

# The Chamber of Commerce is expanding its horizons

By LAURA MALIS

Oakville Chamber of Commerce president Evelyn Hartwell remembers the organization when it was in its infancy.

Now, 29 years after its charter was signed, the chamber has reached adulthood in its efforts to represent the businessman's interests in the community.

Reaching far beyond the bounds of a social organization, the chamber has moved into an active position in Oakville's political and educational arenas in the last few years.

This summer, the chamber made its biggest leap toward active participation in the town's affairs by hiring full-time general manager Nancy Fitzpatrick.

"The full time general manager's entire job is to develop chamber participation in community affairs," Hartwell said. "Naturally we can get a lot more done with one full-time person than with many business people who must divide their time between their businesses and the chamber."

The hiring of a full-time general manager will also help the chamber continue its movement from an introspective businessman's association to a vocal, active body, she said.

"Right now, we are very interested in a viable regional industrial development commission, housing, education and transportation," Hartwell said.

"The chamber isn't just interested in what is good for business. While we are the voice of the business community, we worry about the community as a whole and are interested in the well-being of all the people."

Despite the chamber's increasing participation in community affairs, the organization has had its problems.

Listing 300 dues-paying members from Oakville's business and professional community, the chamber's

membership has dropped from 600 seven years ago.

Last March, the chamber was forced to close its restaurant club which "was financially a losing proposition," according to general manager Fitzpatrick.

"We didn't have a large enough base to draw from in Oakville and people don't like to eat in the same place every afternoon," she said.

Replacing the luncheon club are bi-monthly luncheon meetings featuring visiting speakers.

The chamber is currently working on a number of projects designed to help members of the business community.

A brief promoting a regional industrial commission is currently in the works in order to help the region develop more land suitable for industrial use.

"An industrial commission is not the final answer to attracting industry to the area, but it would certainly help," Fitzpatrick said.

"There is quite a bit of industrial land in Oakville in private hands and we think the town and the region should have serviced industrial lands available and in the proper zoning to attract industry and minimize delay," she said.

In order to help the retail sector, the chamber is trying to co-ordinate mall and downtown business interests on common retail problems.

The construction of an Oakville marina is receiving the attention of the chamber as one of its committees researches the feasibility and potential market of a marina.

The chamber's aid and attention has also been given to the Job Exploration by Students summer program. The exploration program provides summer jobs for students who may not return to school in September.



Oakville Chamber of Commerce president Evelyn Hartwell (seated) with full-time general manager Nancy Fitzpatrick.

## A buried lakeshore treasure?

Is there a treasure buried on the lake shore near the creek that enters the lake between the Eighth and Ninth Lines?

According to an old legend current many years ago, a company of soldiers at the time of the war of 1812 were taking a sum of money in gold to Burlington Bay by boat, to pay the British soldiery.

As they neared the site of Oakville they saw a ship in the offing that they took to be an American gunboat. Fearing that it would overtake them and the money would be seized by the enemy they put it into the mouth of Coates' Creek. Removing the chest containing the money, they buried it under a tree.

Many years later some boys and girls heard this legend from an old man. They went to a fortune teller, who told them that the treasure was beneath three oak stumps near a creek. The youngsters started a search.

They dug in relays, mostly at night, but their quest was unsuccessful. One of the group, Noel Mackinder, who lived until 1941, recalled that when the Coates family, who owned a sawmill on the property, moved away, the mill was taken over by an Irishman.

At first the newcomer was hardly able to raise enough money to pay the rent. Then, in some unaccountable manner, he had plenty of money and was lending it to his neighbors at 20 per cent interest. MacKinder said that the man might have located the buried treasure, but that if he hadn't, he himself knew where it might be.

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