

COMA strives to educate on growing cult problem

"Dialogue. That's the beginning of the end."

And Ian Haworth is warning people with statements like that about the dangers of that first chat with the handsome fellow or pretty girl handing out roses or leaflets on the corner of Young and Bloor.

A founding member of the Council On Mind Abuse (COMA), Mr. Haworth's own close encounter of a hellish kind with a Toronto cult two years ago indicated to him that the average person is far from enlightened on the mind-manipulating techniques of Toronto's 40 quasi-religious and "mind-improvement" organizations.

"What we're interested in is why people become involved with cults," he told a meeting of the Georgetown University Women's Club last Tuesday evening, and if they become involved, how are people completely coerced to accept the cult's philosophies.

He explained that cults can be distinguished by their tendency to seek control over a recruit's mind, the appearance of a rival frame of thought, and a messianic portrayal of a leader. Cult members are taught to believe that the "end justifies the means" and under the guise of a number of apparently harmless fronts, they financially enrich themselves, putting little money back into the community.

TWO TYPES
Mr. Haworth said that there are two types of cults operating in the Toronto region. Therapeutic cults offer "mind improvement" therapy, attracting people of all ages with claims that their course will build self-confidence, sharpen memory, and offer some kind of escape from stress and tired nerves.

His own involvement with the PSI Mind Development Institute of Toronto started with the honorable intention of kicking his smoking habit.

Promising to make him a confirmed non-smoker, PSI enrolled Mr. Haworth for a four-day course, and indeed in three days he had lost his desire to duck out of class for a quick drag. Meanwhile, he had been convinced to hand over an additional \$1,500 for course material.

Mr. Haworth told an enthralled audience that he stayed with the PSI Institute for an additional two weeks before he managed to escape the "stranglehold" which they had on his mind. Although he underwent three days of intensive deprogramming, thanks to friends who realized the danger signals in his distinct personality change, Mr. Haworth said he suffered 11 months of psychological with-

drawal afterward.

TECHNIQUES
The techniques used in "mind-improvement" cults are also used by the so-called religious or youth cults, such as the Hare Krishna movement and the Unification Church (Moonies). A COMA leaflet lists 23 different mind-manipulative techniques, some of which were commonly used in the Korean War against captured American G.I.s.

"First of all you must isolate the person from family and friends," Mr. Haworth said, "and then, through mental and physical deprivation you get the person to clutch to anything he can get a hold of."

He explained that even the PSI courses he took isolated the students from the outside society, used subliminal hypnosis to relax the group, making them easier to persuade, and exercised peer pressure to hold questions to a minimum.

Students were also "house-trained" and were not allowed to go to the washrooms except at breaks once every five hours. Interestingly enough, Mr. Haworth said, students were asked to hold any questions until the breaks, but with most of their classmates out of the room, not to mention their own desire to use the facilities, questions were rarely answered. Persistently inquisitive students were quietly ushered out of the class, offered their money back and asked to leave.

HEAVY
"A heavy" was at the door to make sure that only students came into the building and those that left stayed out," Mr. Haworth said. Few classmates noticed a missing student because the instructors changed the seating arrangement after each break. The chairs of errant and curious students who were kicked out of the course were removed.

Cults often make use of other techniques to fully convince recruits of the merits of their movement. "Lovebombing" is the term used to describe the effusive friendliness cult followers show to new members while destroying family ties.

Sleep deprivation and a diet low in protein speed up the recruit's physical and mental breakdown as he slides towards becoming a full cult member. His vulnerability is further increased with negative lectures, confusing games, rejection of old values, and fear, Mr. Haworth said.

NAZIS
Techniques like this were commonly used by the Nazis,

the Charles Manson family and the celebrated Symbionese Liberation Army which kidnapped Hearst newspaper heiress Patty Hearst.

Mr. Haworth told The Herald Thursday that educating the public would probably be more effective than government legislation against cults, although he said that "street solicitation could be cleaned up" with appropriate laws.

He said that COMA's Toronto office is inundated with calls every day from parents wanting to know how to rescue a family member from a cult, but he warned that kidnapping a cult member could be "extremely dangerous". Parents should not try and get "information first hand" from a cult with which they suspect a son or daughter has become involved, he said.

"Once the group knows you're looking for one of their members they'll get him out of the city and you may never see him again," he said.

DEPROGRAMMING
If parents or friends are lucky enough to rescue someone from the folds of the cult, the person must undergo three days of deprogramming, and withdrawal symptoms—edginess, lethargy, and lack of sleep—could last for about a year.

Mr. Haworth explained that the first 45 days are crucial since the rescued individual is still vulnerable to the cult's influence.

"If it's at all possible they should be watched 24 hours a day," he said, adding the heavy cloak of protection may be needed for four months. Parents still run the risk of a kidnapping charge if caught trying to rescue a son or daughter from a cult.

