

# Block Parent support grows

Acton Block Parent Program organizer Lonnie Harkins didn't expect a big turnout at the first public meeting July 7. About 20 mothers attended.

"It's a bad time of year to get things going since school's out and everyone's going on holidays," Harkins said. "Yet, we wanted to get the program organized by September."

Application forms, available at Acton Community Services Centre, take six to eight weeks for processing, explained Halton safety officer Keith Woods at the meeting.

All members of a family applying to be block parents, over the age of 16, are screened by the police for criminal records. If approved, block parents are given a list

of emergency phone numbers and a red and white sign depicting a child holding the hand of an adult. When block parents are available, the sign should be posted in their front window, indicating that their home is open for anyone in trouble.

The block parent program originated in London, Ontario, following the murder of a child by a child molester. Since then programs have sprung up across the country including Georgetown and Milton.

Gayle Rae, organizer of the Milton program, told the people at the meeting, public response was good. She cited the case of a block parent who reported no visits by people in distress after two months, and wondered if the program

wasn't working. "It's a preventative program," explained Harkins. "Block parent signs act as a deterrent to trouble-makers." The majority of parents were concerned about child molesters.

"Kids are naturally friendly," said Harkins, "and they can be taught to play it safe without losing that quality."

Any child fearful of a stranger, being chased by a dog, lost or ill is welcome to knock on a block parent's door for aid.

"I advise the kids to run to the nearest house if they're in trouble," said Woods, "whether there's a block parent sign or not."

Children are not the only members of society benefited

by the program. Block parents provide a home away from home for teenage girls afraid of a potential rapist, elderly people who feel ill, or anyone with a flat tire or confronted by a thief.

Block parents are not obligated to provide food, drinks, rides or toilet facilities to people who seek their help. They don't even have to let him in. All they are supposed to do is phone for help-to parents, police, the ambulance- whatever suits the occasion.

"It sounds simple, but it makes a big difference," said Woods, adding that the police back the block parent program 100 percent.

The school principals support us too," Harkins said, "now tell your neighbours."



A BLOCK PARENT program is being established in Acton. In attendance at the first public meeting held July 7 were (left to right): Judy McLin, of Acton Community Services Centre, Lonnie Harkins, Block Parent Program

organizer, Gayle Rae, guest speaker from Milton block parents, and Halton Police Safety Officer Keith Woods. Holding the sign is Lonnie's son Steven.

## Bible story wins

The first time she seriously tried public speaking, Kari Aitken, 15, of Acton talked her way to first place in an international competition.



KARI AITKEN holds her trophy for Bible story telling.

As a member of the Word of Life Bible Club of the Calvary Baptist Church, Kari was awarded a certificate of Outstanding Achievement plus a handsome trophy for telling a Bible story at the Eastern United States Junior Divisional Competition recently held at Schroon Lake about 40 miles north of New York State's capital, Albany.

In the finals, her Bible story of Zacharias, the tax collector who everyone hated, and how he came to meet Jesus placed first over 12 other speakers.

Although the story had to be told as if to tiny children, it was actually spoken in front of three adult adjudicators, none of whom Kari had ever seen before.

"It's easier when you have something to work with," Kari said. "I enjoyed it."

To get the chance to speak at the competition Kari first entered the speaking contest at the Teens Involved Club in Acton where she placed fourth. But in Ontario-wide competition with about 40 other Teens Involved Clubs, Kari talked her way into first place.

At New York, Kari repeated her Canadian standings, placing fourth in regional competition and taking first in national finals. There is a western speaking contest in California but it does not meet with the eastern group.

## Hurst absent talks stalled

The absence of vacationing Ward One councillor Joe Hurst from the works committee meeting Monday evening was reason enough for putting forward to the next meeting discussion on the cost estimates of storm sewers, curb and gutter on the north side of Cobblehill Road, the works committee decided.

Street and the councillors present felt that input into the discussion was necessary from Ward One councillor.

Present at the meeting was Mike Armstrong, chairman of the works committee, Councillors Ern Hyde and Dick Howitt and deputy-engineer Ted Ballinger.

Councillor Hurst is expected to be back from vacation in time for the works committee's next meeting, July 26.

## Police get only two bids on communications network

Two tenders have been received by the Halton Regional Board of Police Commissioners for the supply of a police communication system to augment its present one.

Out of eight vendors who received copies of the tenders, only Canadian General Electric of Toronto and

Canadian Motorola of Willowdale submitted bids.

Canadian General Electric's bid is \$531,948.33; Canadian Motorola's bid is \$551,287.72.

The commissioners viewed the copies of the specifications, each about two inches thick, which will be sent to the Ontario Police Commission for

technical evaluation.

At Thursday's meeting, Police Chief Ken Skerrett read to the commissioners a letter from Ontario Solicitor-General John MacBeth saying that the province would pay 50 percent of the cost of the system.

The bids are open until Sept. 17, 1978.

## \$1,000 grant buys canoe

The Outers Club of the Acton high school has received a \$1,000 grant from Wintario.

Wally Rowley, a teacher at the high school said the money will be used to purchase a 25-foot canoe, a replica of the craft used by the early fur traders of the Hudson's Bay Co., and a trailer to haul it.

