

Caught in crisis, people call Contact Centre

By ANI PEDERIAN
Herald Staff Writer
Of the 700 calls received a month by the North Halton Contact Centre, about 20 per cent are from out-of-town callers.

Walter Ridley, a volunteer with the Centre, said. He explained the long-distance calls come because people in need find they can't get through to similar numbers in Brampton or Toronto.

However, the majority of calls are from local callers in the Milton, Georgetown and Acton areas.

"We think of ourselves as a multi-purpose centre," Rev. Ridley said. "We consider ourselves as both a distress and information and referral centre."

Confidential, the service is run by about 60 volunteers, and is open 24

hours a day to anyone in need. Of course, the Centre also has regulars, people who call every day, several times a week, or once a week.

The Centre has a telephone list of dozens of agencies, and he noted that in the time the Centre has been open, at least six new organizations have been started up like the legal clinic, Halton Women's Place, the Salvation Army and the Acton Information and Social Services Centre.

"All of these organizations now mean that it's less stressful for us now, because before we would have no answer for, say, women who were being abused by their husbands," Rev. Ridley said.

Brothers, Al-Anon, Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-A-Teen, Meals-On-Wheels, Red Cross after hours, Toughlove, and the Widows Self-Help Group.



PURE GOLD IN CANTANTE 'RAINBOW'

Georgetown's Cantante Singers are putting the finishing touches on the "Rainbow Connection", their spring concert which will be held Friday. Among the voices you'll hear when the group goes on stage at 8 p.m. at the John Elliott Theatre are (front row, left to right), Sheila Prouse, Jennifer Hodgkott, Lesley Collett, (second row) Cathy

McGowan, Kerry McCashew, Johanna Delroy, (back) Jane Timleck, Diana Collett and Brenda Archer. Tickets for the concert are \$4 for adults and \$2.50 for students and senior citizens. For further information, contact 877-4162 or 877-6194.

(Herald photo)

He said not many youths call the Centre, at least not as many as the organization would like. "Maybe they feel we are 'establishment'," Rev. Ridley said.

"You get people who almost feel ashamed to be calling," Rev. Ridley said. "They say, 'I haven't got a big problem...' They think it's just the number to call if you're contemplating suicide."

Volunteers reassure such callers that they don't have to be at their rope's end before they call 877-1211.

Callers are often referred to various social agencies by volunteers. Sometimes they specifically phone for an agency's number, Mr. Ridley said.

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The 13-week series will be aired Saturdays on CKCO-TV, Channel 13, beginning June 4th at 10 a.m.

Originally produced by the British Columbia Ministry of Health, the "Senior Chef" is being brought to Halton Region by the Halton Regional Health Department.

Each half hour show features Bert Dodd, a good-natured sixty-five year old amateur chef and former civil servant. Each week Bert takes to his kitchen to demonstrate how easily good nutrition and a balanced diet can be achieved on a shoe-string budget and with limited cooking facilities.

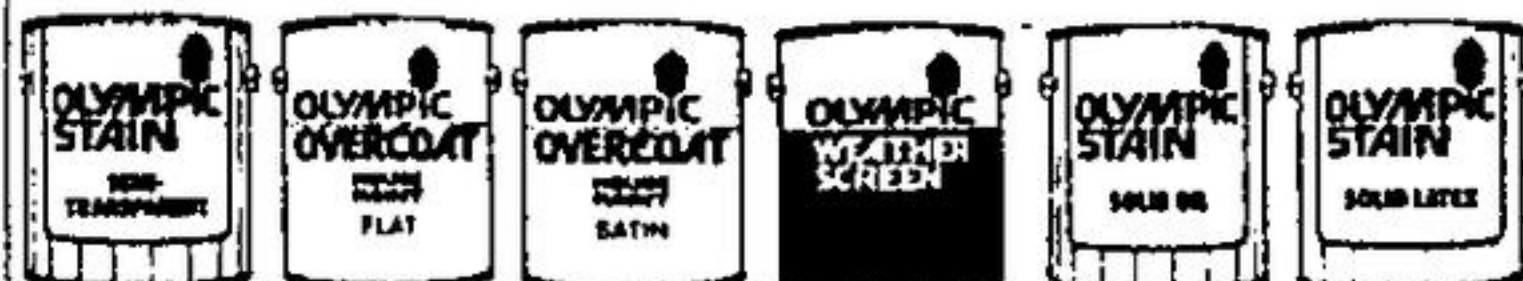
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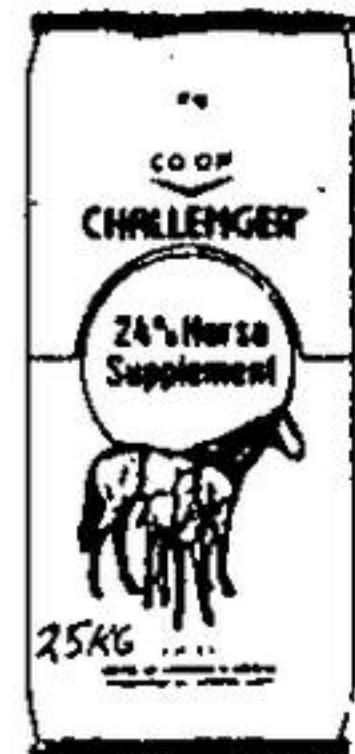


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