



CONSUMER NIGHT CHEQUE

Officials of the Zeta Phi sorority presented a cheque for \$375 to Marion Standon (second from left) of Park Public School in Georgetown Monday, representing the proceeds for a recent Consumer's Night hosted by Zeta Phi and other sorority chapters. Contributing the proceeds to the trainable mentally

handicapped were Sue Schmeier (left), Andrea van de Valk and Gerry Kentner. Mrs. Standon teaches one of the handicapped classes at Park school and invited one of her students, Nelson Itola, to accept the cheque on the school's behalf. (Herald photo)

Acton Community Centre fails in budget boost bid

By PAUL DORSEY
Herald staff writer
Officials of the Acton Community Services Centre failed Monday night to have the town's general committee reconsider its decision to trim the centre's \$5,980 grant request by \$1,900.

A majority of councillors agreed funding for social service programs and facilities like the Acton centre is primarily the responsibility of Halton regional council.

The town's regional councillors will, as a result, help representatives of the centre's board of directors present their case for more funding to the region later this month.

Speaking on behalf of the board of directors, Peter Marks, a former Halton Hills councillor, described the community services centre on Acton's Mill Street as "a low-cost central clearing house" through which a wide variety of concerns, problems and questions are filtered. Anyone who cannot find the answers or assistance needed simply by phoning the centre, he said, is referred to an appropriate agency that can better meet those needs.

REVIEW DECISION

Mr. Marks asked the committee to review the decision of the town's budget steering committee and approve the centre's full 1979 grant request of \$5,980. In making its decision earlier this year, the budget committee noted that the centre had been granted \$5,438 in 1978. It was said that the centre's directors had initially foreseen a time when the town's financial contribution would gradually diminish as alternative funding was found.

The budget committee chopped \$1,900 off the requested grant amount for 1979 hoping regional council would be able to allocate the balance required for the centre's operation.

A regional grant, also totalling \$5,980 has already been approved for the Acton centre, but officials are now hoping that more money may be available. Halton Hills regional councillors Mike Armstrong, Roy Booth, Russ Miller and Ed Wood pledged their support to the centre's forthcoming application to the region, the latter after his motion to have the town approve the full \$5,980 grant failed to win majority support.

COUNSELLING SPACE

Mr. Marks told the committee that the Acton centre co-ordinates local health and social service programmes and other activities and provides office and counselling space for a number of area social agencies, 60 per cent of which are operated by the region. He described the centre as a pioneering project in the field of making information available to the general public.

Mr. Marks reported 12 different health and social service agencies use the centre's counselling chambers a situation he called "very unique" in community services.

He called the success of the centre's work "a big return on a small investment" and said the board of directors is soliciting 30 per cent of the centre's 1979 budget from the general public, compared to only 15 per cent last year.

To recoup the \$1,900 trimmed from the town's grant allocation, Mr. Marks said, the board may have to reduce the centre's operating time from five to four days a week and trim the sole co-ordinator's annual salary by as much as 20 per cent.

SERVICE CLUBS

In response to a suggestion from Coun. Miller, who speculated that additional funds may be available from Acton's service clubs, Mr. Marks re-

ported that many of the clubs are already deeply involved in the centre's upkeep as well as being approached to support numerous other causes. The Acton YM-YWCA has contributed \$2,000 he said, while the Acton Rotary Club has donated \$500 and the Lakeside IODE another \$100.

Acton might not need a community services centre if it instead had a "full-time police" force and other social and health services, Coun. Wood said. He suggested that the budget committee did not have all the pertinent information when it made its decision on the centre's grant application.

"You couldn't, for a lousy \$6,000, set up an organization in Acton like the one they have," Coun. Wood said. "If this council set one up, it would probably cost ten times as much. I'm sad and a little ashamed to hear what's being said here to these volunteers who are trying to help the community".

Coun. Ross Knechtel annou-

need that new information had prompted him to change his mind about the centres' grant, which he previously voted to decrease because he felt its staff was being inefficiently deployed.

