

# Arts and Ideas

## For a community to survive, arts and ideas must flourish

### Arts in Halton Hills still must be encouraged

"Georgetown and the Arts" is a miniature version of "Canada and the Arts." This is, in historical terms, a new country, and since new immigrants arrive here daily to start a new life, Canada, in a sense, remains a new country.

A country where many people must work for the necessities of life before they can afford the luxuries.

There was a time when the arts were considered a necessity, but that time is long gone.

In our time, the arts have become a minority pursuit with the exception of some popular art forms like movies, popular music, square dancing, etc. Our various governments support the arts through grants. This wasn't always the case, it only started in the 50's, and the grants are modest enough if compared to grants that are given to other activities.

However, these modest grants make a tremendous difference. Because of these grants the arts had an almost 40-year-long growth period in this country, and that goes for Halton Hills as well. There are now many arts-related groups in our region that did not exist 40 years ago, or even 20 years ago. Neither would these groups exist without the untiring enthusiasm of the people that make up these groups.

The work that is needed, to produce a play, or a concert, or an art exhibition, for instance, is all-consuming, and these events only come about through the effort of many volunteers. No grants alone could make them happen. In case you don't know what groups I am writing about, let me mention the ones I can remember:

Acton Citizens Band, Arts Alive, Arts and Crafts, Credit Valley Artisans, Friends of the Libraries, Georgetown Choral Society, Georgetown Globe Productions, Georgetown Little Theatre, Halton Camera Club, Halton Youth Symphony Orchestra, Historical Society, Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee, North Halton Literacy Guild, Ontario Conservatory of Music, Palette and Pencil Club, Rug Hooking Club, University Women's Club, the Weavers Guild.

All these organizations are active in Halton Hills, besides several commercial ballet and dancing schools, art galleries and reproduction shops.

Our Cultural Centre on Church Street, that is celebrating its 10th Anniversary this fall, is the place where many of these groups perform or exhibit. Georgetown without the Cultural Centre is now hard to imagine.

But years ago it was far from sure that we would get it. We were just lucky that at that time Peter Pomeroy, who was the mayor then, and the Halton Hills art groups, got together and decided to have a Cultural Centre in the historical part of town.

Like so many other things, at the time, it could have been built on a field somewhere, far from the town, which would have undermined its purpose and its accessibility.

Since its opening, the Cultural Centre has become a focus for everybody interested in the arts in Halton Hills. To many others the Centre has been an introduction to the arts. So many arts-related events have gone on at the Cultural Centre, that I cannot possibly begin to mention them.

Perhaps a citizen of Halton Hills with the necessary time and interest for such an undertaking,



Ideas and The Arts by John Sommer

could put together, from the available records, a brief history of the Cultural Centre for this year's celebrations.

Have all the arts activities brought about a greater understanding of the arts and have we made artistic advances in Halton Hills? Are we having better actors and singers and painters and therefore better plays and musicals and concerts and exhibitions of paintings?

I would give a tentative yes as an answer to these questions.

In the arts, too much praise and jubilation can be deadly. It might tempt us to think that everything is in the best of all possible states. In reality, we have just started and a lot remains to be done.

Let me state here what I have in mind.

All the museums in Canada have more artifacts in their collections than they can exhibit. From these mostly hidden treasures, the museums put wonderful exhibitions together to share them with other museums. A modest fee one can rent these exhibitions for a limited time and

and other communities. For an exhibit them in one's own premises. But there is a catch. In order to get one of these exhibitions you have to have a space that is up to museum qualifications. You have to have air conditioning, humidity control, a guard or guards, burglar alarms, etc. We have none of these things for our beautiful art gallery at the Cultural Centre. Therefore we cannot get any loan exhibitions from anybody.

There are many people of taste in this country who have collected fine and precious art objects.

Some of them would like to donate them to an art museum of their choice. In every case they will want them to be well-cared for.

What can we do to encourage the arts in Halton Hills? We need right now a group of citizens who are willing to work towards new archives, as well as a historical and art museum for our growing collection. We need to raise money for this purpose and we should expect our mayor to get involved, by appointing a committee of citizens interested in the arts, to make recommendations towards such a venue.

Other small towns in Ontario have found that a museum or a theatre can be great assets for bringing tourists to town. Georgetown has many things attractive to tourists (a historic Main Street off the highway, with specialty shops and fine restaurants, to name just one attraction), all we have to do is enlarge them.

### Open Door welcomes all

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT The Herald

Getting through to kids and opening the doors of communication seems to be the only difficulty Georgetown's community social service aimed at youth and young adults, Open Door, experienced and will experience this year.

"Breaking through to teen's and young mother's attitudes is often very difficult," said Open Door's executive director, Ann Scheepers-Nevis.

Being new to her position, (she started in January) she finds she has to earn the trust of the youth who make use of the teen-drop-in centre and the Young mothers program before she can help them work through their problems.

