

Chickens cluck behind Optimist leaders

By BRIAN MacLEOD
Herald Special

A program started by the Optimist Club in Georgetown six years ago is now resonating around North America.

The Chicken Club - an anti drug campaign aimed at elementary school students - first took hold in George Kennedy School in 1981. Now, along with the 13 schools in which the Optimist club operates the program in the Halton Hills area, are schools from North Carolina and Buffalo, Texas.

Why, one might ask, would an anti drug campaign be called the chicken club? The answer is an acronym. Cool, Honest, Intelligent, Clear headed, Keen, Energetic, Not interested in drugs - CHICKEN.

The program and acronym idea really surfaced in Phoenix, Arizona many years ago, said Norm Guthrie of the Georgetown Optimists Club.

The Optimists acquired information on how the program worked in Phoenix (now defunct), modified some of the details and received permission to begin the program in George Kennedy School from then Principal Jack Reed in 1981.

Thanks mainly to the efforts of Chicken Club members organizers in Georgetown, South East Texas towns now have over 25,000 Chicken Club Student members. Looking for a connection?

It seems the Georgetown Optimist Club put together a manual on how best to operate the program and all the requirements necessary for a successful anti-drug campaign. The Optimists book won contests at the district level and the international level for two years running (1983-84), said Mr. Guthrie.



Norm Guthrie greets Texas Optimist club member Dan Eanes to Georgetown. The Texas Chicken Club anti-drug program is a hit with the children from the deep South, says Mr. Eanes. He spoke to the Optimist Club members in Georgetown April 27. (Herald photo)

For a reward the Georgetown Optimists' book was put on display at the international convention in New Orleans in 1983.

That's where Dan Eanes first eyed the book. The President of the South East Texas Optimists copied most of the information from the book longhand and brought it back to his compatriots.

The program is now spreading quickly through-out the United States and along with the 25,000 students Southeast Texas has in the program after just three years, North Carolina has adopted the program with 4,000 students in just two months. South Carolina is expected to follow suit shortly.

April 27, Mr. Eanes visited the Georgetown Optimists Club Hall and presented a plaque from the South Texas Chicken Club to the Georgetown Club thanking them for introducing the program into their district. Along with the plaque goes a picture of Vice-President George Bush - in a Chicken Club T-shirt.

But the Texas organization has taken Georgetown's ideas and expanded on it. Chicken Club T-shirt days at schools, free roller skating nights and visiting heroes such as former Houston Oiler running back Earl Campbell all contribute to the positive atmosphere surrounding a program which boasts at least 95 per cent active participation in every school it enters.

On the weekly "Chicken Club T-shirt Day" at Southeast Texas schools, those not wearing their shirts are in the minority and are the odd one out, said Mr. Eanes.

He cited a case in which one Chicken Club member was found to be using marijuana, his fellow members became angry and asked

the principal to take action. The principal issued an ultimatum - give up the drugs or turn in the Chicken Club T-shirt. After one week the boy had completely given up the drugs and told the principal about two individuals whom he had personally helped start on the drugs, Mr. Eanes said.

In another incident, a crown of Chicken Club members pinned a drug pusher to the ground until the police arrived when it was learned he approached two girls offering them some free "grass" at a football game, Mr. Eanes said.

Mr. Eanes said the program is targeted at 11-year-olds for a reason. "The average age of initial experimentation (with drugs) is 11-years old," he said.

In Georgetown the Chicken Club has experienced a measure of success, but not on the level of the Texas organization. The Optimists Club program is now in 13 area schools enrolling over 4,000 students, Mr. Guthrie said.

The Club has not been operated on the grand scale that Texas has but plans are in the works to get the kids even more involved. Mr. Guthrie expects the increased efforts to meet with successful results.

The Club concentrates on peer pressure as its main tool, said Mr. Eanes. "Adults cannot get into the society of 11-year-olds, Peer pressure of their own group is much stronger," he said.

"We use counter peer pressure." The Georgetown Club hopes to get the kids out doing group activities more often. Pizza nights, movie visits and a host of other activities are some of the ideas Mr. Guthrie has in mind.

Rabies cases down across the province

Although Terra Cotta residents had two rabid foxes in their backyard this past month, Dr. Edward Lobinowich of Brampton's Health of Animals says the incidence of rabies across the province is down this year.

Most cases of rabies are found in Dufferin, with Halton getting between nine and 12 annually and Peel three to six, Dr. Lobinowich said.

Rabies is most prevalent in the fall, when the offspring of wildlife are out trying to make it on their own. With animals less active in the winter, rabies cases slack off. Rabies starts again usually in late July, he said.

"I don't see where people should have to be warned, when the province is full of rabies," Dr. Lobinowich told The Herald. "Southwestern Ontario has been labelled the rabies capital of the world."

Terra Cotta residents were angry this week that they weren't told a rabid fox had been picked up and another sighted.

The doctor said Health of Animals doesn't warn the public so as not to alarm people. However, he noted

that since 1969 there has been an ongoing campaign to keep people advised about rabies, through lectures, films in area schools and pamphlets.

Foxes, skunks and a few racoons are the worst offenders, Dr. Lobinowich said. You should get suspicious if you see a skunk wandering around in daylight, because it's normally a nocturnal animal. Be suspicious also if you see a fox trying to get into a doghouse or under a porch, he warned.

