

Clean up your Hall!

Spring is in the air, and the Nassagaweya Women's Institute celebrates its arrival with an organized clean up of the gardens of the Nassagaweya Community Centre (Brookville Hall). Members will gather outside the Hall on Wednesday, May 10 at 7.30 p.m. All residents of Nassagaweya are invited to join in. Everyone is encouraged to don work clothes, put on a pair of gardening gloves, and bring rakes, spades, trowels or wheelbarrows to pick up the community spirit and help keep Nassagaweya beautiful.

For further information, please contact Katharine Garwood at 854-2470 or Fran Pearce at 854-2252.



Mull'n it Over

with

Bonnie Mullen

When my aunt Tish was born in January 1911 my grandparents named her Letitia Blanche in honour of the doctor who delivered her. Dr. Letitia K. Meade-Sirrs practiced medicine from her home office at Haltonville, then known as Sodom, the second house north of 15 Sideroad on Guelph Line. Her house is now home to Paul and Debbie Foster and family.

Letitia was born in that house in 1857 the same year her father opened a shoe shop there. The hamlet was known as the home of the medical profession in Nassagaweya Township because the first doctor arrived in 1852 and was quickly followed by six others but 16 years later they had all left. With two hotels and several stores, it was a bustling hamlet.

After a seven year teaching career Letitia decided to go into medicine and enrolled at the Ontario Medical College for Women at 227 Sumach Street, Toronto in 1887. Because the University of Toronto was closed to women, a group of prominent citizens and members of the medical profession founded this college and purchased the property for \$1,411 in 1883. The college operated until 1906 by which time the University of Toronto was accept-

Haltonville's female doctor Dr. Letitia Meade-Sirrs

ing women, but the building stood until 1949 when it was demolished to make way for the Regent park housing project.

When Letitia graduated in 1891 with her Master of Surgery she was one of only 18 women doctors in Ontario. She returned to her family home in Haltonville and hung a brass plate on the door bearing her name - Dr. Letitia K. Meade, announcing she was open for business. Her ledger dated 1907 indicates a house call cost \$1.50, tooth extractions 25¢, confinements \$6, and a bottle of medicine 50¢. "Medicine for Babe," presumably an infant remedy, was 25¢.

After her marriage, the brass plate on her door read, "Dr. Letitia K. Meade-Sirrs." Apparently she and her husband had their differences and he left after their son was born. She and her father went their separate ways too, as he moved elsewhere in the hamlet but her mother stayed with her. In 1919 the practice was closed but the plate remained on the door.

Dr. Meade-Sirrs retired in Walkerton, Ontario, but kept her house in Haltonville just as it had been, even after her death in 1943. Apparently her son had no interest in the property and over

time it fell into disrepair.

My parents purchased the house next door, now home to Bill and Onnie Roberts and their son, Christian, in 1951. It was an estate sale and had been vacant for several years too.

As a child growing up, the vacant but furnished house next door was a source of forbidden adventure. I recall sneaking in, wandering about in awe, leafing through old medical books and playing the dust covered grand piano. The stairway to the basement had shelves that held various sized bottles of medications.

I was reprimanded numerous times and told not to go there but the temptation was too great. My father called the health unit and had the medications removed. Eventually other people started visiting the place too and the furnishings began to disappear. Finally, much to my disappointment the house was sold, the bush that had grown up around it was cleared, the house was renovated and a family moved in.

There are still a few old timers in Nassagaweya who remember the doctor. There continues to be a certain mystery about her, her family, and why she departed, leaving her things behind.

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Conservation Halton turfs nine Foundation Directors

(continued from page 1)

A point of contention for some is that three members of the Foundation - Brian Penman, Dennis Gregor and Jean Williams - will continue on the Board. Maguire-Garber explains that these "members of the Conservation Halton Board of Directors also serve on the Foundation as appointments from Conservation Halton. Of course, when they sit at the Conservation Halton Board table, the members of the Board are acting on behalf of Conservation Halton."

It was in their capacity as Conservation Halton Board members that Gregor and Williams made and seconded the motion to reconsider the earlier approvals of their fellow foundation directors. It was their amendment to the original motion that retroactively changed the terms of the appointments to end on March 30, 2000.

The motion, passed by a vote of 6-5, disturbs Mayor Krantz. "It was a close vote, that will tell you that there was a fair amount of concern among the other members," Krantz added if he was able to attend the March 30 meeting, the vote would have been 6 - 6.

"I certainly didn't support the dismissal. I personally didn't think it was the right and appropriate thing to do," Krantz said.

In former provincial cabinet minister Snow's estimation, "This has set Conservation Halton and the Foundation back quite a ways. I think it was a terrible way to treat a number of dedicated hard working Board members, members that have given their time and money to the Foundation. If they don't think we as a Board deserve an explanation, I think the public that pays the bills is entitled to an explanation."

Councillor Lunau also expressed concern. "When Directors agree to serve on a Foundation, they accept a duty to the donors who have entrusted them with gifts and endowments. How can a Foundation maintain public trust if its directors are so easily cast aside? This Foundation is not a fundraising committee of the Authority. It is supposed to operate at arm's length from the Authority. How can it maintain public trust if it serves only at the pleasure of the Authority?"

Councillor Penman is con-

cerned about the emotions that are running high around this issue. "This decision in no way diminishes the value of the contribution of these people over the years. This is about redefining and realigning."

