

Health study shows six big issues here

by Jeff McFadden
The six biggest health issues in Halton are: fitness, nutrition, smoking, stress, automobile safety and falls.

That's according to a forthcoming report by the Halton District Health Council's Health Promotion Committee.

The report is Phase 1 of an extensive health promotion plan designed to embrace every aspect of Halton's health community.

According to the council's executive director William Leonard, this plan is likely the first of its kind in the country.

"We think this is unique... we are opening new ground," he says.

Phase 1 of the plan started in the fall, funded by the ministry of health and costing about \$40,000.

It included a questionnaire distributed to 1,200 Halton residents, which asked 43 questions about health behavior and quality of life.

The survey, called the Fantastic Lifestyle Assessment, was developed by a group headed by Dr. Doug Wilson of McMaster's Department of Family Medicine.

Results of the survey are divided into sex and age categories.

A chart then categorizes the leading causes of death, hospital stay, prolonged hospital stay and lifestyle hazards.

The first three categories were taken from hospital records for the years 1979, 1980 and 1981. The lifestyle section was taken from the survey results.

One of the most striking findings was that the leading cause of death between the ages of 5 and 34 is motor vehicle accidents.

The report then finds correlations between ill health in Halton and factors of risk inherent in lifestyles.

For instance, the major risks where automobile death is concerned are: lack of seat-belt use and alcohol intake before driving.

Also included in Phase 1 is a tallying of existing health programs. A list of 120 service organizations and 80 employers was compiled.

Phase 2 of the plan, which started this month and ends in January, concerns involving the community in the planning process.

The main thrust of this will be through community forums.

The forums will attempt to bring together professionals and the public to discuss concerns and to streamline the efforts of groups working on similar problems.

So far, three forums have been scheduled. The first, in the second week of September, is on motor vehicle accidents.

The other two are in the third week of October and the fourth week of November. They are on stress and nutrition.

Also slated for Phase 2 are, a review and compilation of health literature for the six areas of concern and the preparation of a final report.

The key to Phase 2, says Leonard, is to move people in the direction they want to go—addressing their major concerns.

Money bequeathed

Children's services at the Acton and Georgetown libraries are the beneficiaries in the will of Nellie Gardiner, a long-time Maple Ave. resident who died recently. The Library Board has not yet decided specifically how to use the \$1,000 bequeathed to "junior services" at the library by the late teacher. Any books purchased with the money will likely feature a commemorative bookplate in Ms. Gardiner's name.

