

Seniors for the Future

By FLORENCE WILKINSON

When I was a young girl I do not remember my mother always being away for meetings or other events which demanded her time. Perhaps it was because she was not able to go anywhere during the depression (which so many seniors remember with a variety of emotional responses), or perhaps it was only that she was so involved in keeping a household going, raising a family and struggling to make ends meet.

It therefore rather amazed me that, when she was well past her sixtieth year, she accepted a position that required her travelling around the country to conduct meetings and be involved in the larger life of society.

Now that I belong to that group of "well past the sixtieth birthday," I realize that it is much easier to be free as a senior citizen than it was as a working, struggling citizen.

The second thing which became very clear is the fact that seniors are able to take up new ideas and completely revolutionize their lives.

It may be difficult for younger folk to realize that the group now called 'seniors' were all well into their working lives before such a thing as television was available in Canada.

Though this generation is raised on mechanical devices - notably the computer - it is not the only generation which can become addicted! I guess what I am suggesting is that seniors, though educated before the atom was split, before television was a part of everyday life, air travel was accessible to hosts of people, or the only way of getting to the moon was by daydreaming - seniors may, and can, be excited about all of the modern inventions and become a part of the society that uses them.

In other words, seniors can learn new tricks, and at the same time bring the wisdom of age to bear upon how they can be used. And this is just what many are doing!

Seniors, who have never done much organizing, or had much time for play or hobbies, are now finding time, and looking for, these outlets.

One of these outlets is the Senior's Games. Most of the indoor games are now finished for this year, but outdoor ones are getting started (golf, lawn bowling, etc.). The local games are finalized this early so that the regional winners may go on to the district and then those winners go to the Provincial games which will be held in London, Ontario, in August.

Representing bowling are Zoe Greenspan, Joyce Tilson, Harvey Peavoy, Dennis LeMay and Elmer Pemberton. Teams are from Acton, Burlington and Oakville, and the winners then will go on to London.

There is a group of seniors who are learning the skills of television production. Many of these have learned, over the years, the use of their own camera equipment, others have not. But one and all are finding the same thrill of being involved as if they were a group of teenagers who has grown up in the television age and were taking this as an elective for their school curriculum.

Seniors who, unless they grew up in a larger centre, perhaps never saw or heard much of people who were not white skinned, yet these seniors are learning to relax with Tai Chi, study comparative religion, and travel around the world as if it was their own neighbourhood.

Many seniors are able to do none of these things because of disability or finances. For these seniors other seniors give their volunteer time. Perhaps volunteering is one of the things which the majority of seniors have in common.

As you may be aware, this is the second time around for a column which is going to be written for seniors (others may read for free) by seniors. It should be a column which brings you information about people for whom this is written - the seniors. Your questions, suggestions, comments or columns are welcome.

Cooperative housing project won't have negative impact

A cooperative housing representative told Halton Hills' general committee Monday night, which is made up of the town councillors, that a cooperative housing development doesn't have a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

The coordinator of the Peel-Halton Inter-Cooperative Corporation, Sherry Woytaz, in response to queries from several councillors, said she has lived in a cooperative housing development for several years and none of the surrounding neighbors have ever complained.

In fact, when told there was a cooperative housing development in their neighborhood, said Ms. Woytaz, residents have said they didn't even realize it.

Ms. Woytaz attended Monday night's meeting to ask councillors to support two recently passed Municipality of Toronto resolutions -

that the province follow up its successful "Homes Now" affordable housing program with a similar program starting next year. "Homes Now" is the province's biggest affordable housing project, calling for 30,000 non-profit houses to be built across the province by 1992, and -

the federal government should maintain current funding for the Federal Cooperative Housing Program.

The General Committee voted to support these resolutions but they still have to go before council next Monday for final approval.

Mayor Russ Miller sought assurance from Ms. Woytaz that cooperative housing didn't have a negative effect on a neighborhood, saying there are proposals for cooperative housing developments to be built in Acton that council hopes to get on track during the next few years.

The Mayor was referring specifically to a development proposed for the Cook Street and Victoria area. About 80 residents from that area appeared before council at a public meeting to protest the development. Some residents argued the development would devalue the resale value of their homes.

But Ms. Woytaz referred to a recent study showing introduction of a cooperative housing development showed the prices of surrounding houses actually appreciated. But a reason for the increase couldn't be determined, she said.

Cooperative housing doesn't devalue neighboring homes

because the occupants have a sense of ownership and security. As long as the residents contribute to the workings of the cooperative and abide by the rules, they can live in the cooperative as long as desired. It's stressed the residents don't have to worry about a landlord coming to them one day and saying they have to leave because his brother is moving in, she said.

Ms. Woytaz explained it's a lack of education on the part of people that leads to this misconception about cooperative housing. Change is scary for anybody if they don't understand it, she said.

Ms. Woytaz told councillors 200,000 people across Canada are caught in the cycle of "homelessness," meaning these people don't have adequate housing. And only 25 per cent of all new developments being built today in the province of Ontario, which has one of the lowest vacancy rates in Canada, are geared to income.