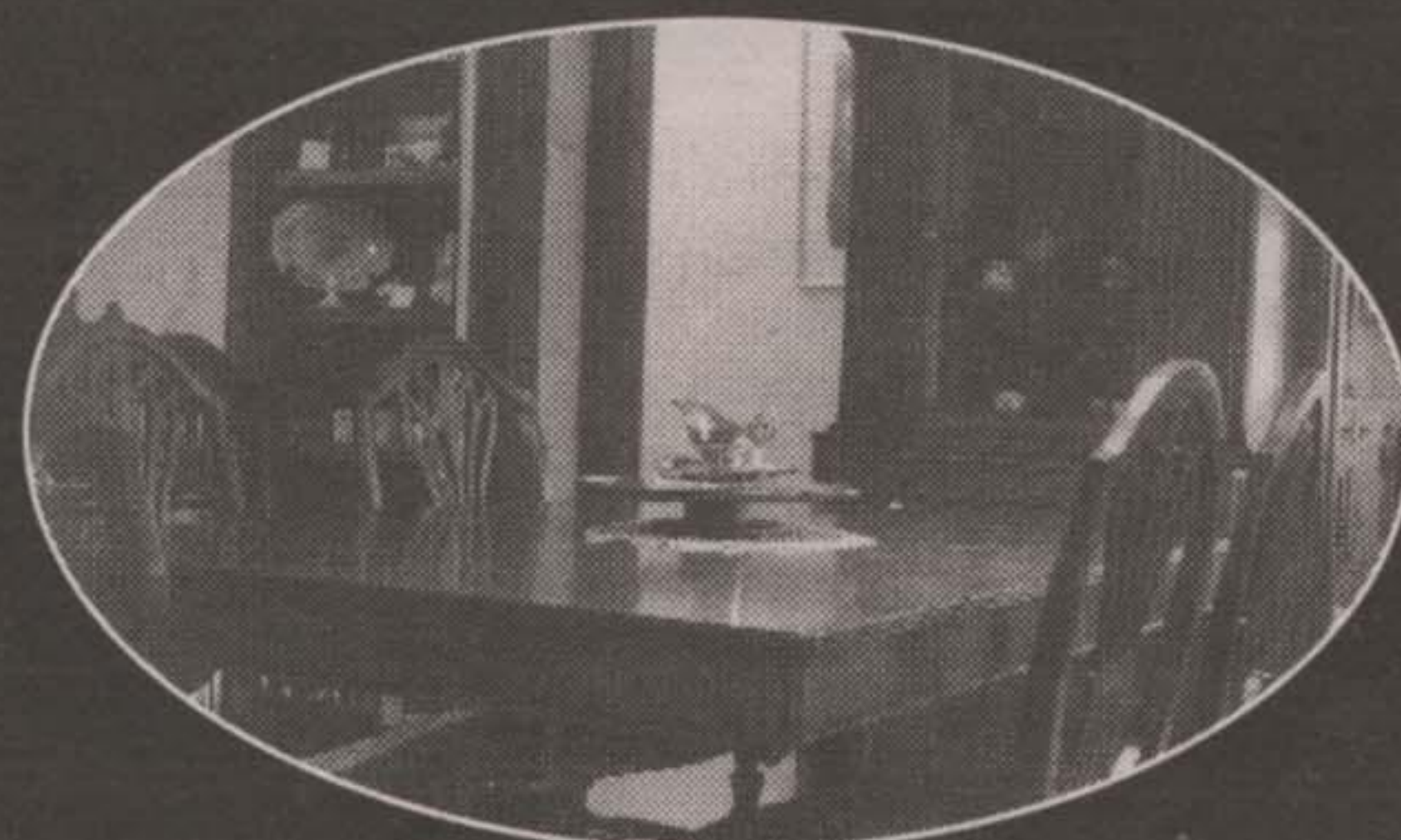
Haas agrees, adding, "There's a time for talk and a time for action. There was too much talk that was not in line with the aims, goals and strategy of the Foundation."

At this point, five of the nine members of the Foundation have re-applied and undergone initial interviews conducted by an interview team of Dennis Gregor, Jean Williams, Theresa Maguire-Garber, and Melanie Wojick, executive director of the Foundation.

This core group will then move forward with a recruitment program. The annual general meeting of the Foundation will take place on May 17 and Gregor, Penman and Williams as members appointed and representing Conservation Halton, will recommend new appointments to the Foundation Board.

Foundation appointments then must be ratified at the May 18 Conservation Halton Board of Directors meeting.

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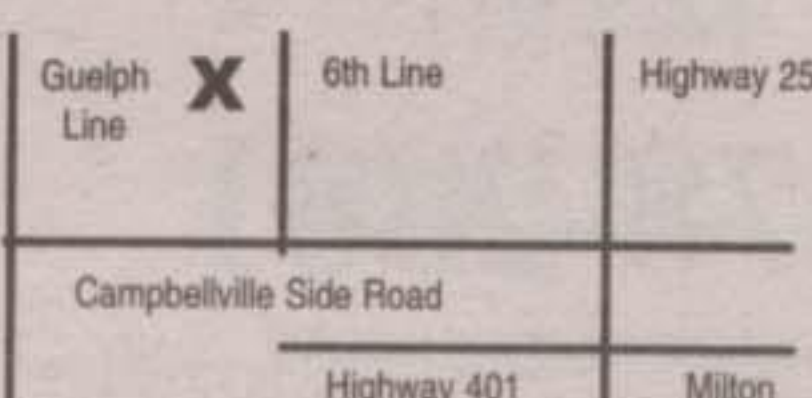
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