



PHOTO - HENRY BURY

Jean Cunningham

The matchmaker

It's called "open adoption" where the birth mother helps choose the adoptive parents for her child and may also have contact with them as the child grows up.

"I support open adoption in most situations because the birth mom feels better about her decision and her child will have a better knowledge of his or her own roots. There are no more secrets."

Cunningham has been involved in various community endeavours outside her profession.

She and her husband were instrumental in opening the second Cheshire Home in Canada — on John Street in Belleville — for physically handicapped adults. Their son, Sandy, was left a quadriplegic following a car accident in 1972 and lived in the house for a period.

Cunningham volunteered in Scouting and Guiding, belonged to the IODE here and canvassed for the United Way, Kidney Foundation and Cancer Society.

One of her favourite hobbies is writing. She has written histories on Deloro and the CAS for the Hastings County Historical Society.

As she prepares to leave Belleville, Cunningham doesn't rule out working again.

"Will I really retire, who knows? There are openings for contract workers in private adoption out West."