

Drug problem?—keep kids at home, Marks says

The director of the Halton Addiction Research Foundation (ARF) maintains it is important to keep young people in their own homes and exposed to the family values system if they are experimenting or addicted to drugs and alcohol.

"There's a better chance of them coming around and adopting family values than if they leave home," director Peter Marks told about 25 parents and teachers in an informal talk on Your Child and Drugs at Stewarttown school last Wednesday evening as part of Education Week. His talk was part of a family life seminar which broke up into three discussion groups under Dan Dalton, Robert Pecora and Eric Balkind afterwards.

Marks said he would make an exception about keeping young people on drugs in the home when there is physical abuse involved—either to other members of the family, or to themselves.

The other option is to make them wards of the Children's Aid Society and placed in a group home. Often, when this is explained to them, "it is amazing how the kid will come around."

Marks said his experience has shown it is important for parents to set limits and let the kids know what expectations you have of them. He maintained it would develop mutual respect and do much to help dicey situations.

He outlined situations which could develop

in three types of homes where the family environment differs, including "spoil a kid" home, the authoritarian home and perfectionist homes.

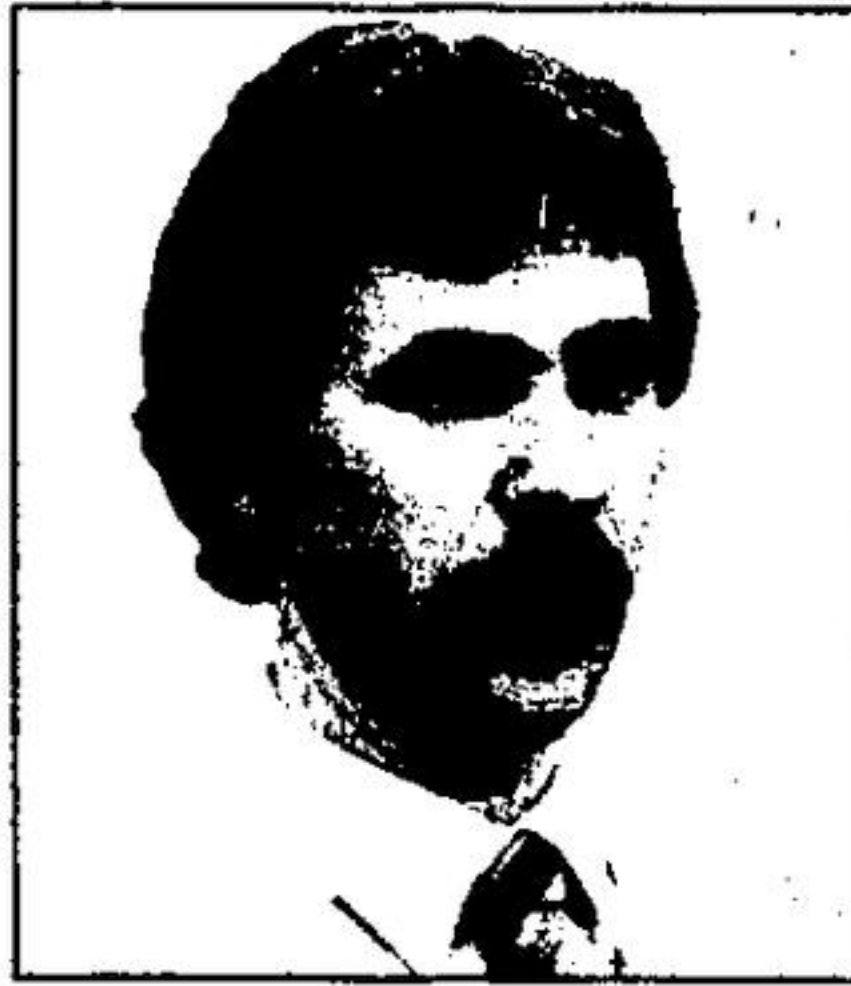
Marks maintains the family environment is set by the parent with the most power, not necessarily the shouter, but sometimes by the wife who cries a lot. He calls it "water power."

He maintained that parents who do everything, pamper their kids and pick up after them are doing a great disservice to their children. "Pampered kids are vulnerable to alcohol and drugs," he maintains. When they aren't exposed to emotional knocks they turn to drugs and alcohol.

Marks maintains that 16 and 17-year-olds should be contributing to the home by doing the shopping, the cleaning and other chores. "If they aren't then you are in trouble," he told the parents.

The authoritarian family where the "lord and master" lays down the laws and make a lot of decisions for children is also destructive. Parents think they are effective because the kids respond when they are in the presence of the lord (about 2 per cent of the time). But when he or she is not there, the kids do all kinds of things.

