

# Legal clinic fills gap twixt lawyers, Legal Aid

The Halton Community Legal Clinic has been busy this summer organizing meetings on the Workers' Compensation Act or calling on residents to amend the tenant-landlord bylaws. But some people may wonder just who and what is a legal clinic.

"Its purpose is the legal welfare of the community and its target is poor people on a limited income. But it is not Legal Aid," said Karen Thompson-Harry, the community legal worker.

A legal clinic fills the legal gap between services offered by private lawyers and Legal Aid, she said. In general, lawyers are hired by people who can afford to pay their fees while Legal Aid is designed for people who cannot afford lawyers but it handles only the serious civil and criminal cases.

The legal clinic specializes in poverty law, a name given to legal problems that are not criminal in nature but common to most people on limited incomes who

cannot afford the services of a private lawyer. The legal clinic is free and confidential.

The most important function of the legal clinic is to explain an individual's rights concerning the landlord and tenant law, rent review, unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation, immigration, or consumer law.

Thompson-Harry said the Halton Legal Clinic can also give limited advice and representation when going to traffic or small claims courts, on family problems such as wife beating or harassment by bill collectors, and when filling out applications such as Canada Pension Plan appeals.

Another function of the clinic, Thompson-Harry said, is to act as an information service about other social services and to refer some of their clients to these agencies.

The clinic, however, does not handle people in the areas of real estate, income

tax, corporate or commercial law, or wills and estates.

Ironically, Thompson-Harry said, lawyers often refer clients or phone for advice because they, themselves, do not have the expertise in poverty law that the legal clinic has.

In the first six months of this year, over 750 people have been helped by the legal clinic and that is keeping a good pace with the record numbers served in the past couple of years. In 1982, 1,450 people were helped, causing a jump of close to 600 clients over 1981. Last year's figures jumped again to 1,600.

This could be due, Thompson-Harry said, to the opening of a branch office in Milton.

The clinic is constantly expanding, she said. In 1977, it started out in the basement of St. John's United Church with only "a scrounged desk, a typewriter, and two chairs."

From there it moved to a part of

Gougeon's store on Main St., then to its current headquarters on Wesleyan St. Once a week it operates out of the Acton Community Services building but Thompson-Harry said she finds most Acton residents come down to the Georgetown headquarters anyway.

The legal clinic was started by a group of volunteers and it is still community volunteers who are elected each year to the board of directors. The board is responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the clinic, including its budget.

The Halton Legal Clinic's operating funds are provided by the Ontario Legal Aid Plan and it is among 44 such clinics in the province. Its case-load is handled by Director David Craig, a lawyer and Thompson-Harry, a community legal worker.

With the evolution of the legal clinic, Thompson-Harry said, "every aspect of law between us, Legal Aid, and private lawyers should be covered."



One of the busiest offices in town is the Halton Hills Community Legal Clinic, a non-profit organization providing legal services to residents. Four years ago they opened a more spacious office at 5 Wesleyan St. as seen here with its three full time employees, David Craig, staff lawyer, June Wilde, secretary and Karen Thompson-Harry, community legal worker.

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# newsmakers

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Internationally acclaimed actor Richard Burton is dead at 58 and many in Georgetown and Halton Hills will mourn the death of a man who brought the screen alive for them in person. Burton, of course, filmed parts of the movie Equus in Georgetown in November of 1978 where this shot was taken with two of his aides beside the old post office on Mill St. He celebrated his 51st birthday in Georgetown making that

film, one of many he made which includes Becket, The Comedians and, of course, Cleopatra, with Elizabeth Taylor. The two stars got involved romantically and created a scandal. They shed their spouses, later wed, divorced and rewed. Burton was a fine Shakespearean actor and his stage career also included such hits as Camelot, Look Back In Anger and others.

## Board official: Lock up spare rooms, save, board decides

Locking up surplus classrooms is one way the Halton school board can save money in the face of declining enrolment, trustees have decided.

Halton trustees agreed with the head school superintendent Jim Morrison, after he said the board could save between \$1 and \$2.50 a square foot if it locks up elementary classrooms no longer needed. The savings would come from unused lighting and heating, and the elimination of daily caretaking in those rooms.

Halton's school board has had a policy of closing classrooms since 1978, but the cumbersome procedure and insufficient data often led to frequent debates when deciding to close a classroom, Mr. Morrison said.

Mr. Morrison proposed that a 'functional rated capacity' for each school be established in order that an accurate number of student places is available when determining closures.

The functional rated capacity would identify how school space is being used, and help determine how to use it more efficiently.

According to Mr. Morrison's analysis of schools, Pinegrove School on Fourth Line, for example, has only 259 students, but enough space for 618 students.

But Mr. Morrison said it is important to know the circumstances surrounding individual schools before making any conclusions.

At Pinegrove, for instance, although there appears to be space for 359 students not being used, 300 of those spaces are currently occupied by the East Education Centre.

Mr. Morrison's proposal for determining lock-ups was adopted by the board. The proposal also calls for each area superin-

tendent to make tentative decisions to close certain classrooms by June each year.

Final decisions on these will be made in September by Mr. Morrison, the head school superintendent, and Wally Beevor, the board director.

In October of each year, an elementary classroom closing report is to be prepared for the board.

"This is a good proposal," said Oakville trustee Pat Hillhouse. "It shows us we need some fine tuning."

But the board's approval in continuing to close rooms, rather than schools, had Burlington separate school trustee Bill Priestner accusing other trustees of having a "not-in-my-back-yard syndrome."

The time has come and passed when we should have closed schools," he said.

