

HALTON'S PEOPLE

'If it helps someone, it's worth the hassle'

By MAGGIE HANNAH
Herald staff writer

Some people sit back and squawk about the way the country is going to hell in a handcart and never even try to change it. Others get in there pitching and end up involved in multiple projects.

Dolly Moulden of RRK, Georgetown, is one of those committed, involved people. She likes people and feels that whatever she gets tangled up in is worth the hassle if it helps people.

Mrs. Moulden dates her increased involvement in politics from early public meetings preceding the formation of regional government in Halton.

"It bothered me that the first chairman was going to be appointed rather than elected," she says, "and I stood up at the meeting in the Esqueving Hall and asked questions about that."

A couple of members of the Halton Riding Liberal Association heard her and asked who she was. No one recognized her name but they decided it didn't matter. If she wasn't already a Liberal, they'd convert her.

They soon discovered that conversion wasn't necessary. She laughs about being a Liberal from birth even though it wasn't a popular position in her home town of Elmville.

"I grew up in a community where I thought my father and our family were the only Liberals in the world, it was that blue," she laughs.

Mrs. Moulden says she always campaigned at election time, but until recently, stayed out of party affairs between elections.

HOUSING CHAIRMAN

In 1975, she was asked to join the Halton Housing Authority and in September, was elected chairman of the south zone of housing authorities. This entitles her to a seat on the board of directors of the association of Ontario Housing Authorities. The board acts as a liaison between the Ontario Housing Authorities and the Ontario Housing Corporation.

The authority meets monthly at its headquarters on Thomas Street in Oakville. She also chairs its monthly placement committee meetings and attends a monthly maintenance committee meeting.

The Halton Housing Authority looks after five geared-to-income type housing projects: one in Acton, one in Burlington and three in Oakville. It also manages 11 senior housing complexes with a new one scheduled to open in Acton next year.

Acton has about 18 units of family housing. The largest of which features four bedrooms. There is little turnover of residents in either the family or the senior housing in Acton, she says.

Mrs. Moulden says she deliberately tries not to remember names of tenants living in the units.

"That way when you talk to people you avoid preconceived notions about them that remain from other things and have no bearing on the present question."

The authority gets several applications each year from underage people on disability pensions looking for space in senior residences. Mrs. Moulden finds it distressing that there is nothing the authority can do for these people.

"Like one woman who applied to us," she says. "She was getting \$176 a month total income on a partial disability pension. She was paying \$150 a month for a little wee apartment and trying to pick up day-old bread and vegetables and that sort of thing for food. She wanted desperately to get into a place where she would have a little more money and some companionship."

"I mean, on her income, she couldn't even afford to go to Bingo. Let alone get a new coat for the winter. Not even at the Salvation Army. To me now, there was a woman in need. When you're disabled so you can't work and have to live on that sort of money, you're old at 58, and very lonely. But under our rules we can't help her."

POVERTY PENSIONS

The Association of Ontario Housing Authorities has forwarded a motion to the government asking that all pensions be raised to poverty level at least. That would be \$300 a month. It still isn't much, Mrs. Moulden notes, but it would be a vast improvement to people like the woman on \$176 a month.

Georgetown and Milton have no geared-to-income housing at this time, but they can get it if they want it, Mrs. Moulden says. The thing is, council has to want it before it will be built.

"We've never been ap-



Dolly Moulden finds the world is full of paper work and no matter what committee she works on she gets piles of reports and minutes to read through. These are just a few of the reports she is wading through to familiarize herself with work for the Land Division Committee. (Herald photo by Maggie Hannah)

pruned by any of the local councillors about housing problems," she says. "Senior housing is a lovely motherhood issue, but they don't want to cope with young, poor families and mother-led families. I can't understand why family services and public nursing people haven't been down council's neck about this long ago. They're shirking their job. It's not our role to initiate housing developments; that has to come from the community. We just manage the completed projects once they are built."

"If the public wants geared-to-income housing in Halton they're going to have to force council to go after it for them. We can't do it for them."

Mrs. Moulden took on a second area of interest this fall she was appointed to the Land Division Committee (LDC). She says she is still feeling her way, since she has only been on it about a month but has already discovered the reams of paper that accompany the job.

"There's so much paper in this world today I can't believe it," she says. "Every committee issues so much paper between minutes and information, it's got to the point I don't know if it's worth reading it all."

SUPPORT PLANS

The LDC is expected to support the various Official Plans for Halton's communities and grant or deny land separations, she says. If they approve a separation the developer will then go on to council if he requires a zoning change or similar adjustment. LDC is only concerned with the separation.

