

Betty Fisher, on being a trustee



Betty Fisher

by Eric Elstone

Betty Fisher can expect to see the results of her year's efforts as Halton Board of Education Trustee for Acton and Esqueping in the second half of her term.

Before being elected in November, 1978, beating out incumbent Bert Hinton and Pam Sheldon, Mrs. Fisher was a critic of both the Halton Board of Education and Halton Hills Library Board—on different issues. She criticised the school board for its values education program and with others also protested expansion of the board's Burlington headquarters. For a time Mrs. Fisher was communications co-ordinator for the Halton Renaissance Committee.

Mrs. Fisher was also the board of education's representative on the Halton Hills Library Board while she and other taxpayers battled against the proposed Cedarvale library in Georgetown at the Ontario Municipal Board. They won.

Among the board's accomplishments in 1979 was the completion and determination of what is needed for a systematic evaluation of core curriculum in the language program of Grades four, five and six. Also a draft discipline policy, which Trustee Fisher promoted, recently came to the board.

Trustee Fisher picked up the chairmanship of the year-round staff-board committee and also sits on other board committees.

The following is the text of a recent interview with Betty Fisher.

Do you have a personal philosophy of education?

First thing, I wouldn't want kids to go through the education system of my time. It lacked creativity. It was lock-step and stifling. I learned how to read, write, spell and do mathematics accurately and with ease. After that it provided me with useless trivia.

After children learn the basics, education is to develop them so they may form choices. The more exposure kids have to things, the better they will be able to make choices.

I feel we are not doing enough for bright children. We are only paying lip service for bright children. Not only in Halton, but in Ontario.

Some of your work at the board seems to take the form of motivating people. Agree?

I'm not a person who sits and waits for things to happen. I'm probably, if you like to describe me: pushing the little guy back, then my involvement almost becomes an obsession. Not almost, it is an obsession.

Do you agree or disagree with the interpretation you are a critic turned worker with respect to the library and school boards?

That's what always starts me off. Once something concerns me, it is part of my personality to get completely involved. I'm not the kind of person to sit on the sidelines.

And when bureaucracy starts pushing back, pushing the little guy back, then my involvement almost becomes an obsession. Not almost, it is an obsession.

It's not a natural course of events for me to start fighting and then at a certain point of time, work on the inside. It was not planned or contrived.

I'm saying there is a place for fighting issues from the outside. It's healthy to campaign against something. I feel we need groups to keep politicians on their toes. But there comes a point where you can only do so much to effect change.

What is your political philosophy in a nutshell?

When you cease to change something, you get out and let someone else have a try.

Have you lived what the school board perceived as your link with Renaissance?

Definitely.

But I never felt that was something I had to

live down anyway. People should accept you for what you say; not the group.

I don't really care what group I was connected with. I held my own views. I was my own person all the time. I was not manipulated by any group.

If I had to do it all over again I would. I feel that positive about my activities before I came to the board. I feel I put up the best campaign for the rights of parents and children. I believed I was correct at the time and I now know that I was.

How do you go about her trustee work?

I work quietly.

The main thing of the job is to bring about better education for kids. I've found I don't have to be high profile to get changes for kids. This method works for me and I will continue to be low profile as long as it works.

Most changes are brought about by compatibility with administration. Meaning you not manipulate them; they do not manipulate you.

To every problem; to every idea there are two sides and the best thing is to learn both sides. Do your homework, analyse and bring that to the board. Generally speaking, if you do your homework and you argue—not to put a person down—people see validity in what you say. To me that's the only way to convince other people.

If I have something (to be done) I run it past principals I know, teachers, parents and administration before I bring it to the board. Before I

make a report I run it past friends, some trustees and administration for their views. Before I do something, I get feedback.

Is being a trustee fun?

Yeah, I love it.

It's the challenge of taking a particular topic, researching, getting peoples' ideas. It's fascinating. You learn not only the topic; you learn other facets: personalities, what makes people tick and why decisions are made the way they are.

It's busy and I like being busy.

It has demands and I like demands.

You're around people.

I like seeing children grow academically and psychologically.

J. Kohari D.T. J. Novak D.T.

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Board asked to oppose dope

The Halton Roman Catholic school board has been asked to comment on the Norfolk Board of Education resolution regarding decriminalizing of marijuana.

In the correspondence Norfolk said they believed the decriminalization would increase the use of the drug.

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Library looseleaf

by Esther Taylor

All the main characters in 'Needles' have warts, including the hero a brilliant lawyer, who is trying to kick the drug habit to which he was introduced while in university. In drug world jargon, he is "wired," a condition of which his wife and some friends are aware. Yet because of his courtroom brilliance, he is retained as prosecuting counsel in the case against Dr. Au, a modern Fu Manchu, drug dealer and murderer.

Saskatchewan-born author, William Deverell, is obviously familiar with Vancouver's drug scene, its pushers, dealers, victims and undercover narcotics police. 'Needles' which won for Deverell a \$50,000 Seal First Novel award is not recommended for finicky readers. It's a tough, realistic novel with a shocker of an ending. Dr. Au, fit only for haunting nightmares, makes one shudder at the thought of submitting to acupuncture. The evil doctor uses needles as weapons in his grisly murders. Definitely not the kind of practitioner to preside at a sick bed.

Deverell began writing at 18, as a police reporter, salary, \$35 per week. He started his own law firm in Vancouver 1965. He is a founding member and president of British Columbia's Civil Liberties Association.

John Wainwright depicts cops with warts in 'Take Murder' a police whodunit with three murders, the victims all prostitutes. A policeman is charged and convicted of the first two murders. While he is in prison, the third murder is committed, and investigations take a new turn. If you have a nasty, suspicious mind, you may

guess the ending and the villain's identity.

Author Wainwright spent 20 years in police work, after being demoted from the RAF where he served as a gunner in Lancaster bombers. During the 1939-1945 war, he flew on 72 missions over enemy territory. He resigned from police work to take up full-time writing. Other Wainwright crime novels in the library are: 'Acquittal'; 'The Bastard'; 'Coppers Don't Cry' and 'A Touch of Malice.'

Sara Woods very seldom goes for warts in her crime stories, about barrister Tony Maitland, his wife Jenny and sometimes testy uncle, Sir Nicholas Harding, QC. In her latest book, 'Proceed to Judgment,' Maitland is persuaded against his better judgment, to act as defense counsel for a doctor charged with the murder of his lady love's husband. Maitland figures that if the defendant is innocent, despite circumstantial evidence, he will have to prove who is guilty. Which he does, in characteristic fashion. Earlier Sara Woods novels: 'And Shame the Devil'; 'Enter the Corpse'; 'Error of the Moon'; 'Knives Have Edges'; 'Let's Choose Executors'; 'Tarry and Be Hanged'; 'Yet She Must Die'; 'Though I Know She Lies.'

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Council turns down holiday

Halton Hills councillors don't want a mid-winter holiday in Canada, at least not "Love a Province Day", as suggested by Oakville resident A.L. Pangborn.

Council didn't support his call for Love a Province Day at their meeting Monday. Pangborn thought February 11, 1980, should be the first Love a Province Day and the province should be Ontario. In succeeding

years, he proposed the day would honor, in order from 1981 to 1991, Alberta, New Brunswick, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, Quebec, Yukon, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island and North West Territories.

Youth suspects in theft \$4420

Jewellery and cash totalling \$4,420 was reported missing from a Tidy Avenue home last Wednesday evening following a break enter and theft.

Halton Regional Police have two 15-year-old suspects in the case.

March Red Cross Month

Halton Hills council decided Monday to declare March Red Cross Month.

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