The authoritarian family is a difficult environment for a family counsellor to work with, Marks said, noting many parents contend they inherited the tendency from their parents. Changing behavior is next to



Halton ARF director Peter Marks

impossible, they imagine. Although they may be sincere they drive a lot of kids out of the home, he said. When the kids are faced with big decisions such as taking drugs they take the easy way out.

Marks maintained kids should make many of their own decisions in the home and then have to live with the consequences.

"When they fail make it painful for them," he advised, "make them live with

the consequences."

The perfectionist home where standards are so high there can never be any self-fulfillment was his next target. Usually the person who sets the tone is compulsive and feels everyone must be perfect. As a result, he notes there are serious drug problems with youngsters who come from such homes. For instance, Marks related, there are serious drug problems with Ontario Scholars.

Many successful people in business and the professions live miserable lives, he contended, because they come from homes where perfection is demanded. They often turn to drugs for relief, and many seek counselling.

Marks advised parents not to be afraid to pay \$400-\$500 to take about 15 sessions with a good counsellor. He reminded them they would be investing in their own lives, "and we only pass this way once."

The speaker outlined ten rules for people to follow so they could lead fulfilling lives, including the admonition that the key to a better future lies with themselves. He advised them to stop complaining and develop an above average smile, hearty handshake and other personal attributes. In an analogy he said kids should learn how to handle the winters in life, take advantage of the spring, take care of the crops all summer by eliminating weeds and reap in the fall.

Kids, he said, should experience the

consequences of not sowing seeds for their future noting that, "What you don't use you lose."

"It's the way drugs work," he maintained, "supplying a crutch to get people through life." The emotional side of the brain, unused, never lets the person have a natural high.

Many 19 and 20-year-olds, the speaker said are emotionally only 11-12 years of age because the use of drugs has dulled natural highs.

Marks gave some startling statistics about the use of drugs, noting their presence was being felt in the elementary schools now. Availability of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco is increasing, users fall into four levels: experimentation, recreational, coping and dependent.

He noted students with part time jobs use more marijuana and hashish than those without jobs, because they have more money to buy them. It is also difficult to detect symptoms of drug use when used only occasionally such as three or four times a week. A parent could go for years and never know his children were drug users, he said.

When parents find out their kids are taking drugs, he suggested they get help from the guidance teacher and those the Contact Centre in Georgetown would advise on.



newsmakers

Georgetown/Acton Wednesday, May 4, 1983



Council to probe reform with assessment commissioner

Halton Hills councillors are hoping to meet later this month with the assessment commissioner for this area to learn more about property tax assessment reform through Section 63 of the Assessment Act (formerly Section 86).

Councillor Ross Knechtel revealed this development in the current review of this contentious issue at last Wednesday's Acton councillors' drop-in.

Differences in taxes and assessments between Acton and Georgetown were raised at drop-in by two Acton residents who also own commercial property.

Because of the sensitive nature of assessment information, the provincial official won't likely agree to meet with councillors in public council, so the session will be held in-camera or behind closed doors.

Before Halton Hills was born assessments were substantially different in Acton, Georgetown and Esqueping, Knechtel explained, because assessment had been done at different times. When Halton Hills was born the province didn't bring in a new Town-wide assessment. Later Queen's Park took over responsibility for assessment from municipalities and aimed to base assessments in the future on "market value." However, the province then backed off on the notion for political reasons.

However, they left it up to municipalities to implement a form of market value assessment, which Knechtel calls equalized assessment, by applying for reassessment through Section 63.

Previously Halton Hills council by narrow vote margins has rejected reassessment or reform through Section 86.

When the issue came to a vote in 1981 Councillors Knechtel, Dave Whiting, Harry Levy and Marilyn Serjeantson supported reassessment, as well as former councillors Terry Grubbe and Walter Biehn. However, Mayor Peter Pomeroy, Councillors Russ Miller, Mike Armstrong and John McDonald and former councillors Roy Booth and George Maltby all voted opposed. Councillor Pam Sheldon was absent for the vote.

Earlier this year a consultant appeared at Halton Hills council disclosing that taxes on industrial, commercial and residential properties in Acton are 25 per cent higher than in Georgetown. However, Knechtel disputes there is a disparity between residential taxes in Georgetown and Acton,

though he acknowledges the consultant is correct about the gap for industrial-commercial property. The consultant prepared his report for Heller's.

At that meeting council decided to review the reassessment issue again, and part of the process was for Knechtel to work with Treasurer Ray King updating the old report.