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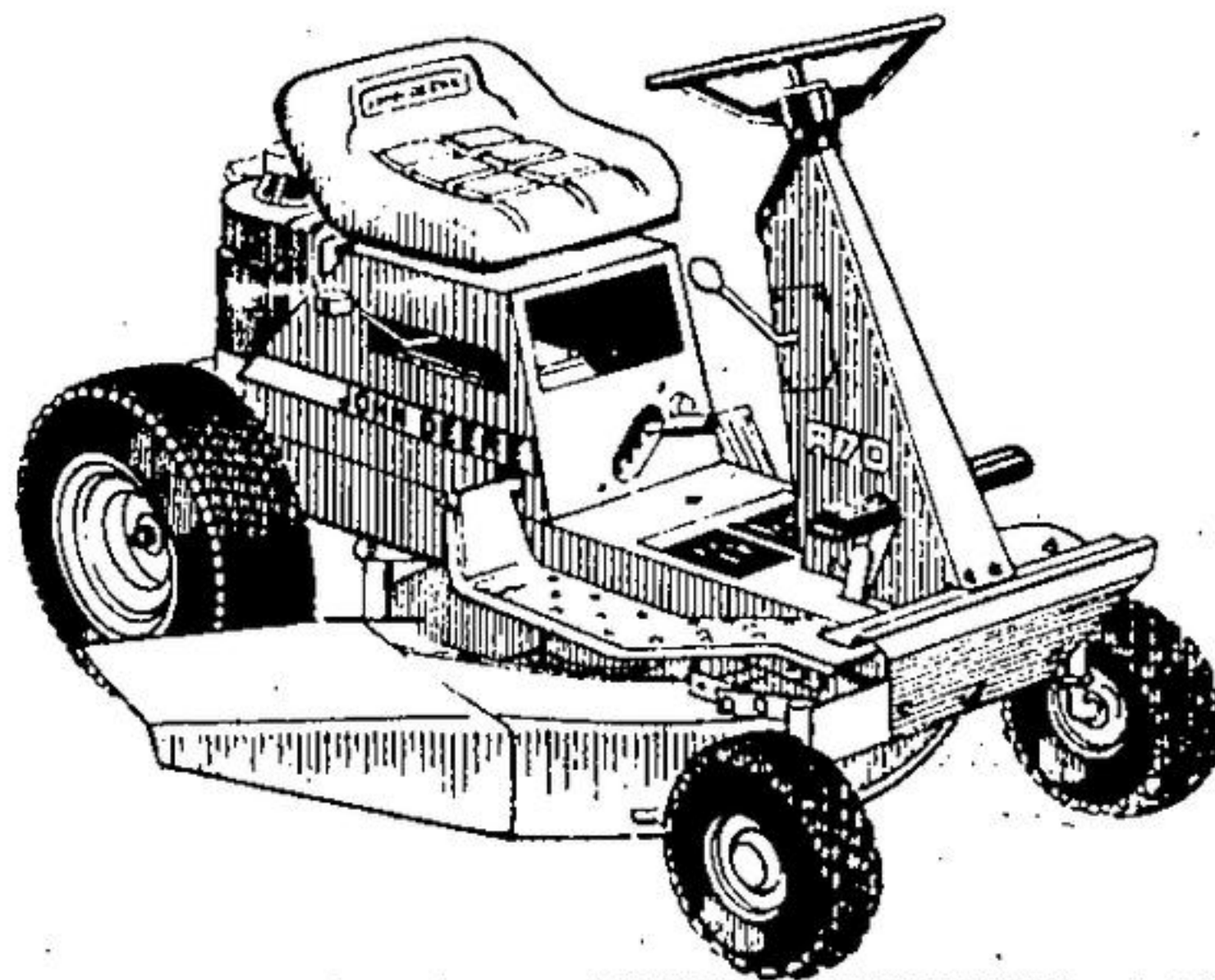
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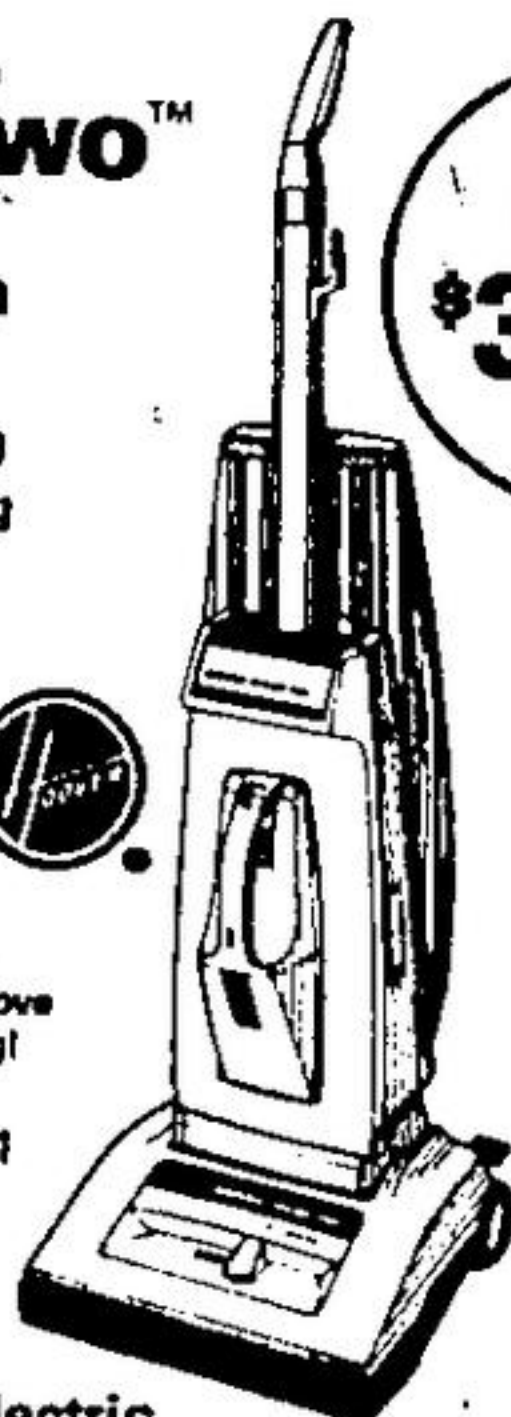
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