Meanwhile, Halton Regional Council voted Wednesday to support the same resolutions the town's general committee supported.

The approvals come a week after the Region's planning and public works committee endorsed the resolutions.

Civic Garden tour a popular event

The Civic Garden Centre is presenting Through The Garden Gate, a tour of private Toronto gardens on June 16 and 17 from noon to 4 p.m. From large and stately to small and intimate, the nine gardens in Forest Hill and six on Belmont Street are viewed by the owners as places to relax and to entertain. This is a fundraising event for The Civic Garden Centre.

There are formal gardens and tiny shady patio gardens, gardens with swimming pools, waterfalls, classical columns and sculptures. A garden for seniors, a wildflower garden and gardens of varying

design and abundance of plant material assure there is something on this tour to please everyone. The Civic Garden Centre's Master Gardeners will be present to help you identify plant material and answer your gardening questions.

The complimentary shuttle buses will circulate the route from noon until 4 p.m. The buses will also service convenient TTC stops. When you purchase your ticket, a map of the tour is provided with the shuttle bus stops marked so that you can easily select the most convenient starting point.

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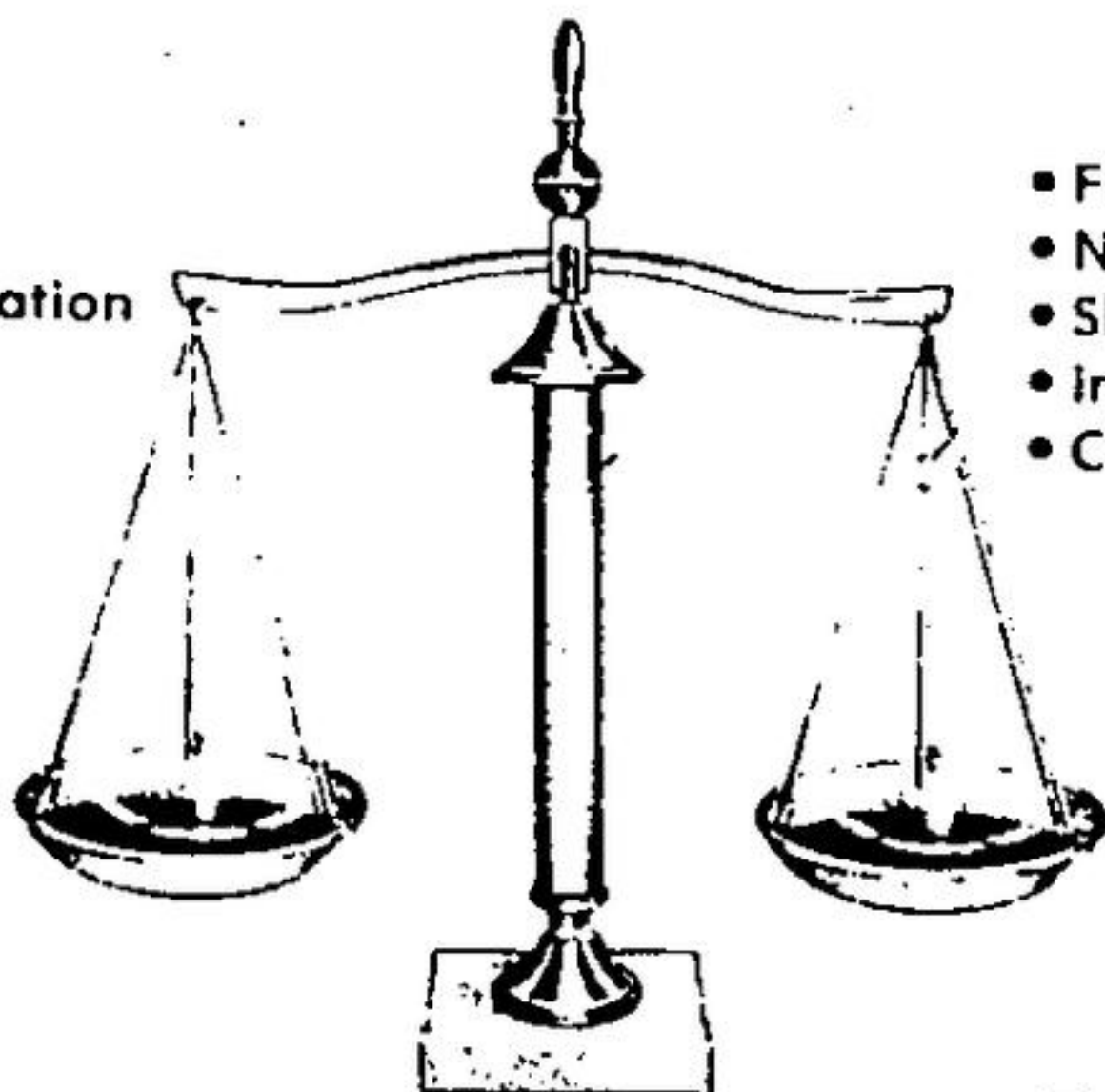
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