Wednesday Knechtel explained there are two problems with assessments in Halton Hills. Firstly homes, businesses and plants built after 1972 have been assessed by the province using the new system, based largely on market value. However properties assessed before 1972 still have assessments in effect based on the old system. Complicated equalization factors are applied to the residential mill rates for Acton, Georgetown and Esqueping to compensate for the differences in assessments in Halton Hills. For example residential assessments are 25 per cent lower in Acton than Georgetown but the mill rate is 25 per cent higher in Acton, so taxes work out equally in the two urban areas for similar properties, Knechtel explained.

But for industrial-commercial property it appears assessments are about equal in Acton and Georgetown so with the equalization factors and 25 per cent higher taxes are 26 per cent higher in Acton than Georgetown.

Half of Ontario's municipalities have opted for reform through Section 86 or Section 63.

The assessment situation in Halton Hills is a "gross injustice" to owners of property assessed after 1972 as well as owners of industrial-commercial property, Knechtel declared.

Through the normal assessment appeal process people must demonstrate their assessment is unfair compared to neighboring properties, they can't compare Georgetown with Acton. That's a problem with the "stupid" Assessment Act, he said.

Knechtel said it can easily be argued that Halton Hills council shouldn't have to solve the problem created by Queen's Park.

It is a very political issue Whiting said, Councillors keep in mind that a third of assessments will go down after Section 63, but those voters will simply feel they have been paying too much for too long. Another third of taxpayers will see their taxes go up, and they won't be happy with council. The

last third will see no change in their taxes, so they won't care. While reassessment is the fair thing to do, it hasn't carried because it isn't "politically astute."

The present situation is "grossly unfair" Knechtel said, adding he has heard many complaints about the problem from not only Acton but Esqueping residents as well.

It is argued that reassessment will hurt senior citizens who own older homes, but that isn't true, Knechtel said. He noted while their assessment will go up and thus their taxes, seniors will then just receive a bigger grant from Queen's Park to cover their property taxes. He felt seniors don't want to be treated differently, they want to pay what their property is worth.

Reassessment was done in cities like London, Cambridge and Kitchener and while there were some complaints, it didn't cause a big problem, Knechtel noted.

Another argument against reassessment is that it results in loss of municipal assessment, but any loss is because with a new system people ask more questions and there are more appeals, Whiting said.

The last time council voted on this issue they weren't aware of the problem with industrial-commercial property, and that may make a difference in the next vote, Knechtel said.

He said there is "hope" council will opt for reassessment, adding people who want Section 63 approved should keep "their fingers crossed" because it will be put to a vote before the end of this year and he expects a close vote again.

One of the things holding some councillors back on this issue is the province doesn't provide enough information, such as a list of old assessments compared with assessments after Section 63 is approved. Some councillors won't support the measure because they don't know what will happen.

The residents at drop-in said since Halton Hills is supposed to be one Town there shouldn't be a disparity between Acton and Georgetown taxes. Regional government was supposed to eliminate disparities.

This disparity is a big factor in the lack of industrial development in Acton. There is little industrial land left in Georgetown so it would be in Halton Hills' best interests to solve the problem so firms could be attracted to Acton. As things stand now industrial taxes are too high in Acton.



Million dollar road

Work has begun on the 7.3 k.m., \$1.3 million reconstruction on Highway 25 from Halton Road 9 to just north of Speyside. The reconstruction job goes to Armbr Materials and Construction of Brampton and will be completed early this fall. Included in the work is a special truck climbing lane.

(photo by Murray Hosin)

Fisher to challenge conflict legislation

The new provincial conflict of interest legislation could soon be put to the test of the courts, if Halton Board of Education vice chairperson Betty Fisher has her way.

Bill 14, recently passed in the legislature says a person who is married to a teacher on the same board, or another board, or is a teacher himself/herself on another board, has a conflict of interest.

With the Halton Board, of the 20 trustees, eight have a conflict of interest, including Halton Hills members Betty Fisher and Dick Howitt.

Fisher says the province contends there is a direct pecuniary interest in that their spouse probably belongs to the Ontario Tea-

cher's Federation, a parent organization to the smaller groups in which the local teachers belong.

The province, Fisher says, is saying when a trustee votes on salary negotiations, in Halton, it can have a whiplash effect in Peel. She admitted that if it were provincial bargaining she could see the conflict, however, each board has its own bargaining, and she feels "that's a different kettle of fish."

If an elected official is challenged on a conflict of interest and is found guilty, Fisher told this newspaper, that person must vacate his or her seat immediately.

(Continued on B3)



The Vikings have landed

Eric the Red, Lief the Lucky and other Vikings were on hand to celebrate as Canada's first European visitors. Grades 4 and 5 students

donned elaborate costumes to represent the Vikings in Limehouse School's musical presentation of Canadian multiculturalism.