"If people think it's a political plum they can think again," she says. "We don't get paid so it's no plum. But I wouldn't give it up because it's people I'm working for."

Mrs. Moulden also does public relations for the Limebush Women's Institute. Most of this, she says, centres around arranging the group's Canada Day celebrations.

"Someone said 'why doesn't the government do something about organizing Canada Day celebrations in all the small communities?'" she chuckles. "and I bristled and said, 'what do you mean, the government? It's your country and your celebration in your community. Why don't you do something instead of expecting the government to do it for you? Guess who wound up as chairman of the celebration committee. Me and my big mouth!'"

Mrs. Moulden says she was raised on a farm, and although she admires farmers who are willing to spend all those hours to make their occupation work, it just wasn't her idea of the way she wanted to live. She was so definite in her ideas, in fact, that she left home so she would avoid marrying a farmer.

"And look where I am," she smiles. "But he isn't a farmer."

Terry Moulden works in customs at Toronto International Airport. It was because of his job that the Mouldens spent

almost five years in Lahr, West Germany, where Canadian servicemen and their families were cleared for their return home.

"When we first wanted to go overseas, we only had two children but they wouldn't hear tell of it," Mrs. Moulden says. "Then when we had four children they suddenly decided we could go."

SNAG DEVELOPED

In October, 1967, they left their home on the Fifth Line and set out for a fully furnished three bedroom apartment in Lahr, or so they thought. When they arrived they discovered a snag had developed and their three-bedroom apartment had turned into an attic with a gas-fired geyser-aver the sink for heating the water. Eventually, they found their quarters, but in the meantime they learned a lot about putting up with inconvenience and making do, Mrs. Moulden says.

"For instance, I discovered that red wine goes very well with peanut butter sandwiches," she chuckles. "I also found that the weather in the Rhine valley in the fall is even greater than ours."

But that didn't stop her enjoying the place.

"I'd go back in a minute,"

she declares. "I really enjoyed it there."

Mrs. Moulden was surprised to discover after two and a half years that her youngest child, Jeff, who was about seven, was homesick.

"He said he missed his country," she says. "I would have expected him to miss his family or his house but he said that wasn't it. He was homesick for his country. That amazed me at his age."

Mrs. Moulden enjoys sewing, needlepoint, curling and loves to read. She also spends a good deal of time gardening and looking after the acre of land on which their house is built. If she had the time, she'd like to rekindle her interest in pottery, she says.

"I have my own small kiln, and I used to work at it, but you really need to be able to spend a certain amount of time on it every week and I just can't manage that at this point," she says.

"With my husband and all our children on different shifts around here, even on weekends, I never seem to get anything organized. Maybe what I need is a housekeeper. House work always was on the bottom of my list."

