out so far, said Ms Lomax.

As the former senior vice-president of the Bank of Nova Scotia, Ms Chambers emigrated from Jamaica in 1976 working during the day and attending night school.

"There's no doubt we've come a long way in regards to greater inclusion of women in society. Some of us are old enough to have heard in our youth that only males needed to

pursue education," said Ms Chambers.

Today the number of female graduates exceeds male graduates in some universities.

But barriers to advancement, especially for minorities, still need to be eradicated, she added.

Ms Chambers is excited that Premier Dalton McGuinty is putting a priority on expediting accreditations and assessments of internationally trained graduates.

More than 70 per cent of immigrants who arrive in this country already have completed a post-secondary education, said the training, colleges and universities minister.

"The GTA loses \$554 million annually as a result of internationally trained individuals not being used in our society, to the extent that their skills would allow them to, simply because they aren't accredited."

Already a bridge training program has effectively doubled the number of nurses now working across the province. The accreditation program has also improved employment opportunities for newcomers previously trained in the fields of pharmacy, teaching and engineering, added Ms Chambers.

"The 21st century will belong to countries which invest in human capital and keep pace with emerging knowledge and technologies," she said.

To that end the Business and Professional Women of Halton intends to build up such future potential. The group meets on the first Wednesday of each month.

Membership costs \$125 per year with a one-time initiation of \$50.

For more information about the new Halton chapter, call Helen Lomax at (519) 853-3809.

Harrop starts new fundraiser

Stemming from a desire to support its community, the Harrop Restaurant on Steeles Avenue has come up with a new fundraising venture.

For a donation of \$20, patrons can sit at table number four, by the fireplace in the Green Room, or table number 34, by the fireplace in the Carter Room.


The money will go to the patron's choice of three charities — the Milton District Hospital Foundation, the United Way or Halton Women's Place.

Harrop Restaurant owner Robert Goderre said no one will be seated at either table without paying the \$20, including groups booking the rooms.


Also, patrons must pay cash up front, and fill out a personal information form, for a tax receipt, before the order is taken.

Harrop's goal for the first year of this new idea is to raise a minimum of \$30,000. The two tables will be called their 'Charity Tables'.

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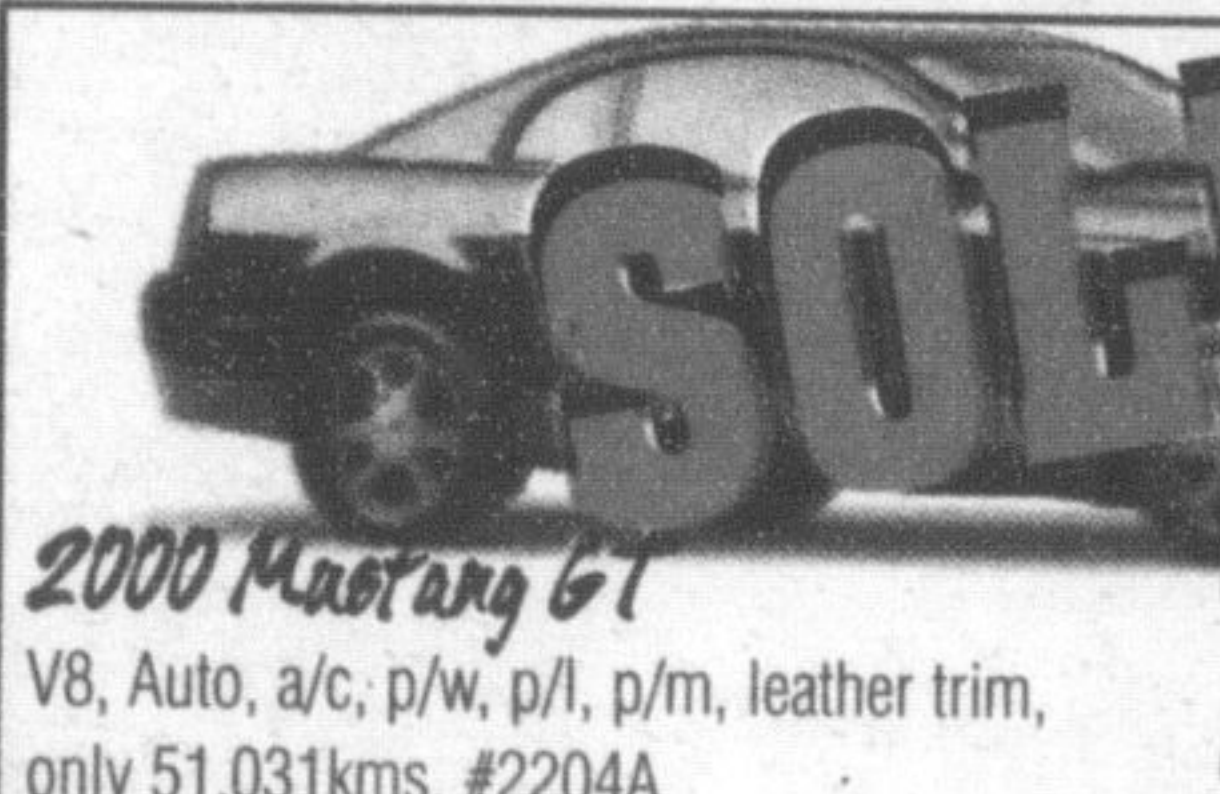


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