Coun. Walter Biehn warned that any change being made in a municipal operating budget that is already approved could set a dangerous precedent for other grant allocations.

MEASLY PENNIES

Coun. Marilyn Serjeantson advocated approval for another \$5,438 grant identical to the 1978 allocation, but Coun. Harry Levy, who chaired the budget committee, was opposed to any change. To back-track on the committee's effort to trim "measly pennies" everywhere from the budget, he said, would "open the floodgates".

Coun. Levy reminded the committee that only 12 of the 30 grant applications received by the town this year were approved as submitted. Seven applications were approved in reduced form, he added, and

the rest denied. More time was spent on the Acton centre's application than on any other, he said, and an even bigger reduction was considered.

Mr. Marks said that, according to town treasurer Ray King, council maintains a \$50,000 contingency fund from which the additional \$1,900 for the centre could be drawn without affecting the town's mill rate.

Coun. Serjeantson said the centre's financial problem underlines the need to have all grant applicants address council when their requests are being considered. Had the circumstances of the Acton centre's situation been known prior to the approval of the budget, she said, the full amount may have been granted.

Mr. Marks pointed out that centre officials had indeed asked for an opportunity to speak to council when the grant application was being considered but were not invited to do so.

Teen choir Montreal bound

The Teen Choir of St. John's United Church has been invited to perform at St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal, a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity", choir director Dale Wood said.

St. Joseph's Oratory is the second largest in the world, next to St. Peter's in Rome, and seats 12,000 people, Mr. Wood said. The choir will be performing on Victoria Day weekend, with an orchestra, and other choirs also performing.

Mr. Wood said the person who was to make the decision on whether or not the Teen Choir would be invited to perform, attended the performance of "Almost Spring" at St. John's Church and made the final decision after the performance.

"I told the girls to sing their hearts out, but I didn't tell them what was going on," Mr. Wood said. "I knew someone was going to be there, and we were very luckily chosen to go."

Mr. Wood said the size of St. Joseph's Oratory presents special problems for singers because the reverberation is so great that the sound of the voices carries on for twenty seconds after the singing actually stops.

"It is difficult to perform something there because you have to wait out the vocals," Mr. Wood said. "You finish one verse and you have to count out twenty seconds before starting the next verse."

The choir will be presenting a concert which will contain some elements of the "Almost Spring" presentation, along with some new material, at Holy Cross Church on April 22. The proceeds of the concert will go towards the cost of the trip to Montreal.

"This is kind of special for Georgetown," Mr. Wood said. "I'm kind of thrilled about it."



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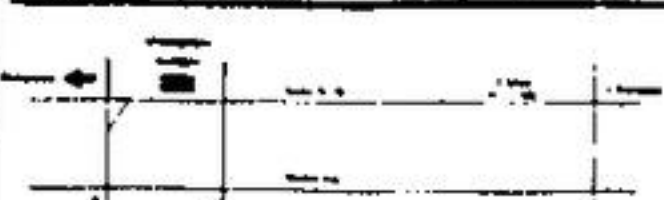
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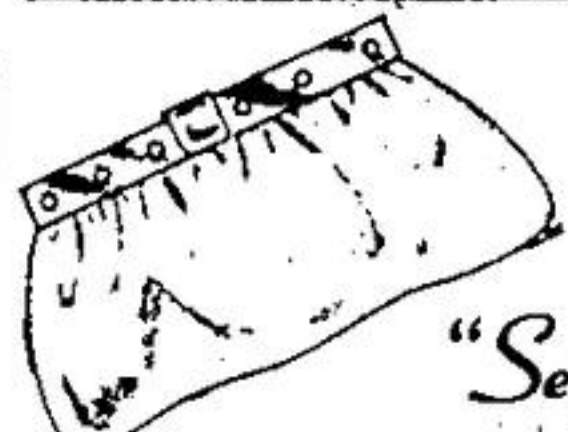
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