"I think we have to take the bull by the horn and start to at least close classrooms," Mr. Priestner added after it seemed a few trustees feared locking up classrooms would detract from programs like French immersion which sometimes has a classroom with French displays set apart from other classrooms.

Other trustees disagreed with Mr. Priestner, however, saying they've often had to bite the bullet and close schools in unpopular decisions.

Burlington trustee Bev Vola complained that the board is proposing to build schools in some areas and yet is closing down classrooms in other areas.

But Mr. Morrison said everything depends on the area. Newer subdivisions north of the Queen Elizabeth Way in both Burlington and Oakville can support new schools, he said.

## Need mental health centre for children

by Gord Kelle

Halton Region needs a Children's Mental Health Centre (CMHC) of its own, says Halton Children's Aid Society director Ron Coupland.

Coupland made the comment in the wake of a \$150,000 grant given to Halton Region last week by the provincial ministry of community and social services. The money will provide additional mental health services for children in the region.

"We needed this grant," says Coupland, "and we're grateful to the ministry for it but we hope one day a CMHC could be established here. A lot of our kids should be kept here."

To understand Halton's unique position in the world of children's services is to appreciate a political 'dividing line' according to Coupland.

Halton is a patchwork of communities thrown together in order to prevent encroachment by the city of Hamilton in the west and Metro Toronto to the east, he explains.

The populations of the region's communities live along its borders: Milton in the north, Burlington in the west and Oakville in the east.

Vast populations

When the ministry of community and social services evaluates a region's need it takes into consideration population centres. On either side of Halton are vast population areas capable of handling large help centres.

The ministry sets up centres in these areas and correctly assumes Halton's communities will send problem children to the closest regional centre, says Coupland. But Coupland's view is that with a centre in Halton, the cost of sending children to other centres will be cut significantly.

"It costs us a full staff day to send children to London," he says. "They're getting the best professional treatment, we know that and have always leaned on London for help, but the ministry will soon be facing a problem in Halton; just how is it going to continue to service us?"

And there are other clumps of problems facing Halton's children's service organizations, says Coupland.

There is the matter of children themselves. There are a lot of disturbed children in the region who need to be helped beyond family support, says Coupland.

Halton CAS has a floating population of about 65 children a year. According to CAS figures, it costs \$1.2 million annually to provide them with care.

There is also the problem of juvenile crime, which is on the rise, says Coupland.

"Halton has about 20 per cent of Peel Region's juvenile crime rate which is monstrous. We have no qualms about Peel's new children's centre which will provide a variety of family and juvenile court services. But we have no centre to help young offenders in Halton," says Coupland. "They have to be sent elsewhere."

Coupland says a majority of Halton's problems could be solved within the region. But that's where the biggest problem lies—community attitude.

"You know, the community opinion on children's services is like the dump site issue," he says. "People want to make garbage, but don't bury it in my back yard."

Oakville example

We get a lot of resistance in Oakville to the establishment of social service centres," he says. "The town doesn't want it, yet other communities are different."

Coupland illustrates the point by rattling off the names of communities which support children's services: Halton Hills, Burlington, London, Hamilton, Waterloo Region.

"But without political support, we're never going to convince the ministry to build a centre here," he says.

The province won't force the establishment of group homes in Halton because they listen to the community's objections, says Coupland. "But that's what they have to do. It's up to the community to convince them otherwise."

So the ministry feeds Halton piecemeal grants to beef up local service groups, explains Coupland.

The \$150,000 is to provide Oakville, Burlington and Milton with an additional psychiatrist and social worker in each community.

### Horse show

## Graham tops league competes at Cheltenham

Equestrian Hugh Graham of Limehouse after four qualifying shows, is the leader for the Dunhill Equestrian of the Year Award, and also tops the standings in Canadian World Cup League.

Graham, a member of the Canadian Olympic Team, will be competing in the \$20,000 Dunhill World Cup Qualifier at Cheltenham August 19, the second last event in the battle for points toward the Dunhill award.

In 1982 Graham, riding Abraxas won the Dunhill Equestrian of the Year Award, and this year aboard Elronid will be attempting to recapture the title.

In the Dunhill league Graham leads with 13 points with Mario Deslauriers of Quebec, right behind him with 12. But in the Canada World Cup League Graham is ahead by ten points over his closest rival. He has 58 points and Laura Tidball has 48.

Joining Graham at Lothlorien Farm, Cheltenham, will be team members Mario Deslauriers, Jim Elder and Ian Miller, coming directly from the Olympics in Los Angeles.

Challenging the Olympic competitors at Cheltenham will be some of Canada's best

riders, including Beth Underhill from Schomberg where Hugh Graham trains and rides his horses.

Graham will have one more competition after Cheltenham to prove he is the top rider in the Dunhill event. The winner of the August 19 contest, wins \$5,000, a trophy and a bottle of Dunhill Premium Scotch.

The Dunhill Cheltenham event is also the sixth of eight qualifying competitions for the 1984-85 Canadian League, with the top three riders attending the 1985 World Cup Finals in Berlin.

Graham with the lead in this league at present, stands a good chance of making the trip to Germany.

In the previous qualifying rounds, Graham took one first, two seconds and a third.

While Dunhill Grand Prix is held Sunday, August 19, the Cheltenham Gold Cup Horse Show starts August 14 and ends with the star event.

CBC Wide World of Sports will be covering the derby-type Grand Prix course, which includes a number of permanent fences, open ditches, water jumps and a sunken road.



Hugh Graham with the Rothman's Equestrian of the Year award presented in 1982 at a ceremony in Toronto.