However, the request for the grant was for enough money to purchase two canoes as well as

a trailer and the club faces a fund raising drive in order to have all it needs.

Rowley said the students, who wrote the grant request themselves, got the idea of the fur trading canoe replica after seeing a 36-footer brought to the mini-school at Acton high school, May 19, by Greg Cowan of Brussels, Ontario, who builds canoes.

With the canoe, which will be

a 25-footer capable of carrying eight to ten paddlers, the Acton Outers Club will be able to ply the waters of Georgian Bay, the French River, and actual routes used by Canada's early fur traders, Rowley said. About 70 students are involved in the club during the school year.

The grant was made by the ministry of culture and recreation.

## Two single car mishaps

Engine failure and brakes that wouldn't hold led to \$1,000 in damages to a car driven by Brent McEachern, HRT, Acton, July 5.

Police said that McEachern's vehicle stopped near the crown of a hill on Main Street South because the engine failed and then began rolling back. Finally striking a telephone pole north of Ransom Road after

the brakes failed to hold.

There were no damages to a car driven by Tandy Glenn Van Wyck of Hillsburgh, July 6, when it went out of control on the Third Line north of Given Road, plce say.

However, damage to a mail box owned by Charles Barber amounted to \$20.

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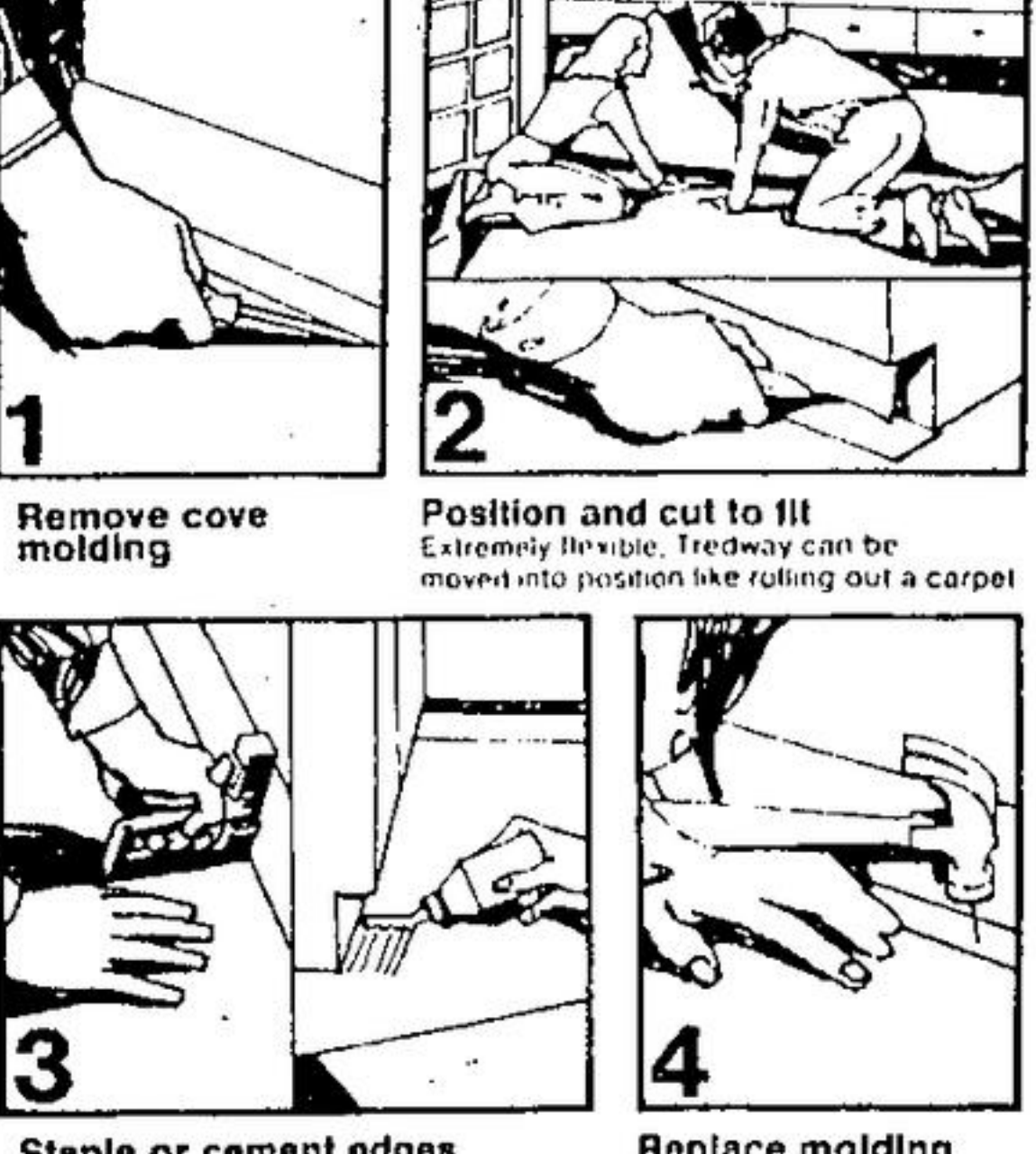
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