

Environmentalism tells audience at chairman's breakfast to keep area 'very special place that it is'

By MELANIE HENNESSEY

The Champion

Local residents were reminded of the role they play in preserving Halton's natural world at the Bell/Chairman's Breakfast on the Environment last Friday morning.

Everyone from school groups to corporations and environmental committees came out for the event at Rattlesnake Point Golf Club that featured renowned author and deep sea explorer Dr. Joe MacInnis as the keynote speaker.

Dr. MacInnis presented a mix of stories of his travels and tidbits on preserving the Region's environment.

He was the first person to dive under the North Pole, and among the first five people to view the underwater remains of the Titanic.

"I work in the world's largest environment — the ocean," he said.

He told the crowd that to preserve Halton's environment, people need to demonstrate high-empathy leadership and communicate beyond words.

"To protect the environment here in Halton, all of you have to project your minds into what that environment is," he said.

Dr. MacInnis went on to encourage the crowd to keep Halton the "very special place that it is."

"The future for environmental leadership is something that dwells in you," he said.

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DR. JOE MACINNIS

He entertained the audience with video clips of some of his deep sea adventures and the work that he's done with director James Cameron.

He showed a clip from Mr. Cameron's upcoming film *Aliens of the Deep*, a 3-D Imax documentary of 40 dives made to volcanic vents of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, scheduled for release in January.

Dr. MacInnis worked with Mr. Cameron on this film and will be putting out a book on the expedition, also in January.

"I wanted to be the guy that watched the exploration unfold," Dr. MacInnis said of his work with Mr. Cameron.

He wrapped up his presentation with a diving-related quote that he said defines Halton's relationship with its natural world: "When you dive deep into the heart of the ocean, there's two rules — take care of each other, and take care of each other."

Halton Chair Joyce Savoline said Dr. MacInnis' presentation was both "entertaining and educational."

She said the presentation tied into "the awareness that we always try to create about a healthy environment and how that contributes to our quality of life."

Dr. MacInnis' talk also had an effect on those in attendance, both young and old.

Oakville Christian School grade 8 student Caroline Beckley said the presentation taught her that, "We need to be confident. We can't just give up."

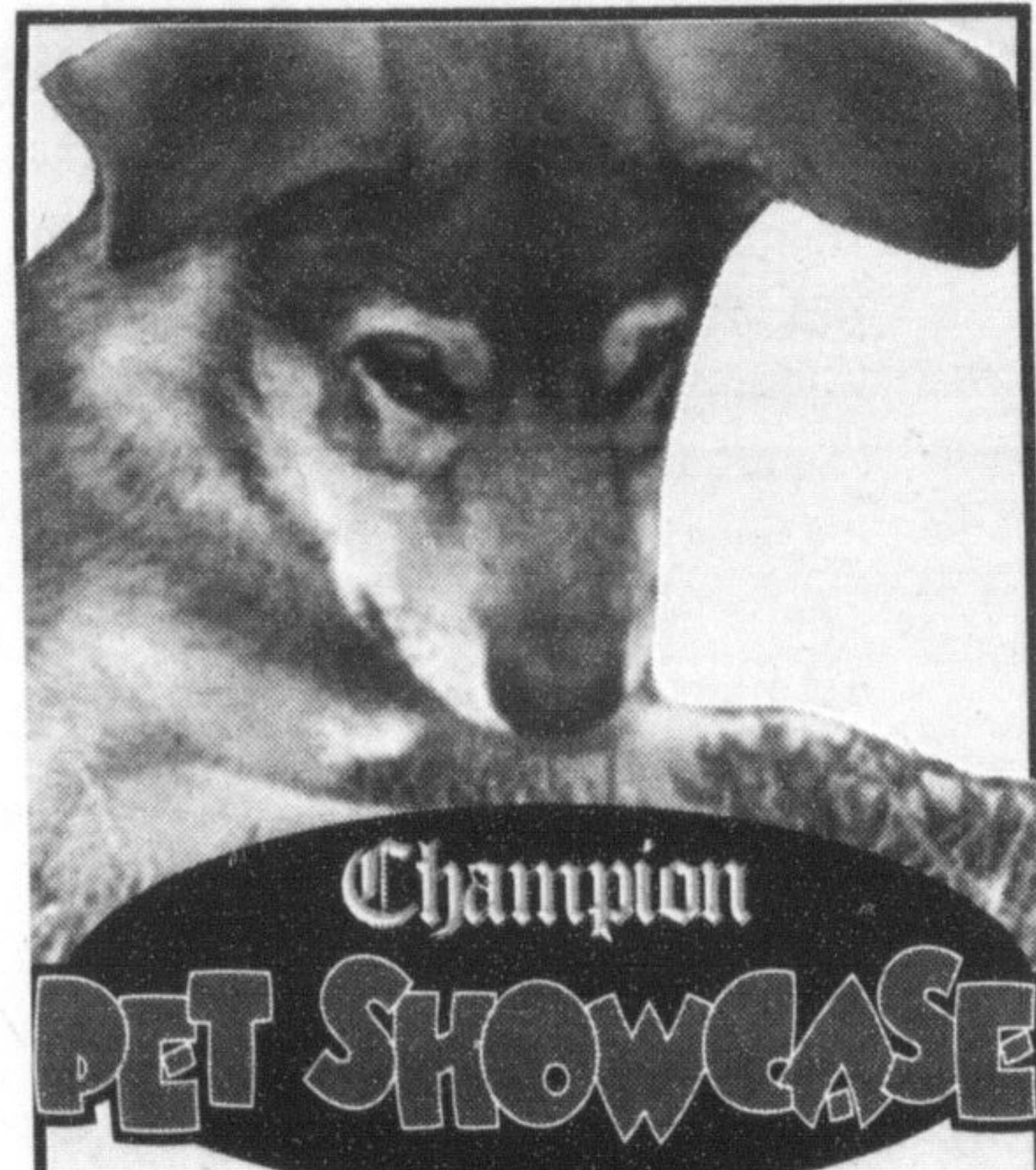
Commercial realtor James Weber of Burlington said he also found Dr. MacInnis informative.

