

# 'Insanity' verdict in U.S. murder trial

**Herald Special**  
A U.S. judge has cleared the way for a former Acton woman to return to Ontario almost a year after she stabbed her three sons in Cedar Falls, Iowa, killing one of them.

The judge's clearance concludes a trial in which he found Mary Abigail Vukovich, 37, not guilty by reason of insanity on a first-degree murder charge laid against her in the death of her seven-year-old son, Michael, and attempted murder charges in the stabbing of her other sons, four-year-old Matthew and four-month-old Jonathan.

James Sheerer, a spokesman for the Black Hawk County prosecuting attorney, said earlier this week that district Judge Dennis Damsgard ruled that Mrs. Vukovich, wife of former Acton doctor Joseph Vukovich, is no longer dangerous and can return to Toronto to live with her parents while continuing psychiatric treatment.

The couple left Acton a year ago after Mr. Vukovich had spent seven years in the town as a family physician. He had obtained a position at Allen Memorial Hospital in Waterloo, Iowa.

The stabbings took place last Oct. 1 at the couple's new home in Cedar Falls. Mrs. Vukovich also stabbed herself.

Court testimony and letters from doctors and psychiatrists indicate that on the night of the stabbings Mrs. Vukovich feared a tornado was coming that would destroy everyone. Several psychiatrists testified that Mrs. Vukovich committed the stabbings in an effort to protect her children.

## Women's hostel opening Sept. 29

The long-awaited and apparently much-needed opening of Halton Women's Place, the region's first hostel for abused wives and their children, takes place Sept. 29 in Milton.

Women's Place executive director Loretta Costigane reported last week that the summer months, which saw supporters struggling to secure financing and quarters for the project, brought eight phonecalls from Halton women in need of such a facility. Each was told in turn to try and manage as best they could until the hostel was ready to open.

Mrs. Costigane expects the hostel, located at 48 Hugh St. in Milton, to be filled to capacity—12 living units as soon as it opens.

Financing the project has been something of a struggle from the outset, but the hostel's board of directors now considers itself fiscally secure, although donations from the public will continue to be welcomed. Similarly, volunteer help in the areas of operation, maintenance and renovation is needed.

Halton region is leasing the Milton house to the board for a token fee of \$1 per year. Dozens of service organizations in the region have provided much assistance and Halton's 1,300 elementary school teachers have pledged \$10 each per year toward the hostel's upkeep.

Anyone wishing to help maintain the hostel through donations of money or provisions is invited to contact Mrs. Costigane at 878-7757.

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