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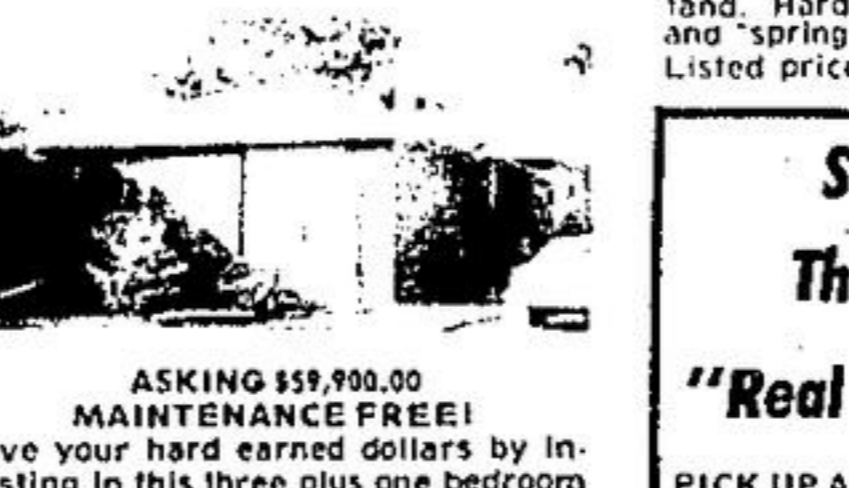
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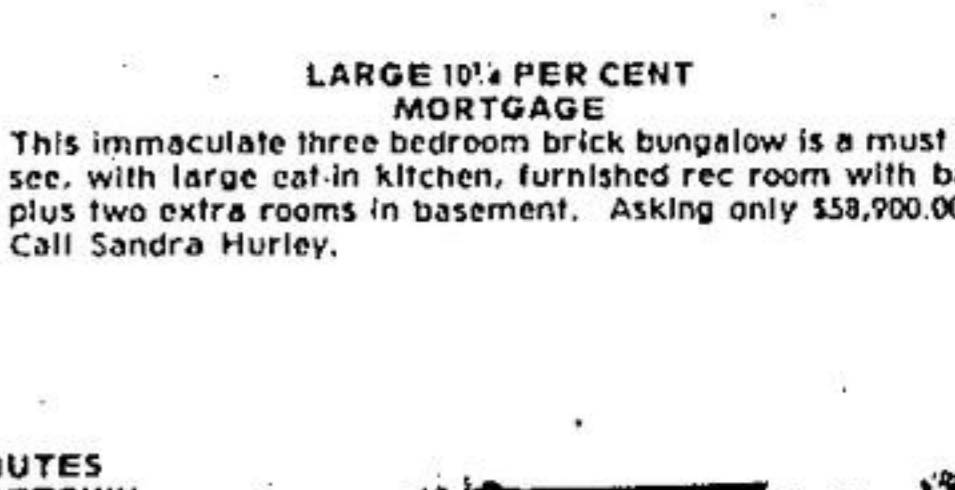
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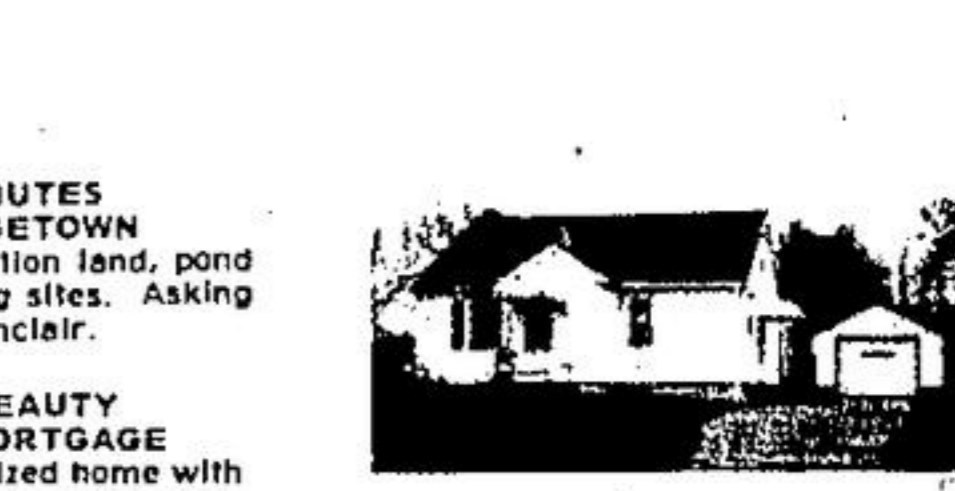
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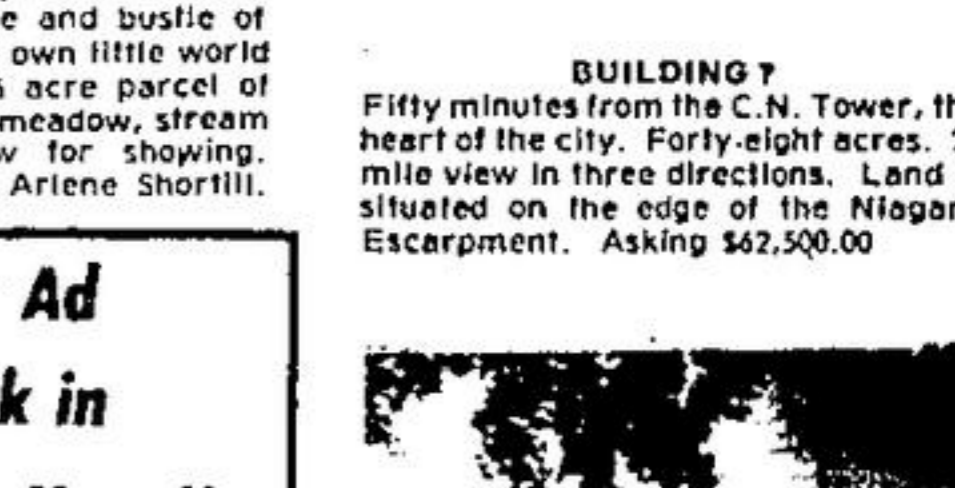
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