Once the animals die, they aren't contagious, as they soon start to decompose or get washed down in the rain, Dr. Lobinowich said. If the rabies virus isn't introduced onto nerve endings, there's very little likelihood another animal will contract the disease which is a disease of the nervous system.

Health of Animals concerns itself with control of disease in livestock and domestic animals in Halton, Peel and Dufferin counties. If the Halton Hills Animal Control Service picks up an animal it suspects to be rabid, it sends it to Health of Animals which in turn sends it to Ottawa for testing.

Developer is unhappy over lot levy stance

A Georgetown developer is unhappy with the town's intention to defer lot levies for apartments and condominium buildings.

Tuesday night, Al Piliutti won a deferment of the policy councillors had approved April 13 at their general committee meeting.

The proposed policy gives developers of buildings containing 24 to 50 units 90 days to pay lot levies, and for buildings containing more than 50 units, 180 days grace.

Mr. Piliutti told council he wants the proposed policy to apply to buildings with eight or more units.

Coun. Joe Hewitt agreed, and said in Halton Hills, 12 units in a building represent a fairly substantial development. He wanted council to reconsider the proposed policy.

Coun. Marilyn Serjeantson said she preferred more councillors be present before a new decision is made on the matter. Eight councillors were present at the meeting:

Couns. Gerald Rennie, Norman Elliott, Betty Fisher, Al Cook, Lillian Bowman, Peter Norton, Joe Hewitt and Marilyn Serjeantson. Five were missing.

The issue will be brought up at the May 4 general committee meeting, councillors decided.

Safety village opens

The Halton Police Children's Safety Village officially opens May 11 in Oakville.

The village, located at 1151 Bronte Road will help children better understand traffic safety rules and regulations, police say.

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Wants comprehensive child care system

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney has promised Canadians a comprehensive child care system. As the family unit changes, along with economic and social changes, so do the needs of Canadian families. Supporting the family and helping it to adapt to these changes is at the heart of this government's social policy.

work or to stay at home. Affordable, accessible child care is crucial because it will not only give women these choices, but it will allow families to have choices.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE REPORT

-A new child care expense tax credit to replace the existing child care expense deduction. This would provide fairer tax treatment for families, providing more assistance than at present to lower-income families. Tax benefits would be based on what you actually pay for child care rather than on your income.

-Operating grants for licensed child care services to improve the quality of existing services without raising fees.

-Grants to stimulate development of new day care spaces.

-Business must also share in the responsibility, through extended maternity and paternity benefits.

-Significant improvements to UIC and maternity and paternity benefits, including more flexibility and a longer benefit period.

-A child care tax credit for all families with preschool children, even where one parent stays to raise a family.

Health and Welfare Minister Jake Epp says the report will be a valuable tool as the federal government sits down with the provinces for the next round of discussions to work out how a national child care strategy can become a reality.

MP's Report

John McDermid

Real progress is being made on the child care issue. The government's special Parliamentary committee report on child care, released at the end of March, will help the government assess what Canadians' needs actually are. Health and Welfare Minister Jake Epp and his provincial counterparts have agreed to a "fast-track" work plan, and it is expected that concrete negotiations on this complex issue will be well underway by June.

Women are entitled to make choices about their lives, whether to

BIA reps recharged after Ottawa seminars

Two representatives from the Georgetown BIA (Business Improvement Area) went to Ottawa for a "recharging session."

Ontario BIA members met April 25-28 for a series of workshops on the theme, BIA: A Great Community Resource.

BIA Co-ordinator Margaret Vint and member Elizabeth McNeilly attended the conference, which included four workshops per day. Some of the topics included marketing and promotion, physical improvement and downtown management.

A spokesman for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs at the conference was positive and it sound-

ed as if the Ministry is interested in helping to keep downtown areas prosperous, said Mrs. Vint.

The question of parking was introduced and Mrs. Vint found it amusing some members were complaining about a rise in meter parking to \$1 per hour.

In Georgetown the price for an hour's parking is 25¢.

Members were also told about a group insurance package which is available and this will be discussed with the Georgetown BIA said Mrs. Vint.

The seminars were a good opportunity to exchange ideas and learn more about what can be done to improve the BIA, she said.

Town won't interfere with a garden centre

Councillors backed off from interfering in the operation of a garden centre on Sideroad 5 west of Trafalgar Road.

In their general committee meeting, councillors approved the zoning amendment application by Tom Moroz who currently operates a nursery operation nearly 11 acres on the south side of Sideroad 5 (Regional Road 9).

Mr. Moroz needs the zoning amendment to allow him to sell nursery and garden products not produced on his property, and to set up a landscape consulting office.

The proposal to restrict motorized machinery like lawn mowers and chain saws from being sold at the

garden centre was dropped. It was made when garden centre neighbours anticipated increased noise levels arising from such sales.

"It seems to me it's unfair to restrict this one guy to compete with all the other businesses," Coun. Pam Johnston said.

Coun. Betty Fisher said telling one businessman what he couldn't do, yet allowing another in the same line of business to do it, is not fair.

There's nothing wrong with a municipality drafting site specific bylaws, objected Coun. Pam Sheldon. She warned down the road council may be dealing with irate citizens who apply the town's noise bylaws.

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