The Open Door program operates out of St. George's Anglican Church in Georgetown.

Other than this common aspect of social services, Open Door has done well this past year and is looking good financially and program-wise this upcoming year as well.

Government support and successful fundraising efforts has given Open Door financial security for the near future although the staff and volunteers at the centre will continue to raise funds to ensure the needs of teens and young mothers are met.

Mrs. Scheepers-Nevis is now



Ann Scheepers-Nevis

planning this year's activities.

She hopes to start a stress workshop which mothers can attend to help them cope with pressure of raising a baby.

She's also working on getting the centre connected with Teen Education and Motherhood (TEAM), a program offered at other social services in Halton for single mothers.

Promoting the centre is another aspect Mrs. Scheepers-Nevis will undertake this year. "I'd like to be more visible in the community. I don't think we're as well-known as we could be," she said.

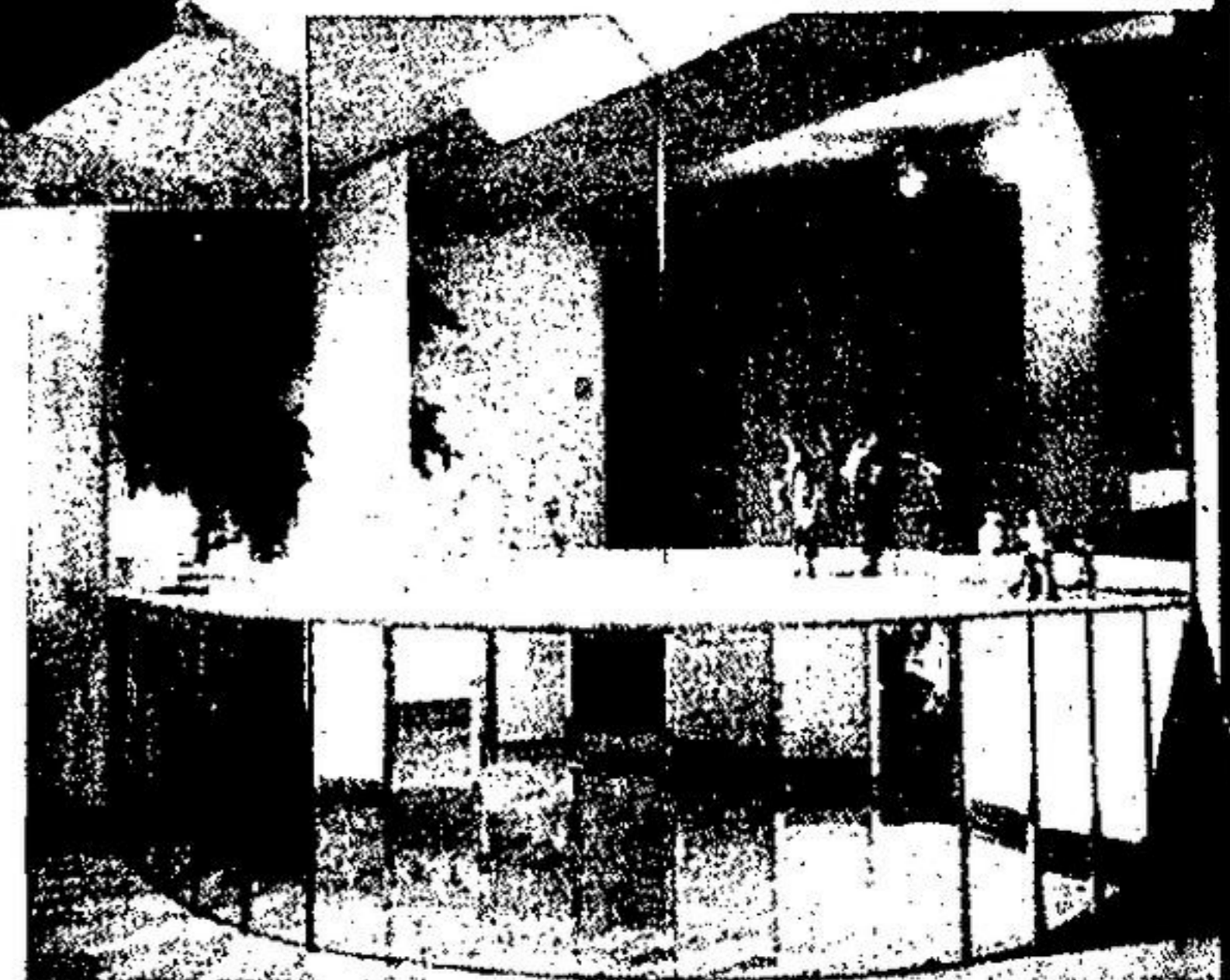
As she gets to know the community and centre better, she intends to work more closely with the people Open Door serves to incorporate their ideas and wants into the centre's programs.

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