

Acton family talk with their hands

By KAREN WARD
Herald staff writer

Adopting a child is not an overnight procedure but once everything is settled and the child is brought home and welcomed into the family the family carried on in a familiar routine.

But, when Lorraine and Gary Barton, of Acton, adopted a two-year-old Andrew a whole new world was open to them and exploring into it has led the family into discovering a different means of communication.

"Communication is the key factor publicized in the 70's," Mrs. Barton said. "Children are wearing T-shirts with communication written in bold black letters."

"For a child who was born deaf, as Andrew is, communication is accomplished with sign language, lip reading, and a story is told through pictures," she said.

The Bartons, including Jamie and Janice, their two other children had to learn sign language and teach Andrew, which required time and patience, but "when you are really motivated to learn

something, the skills come easy," she said.

Mrs. Barton was involved in setting up a nursery school in Acton, the Honey Pot Nursery School, which now has 50 children enrolled for children ages three-to-four, when learning new communications entered family life.

Five other women worked together to make the first nursery school in Acton a reality, and Mrs. Barton will teach a class in September.

"It was a great way to meet the people in town," she said, "since we had just moved to Acton." Andrew is enrolled in the nursery school for awhile, and the objective of the nursery is to accept children, whether handicapped or not.

Mrs. Barton said kindergarten teachers in the area praised the efforts of the nursery school teachers remarking that the difference between children, who had attended the nursery school and those children who had not attended was obvious the first week of school.

Meanwhile, at night the Bartons were taking a night

course to improve their sign language and listened to difficult philosophies on whether a deaf child should be taught to sign.

The couple decided to use "total communication", in which they speak slowly and clearly so Andrew can see the shape of words and at the same time use sign language.

A significant moment for Andrew came when he visited Galaudet College in Washington with his family, a college for adult deaf persons, and he saw so many others using sign language just like him, and his family were different instead of him. "It gave him a real lift," she said.

The children in the neighborhood have accepted Andrew, Mrs. Barton said, and the boy next door knows about 30 signs. The children regard Andrew as being just like them except "his ears don't work." It has been a rewarding experience to everyone who has come in contact with Andrew, she said.

The family has spent a lot of time teaching Andrew sign language and how to lip read - "he knows the word thank you

and hello so that we don't sign those words," - but to try and conquer his inability to speak "it would take two to three hours a day and I just don't feel it is fair to him", she said.

"We want Andrew to have as normal a life as possible and keep him emotionally healthy, she said, "but to spend that much time every day his friends wouldn't wait for him, and because he has never had hearing it is impossible for him to understand."

Mrs. Barton worked as a supply teacher for E.C. Drury school for the deaf in Milton last term, and she noticed that children who lost their hearing at age three or four could speak beautifully. The child knows to put inflection in their voice, whereas a person born deaf has no idea and speaks in a low guttural tone.

Andrew is enrolled in the school and she said it will open a whole new world again for

them. He made friends last year in Milton with another deaf child and the mothers get the two deaf children. "who sign like mad when they're together," once a week. Soon she said it will become an exchange outing for a night and later for weekends.

At a look at the future, Mrs. Barton said she is so glad her family knows sign language, "because what a shame it would be if we couldn't communicate with his deaf friends or deaf wife." But, that's really looking ahead, she said.

For her own future, next year she will teach at the nursery school, and is trying to organize a deaf Sunday school program in the fall at Maple Avenue Baptist church, and also teach classes at E.C. Drury. A long range forecast, she hopes to be able to further her education by becoming a professional deaf teacher, because she loves working with deaf children.



Lorraine Barton, of Acton, demonstrates the word "Daddy" in sign language. She uses sign language to communicate with her deaf son, Andrew. She says it wasn't difficult to learn sign language because she was highly motivated and determined so that she could teach her son to communicate.

Committee nays Halton road study

Halton region public works committee has suggested no action to a request from treasurer Don Farmer to investigate the institution of a regional roads system before the end of 1978.

Should council approve such action, he said, transitional grants would be available from the province, but it would cost much more if taken after the expiry date.

Halton now operates a county road system which concentrates the majority of the 175 mile network in Milton and

Halton Hills. Committee chairman Jack Rafits favored keeping the county system in operation since it benefits the communities which are not in a position to take over the financial responsibility for the roads.

Burlington Coun. Vern Connel, however, argued that should a change be instituted it must ensure that the southern municipalities which pay more than 50 per cent of the cost of operation gain some advantage by having more regional roads in the south.

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SUNDAY'S STORM DAMAGE

A tree at the rear of 2 Main St. S. in Georgetown toppled onto this car and storage shed during the windstorm Sunday afternoon. The storm brought down tree

The Georgetown Lions Club have completed arrangements for "WINDFALL 77" to be held at the Georgetown Memorial Arena on Sept. 10, 1977 starting at 6 p.m.

Highlights of the evening will be a draw for trips and other prizes valued at almost \$4000. First prize will be a Caribbean Cruise for two; second prize will be a one week Disney World Trip for two. An additional \$2000 in merchandise will be drawn for during the evening. Trips will be arranged through and with the co-operation of Sunflight, Canada's Number One Holiday-maker.

Dancing will be provided by Ross Hillier and the Entertainer", and a buffet will be served throughout the evening.

Proceeds will be used to help the Lions meet their commitment of \$15,000 over three years for the renovation of the Georgetown Memorial Arena.

Present plans call for this to be a yearly event and it should prove to be a highlight of social functions in Georgetown.

Lion's club ready to go

Court to rule on HQ start

Construction of the new Halton region headquarters building may be stalled until at least Aug. 26 pending the outcome of an Ontario Supreme Court hearing.

The hearing was called following a request for a judicial review of the parkway belt exemption given the project by Ontario Treasurer Darcy McKeough.

The action has been brought by Peter G. Lush, the man who owns the offices where the regional offices are now located.

Mr. Lush maintains that an Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing should have been called into his objection and the objection of Botterell Warehousing of Oakville against the approval of the exemption.

A lawyer for Mr. Lush said Wednesday that a hearing is usually called and the ministry only rejects objections if they are frivolous, designed to cause delays or in bad faith.

GLT needs actors

Early auditions will be held for Georgetown Little Theatre's first play of the season, "The Mumberley Inheritance."

There are parts for five men and three women of varying ages. While it is not necessary to be a member to attend auditions those that are cast are expected to become members.

The readings will be held at the home of Joe and Les Heed, 18 Park St. on Thursday, July 28 and on Aug. 5. Both auditions begin at 8 p.m.

The Mumberley Inheritance is a costume melodrama set in nineteenth-century England and also includes some musical numbers. Director Derek Joyes is hoping to commence rehearsals mid August.

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