

## New teachers learn from their mentors in town

When a new semester of school begins it can be a traumatic experience for those students who are new to the area.

But it's not just the new students that have a rough time, says Joanne Zywine, a Halton Board of Education superintendant of instructional services, the new teachers can also have a tough time.

To help new teachers begin their careers the board implemented a teacher-mentor program in September 1988. The program has helped at least two local teachers get started.

Karen Coats, a teacher at George Kennedy Public School since September, said her mentor, Kathryn Braga a teacher for five years, helped her in "just trying to judge the kids". The strictness levels can be kept more consistent, she said. Ms. Coats teaches the English section of a French immersion class. Her mentor, Ms. Braga, teaches the French section of the same French immersion class.

Ms. Braga said she tried to give Ms. Coats "little tricks of the trade that make life more enjoyable". This includes "knowing what to worry about and what not to worry about for the first few months," Ms. Braga added.

Ms. Coats and Ms. Braga met before September and now meet once a month to try and solve some of the problems Ms. Coats may be having. One of the main problems is the curriculum of a specific class, Ms. Braga said.

Debbie Curtis has seen both sides of the program - as a rookie teacher in the first year of the program and as a mentor this school year - and says teachers now tend to overplan. What doesn't fit into a class can go in the next or a later one, she said.



Kathryn Braga

Ms. Braga agreed and added the teachers develop a flexibility to the teaching structure of a class. Ms. Curtis explained that once a teacher learns the teaching structure it becomes easier.

Ms. Curtis said mentors can help the new teacher keep up to date with out-of-class activities. "(The mentor) helps the new person prioritize things," she added.

The meetings about the teacher-mentor program can take up a lot of time Ms. Curtis said.

She said her mentor was good at pointing out the important aspects of teaching and the unimportant aspects of teaching.

Ms. Curtis has, however, heard of one class in which a mentor was so good at teaching that she could leave at 3:45 p.m. and leave the new teacher "still looking for her desktop".

Another possible negative aspect of the program is with the mentors who have 20 to 30 years of ex-



Karen Coats

perience and push all their old ideas onto the new teachers, Ms. Braga said. Ms. Curtis agreed and said the newer teachers, turned mentors, have fresher ideas and can relate better to the new teacher.

So far 100 per cent of the participants in the program believe it should continue, Ms. Zywine said. Approximately 80 per cent of the mentors wanted to be mentors again she added. These results were taken from a survey at the end of the last school year, Ms. Zywine said.

## Back from Ottawa as world champs

## Norval News

NORVAL-Hyatt and Charlotte McClure, RR2 Norval, have returned home from six days in Ottawa. They were strong supporters for Canada in the women's world hockey championships.

The McClures' son-in-law, Dave McMaster, was coach for the Canadian team, and spent two weeks in Ottawa prior to the championships.

The McClures motored to Ottawa with their daughter Norma McMaster and grandchildren Anne and Scott McMaster of Toronto.

The games were played in the Ottawa Civic Centre to full capacity crowds and they were attended by Mayor Hazel McCallion of Mississauga, who was a hockey player in her earlier years.

Team members came from as far east as New Brunswick and as

far west as Alberta and coach Dave McMaster ended up with 22 players.

There were eight countries playing in the championships, including Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Japan, Switzerland 1, the US and Canada.

Canada played their final game on Saturday against the US. The American ladies took a 2-0 lead in the first period, but from the second period on Canada started scoring and never looked back ending up with a 5-2 win.

Now they are hoping for the Olympics to include a women's hockey championships.

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