Considering that a single member can raise more than \$300 soliciting funds on the street, the loss of one "could mean the loss of a substantial amount of revenue," Mr. Haworth said, explaining the zeal of some cults to get

members back.

A non-profit organization, COMA raises money through speaking engagements and casual contributions. Informa-

tion about the organization can be obtained by calling (416) 484-1112, or writing Box 575, Station Z, Toronto, Ontario, M5N 2Z6.



Ian Haworth, executive director of the Council On Mind Abuse (COMA) spoke to an audience of Georgetown University Women's club members on the growth of cults in Toronto. In addition to revealing details of his own experience with one cult, Mr. Haworth also said that his organization is trying to educate people on the techniques cults use to get members and their motives behind recruitment.

(Herald photo)

About the Hills

Volunteer training

The fall training course for volunteers at the North Halton Contact Centre will begin October 28. The centre needs 20 to 25 volunteers to maintain 24-hour-a-day service on the telephones. A spokesman for the Contact Centre said the situation has not improved since last fall when a shortage of funds and volunteers was threatening the existence of the centre. The centre is receiving 700 calls a month and has had to shut down on occasion for lack of staff.

Christmas tree sale

The Kinsmen Club of Georgetown will be selling Christmas trees again this year at the A and P Parking Lot from December 19 to Christmas. This is the 23rd year for this project, which was the first fund-raising operation undertaken by the Georgetown Club.

Raffle results

The Lions Club International Multiple District "A" 1980 raffle was held recently, and here are the results: first prize, a 1980 Cadillac Sedan DeVille, to Doris McDougall of Stony Creek; second prize, a 1980 Pontiac Phoenix, to Bob Woods of Simcoe; third prize, a 1980 Pontiac Acadia, to Normand Durocher of Beattyville, Quebec; fourth prize, a Sunlight two-week tour to Hawaii, to Peter Barrett of Toronto; fifth prize, a color television, to Roman Klyn of Saul Ste. Marie; sixth prize, also a color television, to Brian Wardlow of Oshawa; seventh prize, a Canon SLR camera, to Stephen Wilson of Nepean; eighth prize, also a Canon SLR camera, to Jessie Smith of Mississauga.

Making friends

The North Halton Association for the Mentally Retarded is looking for volunteers to assist in a new program begun this year which they hope will broaden the horizons for their adult clients. The program, called "Be a Friend", will match a volunteer with a client, in hopes the two will be able to establish a friendship. Anyone who has time to take in a movie, go to a ball game or meet with a friend for coffee is asked to contact Barbara Abray at 877-7702.

Farm tour

All members of Halton Hills and Halton region council have been invited to participate in a tour of selected local farms on Oct. 16. The tour, organized by the Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Rural Outreach Development Committee, is aimed at familiarizing council members with some of the problems facing Halton farmers.

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Graduate



Tammie Grozelle, daughter of Lloyd and Verna Grozelle, Maple Ave. graduated with Honors, receiving a Gold medal for High Academic standing from Toronto Institute of Medical Technology as a medical Laboratory Assistant. Graduation ceremonies were held Oct. 4 at Convocation Hall, University of Toronto. Miss Grozelle is now employed by Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto.

Casting completed

Casting has been completed for the upcoming Musical "Anne of Green Gables", to be presented at G.D.H.S. on Nov. 27, 28, and 29. Anne Shirley will be portrayed by Brenda Archer, who was the rose seller in Oliver last year. The brother and sister who adopt her, Matthew and Marilla, will be played by Bill Marchant and Becky Reid. The other main cast members are Ken Kuhl as Gilbert, Chris Gorin as Diana, Lori Kenner as Mrs. Lynde, Joanne Tucker as Josie Pye, Ray Brennan as Mr. Phillips and Jenny Inglis as Miss Stacy. Music and acting rehearsals are now taking place under the direction of Mr. Ralph Urset and Mrs. Joan Silk.

ATTENTION:

Mayors, Fire Chiefs, Police Chiefs, Medical Officers of Health, Municipal Emergency Planners.

Register now to attend a conference entitled **Emergency Preparedness for the Eighties**. This important conference will deal with practical issues facing all those involved in emergency planning in government and industry.

Issues to be covered include the nature of emergencies and the capabilities of response; the role of the local emergency planner and the responsibility of elected officials.

The Mississauga train derailment will be used as an example of the sort of emergency for which you must be prepared.

Emergency Preparedness for the Eighties.
November 16-19, 1980, at the Harbour Castle Hilton, Toronto.
To register, phone (416) 961-6505. Telex 06-986766.
Ask for Emergency Conference Secretariat. Address is: Emergency Conference, Conference Secretariat, 112 St. Clair Ave. West, Suite 303, Toronto, Ontario M4V 2Y3.

Please note—the date for this Conference is November 16-19, 1980 at the Harbour Castle Hilton, Toronto, not October as printed in last week's advertisement.

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