

# Finding helpers requires care

Although leisure time is increasing, thanks to shorter working hours and longer weekends, according to Halton Hills Arts Council representative, people are not likely to spend it on volunteer work unless they are attracted to a group's particular cause.

Speaking to members of the Halton Hills Arts Council at a general meeting last Wednesday night, Maude McLean said that volunteer recruitment requires special planning and care, especially when transportation costs make donated time increasingly uneconomical.

"A lot of people have put volunteerism out of their picture," Mrs. McLean said. "To attract them to your group, you've got to try to show them that getting involv-



MAUDE McLEAN

ed is fun and then make them feel that you're as a group they'd like to get into."

The wide range of interest groups represented by the arts council - artists, craftsmen, and performers - have all experienced difficulty in finding volunteers to participate in fund-raising efforts. Keeping members interested from year to year has increasingly become a challenge as well.

Where most groups fall flat on their faces, Mrs. McLean said, is in their failure to assimilate material on new recruits and eventually fit them into roles that will be of most benefit to the group and the new volunteer.

Members of the Arts Council attending last Wednesday's meeting agreed that new volunteers should be made aware of the goals of the organization they may consider joining. Informal overtures aimed at finding out more about the new recruit should be made at the first meeting, Mrs. McLean said, but information gathering should be done without embarrassing the person.

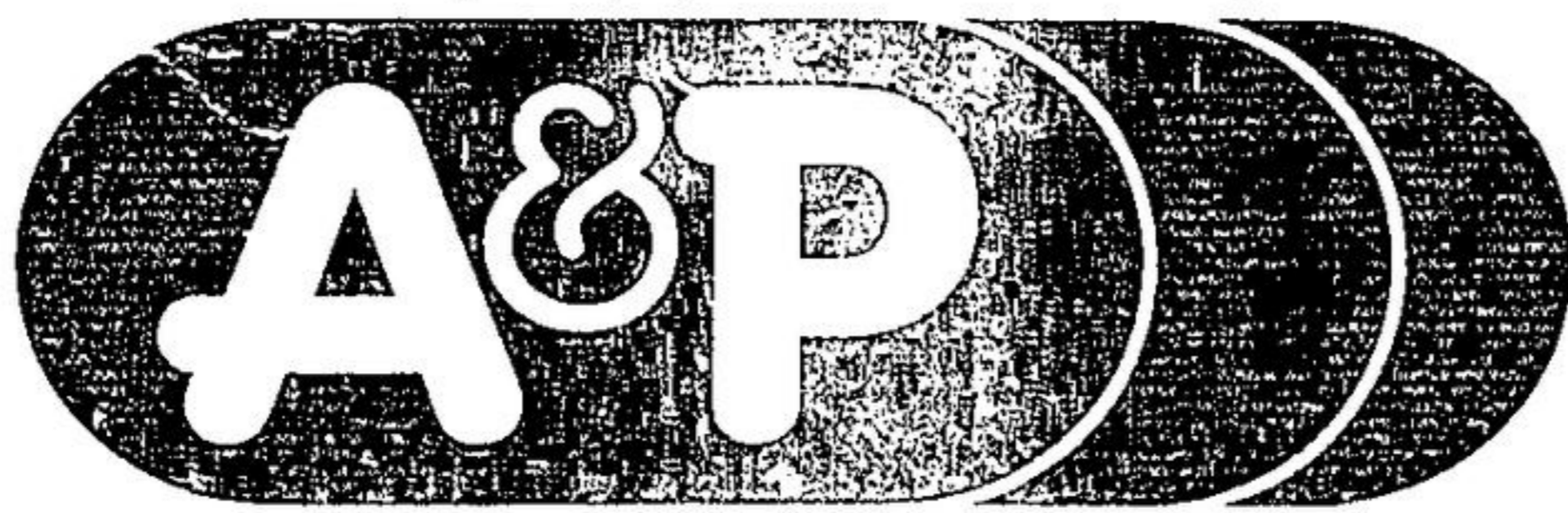
And, she added, offering training of some sort within the group is a good way of attracting new people and maintaining their interest. Volunteer work should be highly praised from within the group and the recruit must be able to see a clear line of promotion ahead if he does his work, even if he or she starts off doing something menial.

The average volunteer is "intelligent and reasonably well-educated," Mrs. McLean said.

Many people, such as reformed alcoholics, offer their time to repay a debt to society; others volunteer because of loneliness.

"Volunteerism is a learning and growing experience," she said. "It helps you make new friendships, interests and concerns and it makes use of present skills as well as develop new ones."

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