"We need to think globally, not just locally," he said of what he gathered from the speech. "There's plenty that everybody can do to help (preserve the environment)."

The event was directed by a round table of volunteers from Halton's school boards and corporate and community sectors. It was presented in partnership with the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation and supported by Bell Canada.

Ms Savoline said the Region will host another breakfast event in April.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com.



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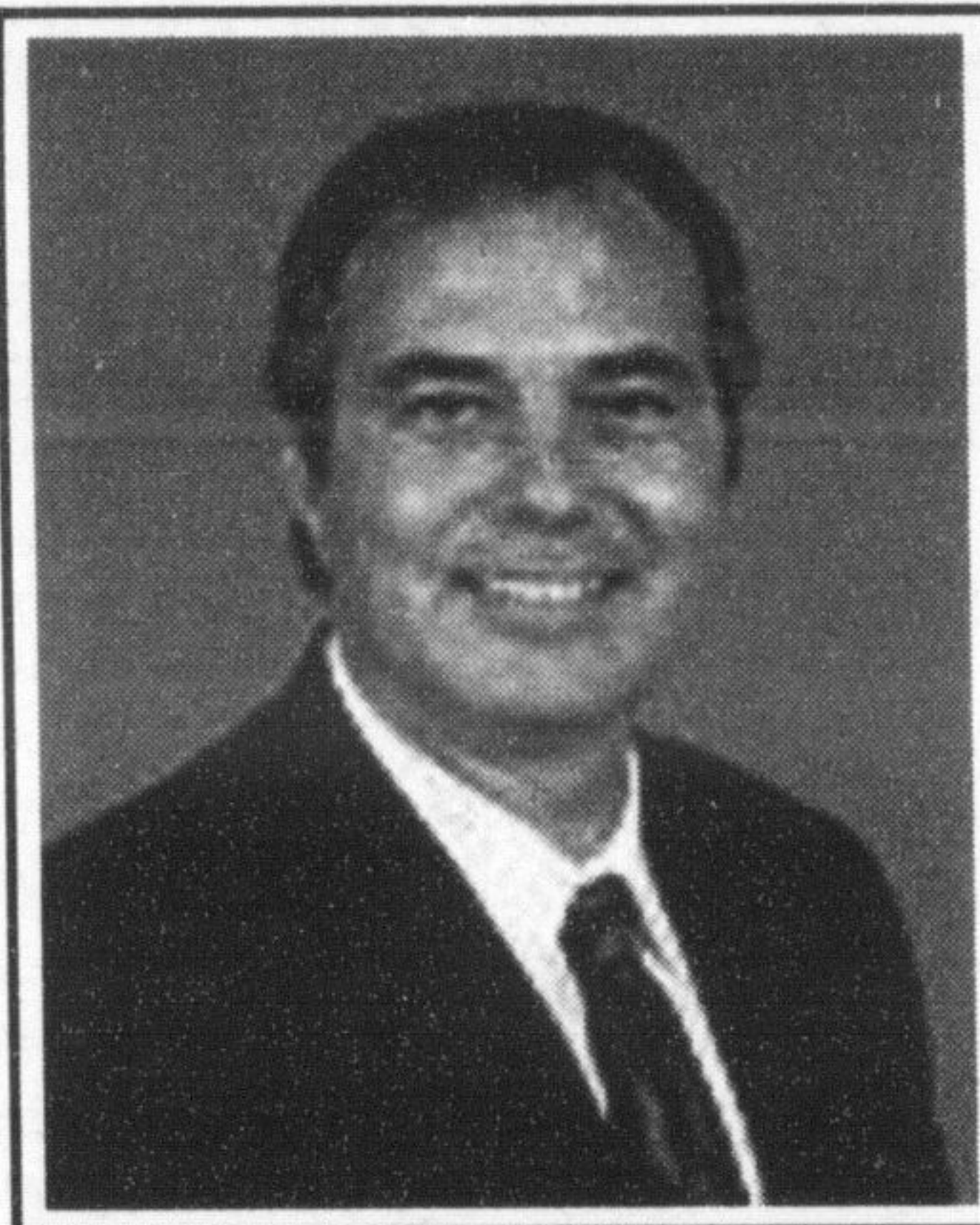
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