

# Foster parents desperately needed in Halton Hills

When Madeline Harding of Acton saw the notice in her church bulletin about the need for foster parents she said to herself: "It's time." She had been thinking about fostering for years - her father and uncles were foster children - but was busy raising her own five children and kept waiting for "the right time".

But once she realized how urgent the need for foster parents was, she decided to find out more.

At the first meeting the Hardings attended at the Halton Children's Aid Society, she

discovered that most of the children needing foster care were adolescents.

"I was a bit concerned about taking in another teenager when we already had several at home," Madeline says. "Then I heard about the Halton Home Care program, and we decided to apply to that."

Halton Home Care is a unique program that finds foster parents for developmentally handicapped children. The Hardings soon had a nine-year-old boy who had been diagnosed as autistic placed with

them. He's now 17.

As their five children grew older (they now have a grandson) the Hardings decided to include children from the regular foster care program. At present, they are caring for a seven-year-old who has been with them since March, and an 18-month-old who joined their family just a few weeks ago.

"Being a foster parent is very rewarding," Madeline says. "I get excited when I see them come ahead so much, when I see their behavior change and know

they're making progress."

The hardest part, she says, is letting them go.

"The Children's Aid is always hoping to get them back with their families, so that goal is always in the back of your mind. You try to prepare yourself, but it's still hard."

Madeline encourages anyone who has been considering foster parenting to realize, as she did, "This is the time. If you like kids, and think you'd like to help them, this is one of the better ways. You can really make a difference."

The need for foster parents in

Halton continues to be urgent. Kim Elliott of Halton CAS says:

"We particularly need people to foster adolescents, pre-schoolers, and sibling groups. Foster parents for the Halton Home Care program who can care for handicapped children are also needed. A daily rate to cover room and board is paid, plus any additional expenses."

If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, contact Kim Elliott at 878-2375.

## Halloween crackdown

Here's your warning. The cops have placed their sense of tolerance on hold, so don't plan to play any against-the-law pranks this Halloween.

Halton Hills Crime Prevention officer, Sergeant Marty Power said "police officers will be out threefold from last year and will have a zero tolerance level."

That means no breaks. Uniform and plain clothes police officers will be cracking down on egg-throwers, pumpkin smashers and vandals charging them with anything from a criminal charge of mischief to the \$103.75 fine of littering.

"We'll be strictly enforcing any criminal code offence including mischief, damage to public property, liquor offences, highway traffic offences and all the by-laws of the Town of Halton Hills," said Sgt. Power.

"Youths have to realize that something as simple as throwing an egg can be construed as mischief which is a charge under the criminal code. They'll have to ask themselves if throwing an egg is worth a criminal conviction."

This years Halloween night and

'Devils' night' crack-down is largely the result of last years trouble in Acton where police officers, cruisers, store fronts and residents were pelted with eggs and pumpkins, he said.

"Our biggest worry is the large groups of kids that form causing vandalism," he said. Their worry was echoed by the Community Consultation Committee and the Acton Business Improvement area both called Halton people to express their concerns about vandalism.

The service's paddy wagon will be out as well

Sgt. Power said local businesses have been asked to be "good corporate citizens" and secure anything that could be stolen or smashed. Store owners are also asked to use their discretion when selling eggs to groups of youths.

Police will also be posting no parking signs in strategic locations around town to prevent damage to vehicles.

Vandalism is a matter of concern in Halton Hills said Sgt. Powers who revealed from January to September, vandalism cost residents \$191,000.



Tea time

The Beta Sigma Phi Society of Halton Hills held a preferential tea in the Halton Hills Cultural Centre Sunday to celebrate the induction of legacy daughters and four new members. The legacy daughters, their mothers and the new members are: (back row, left to right) Edith Scheuing, Betti Jamieson (president of the societys' city council),

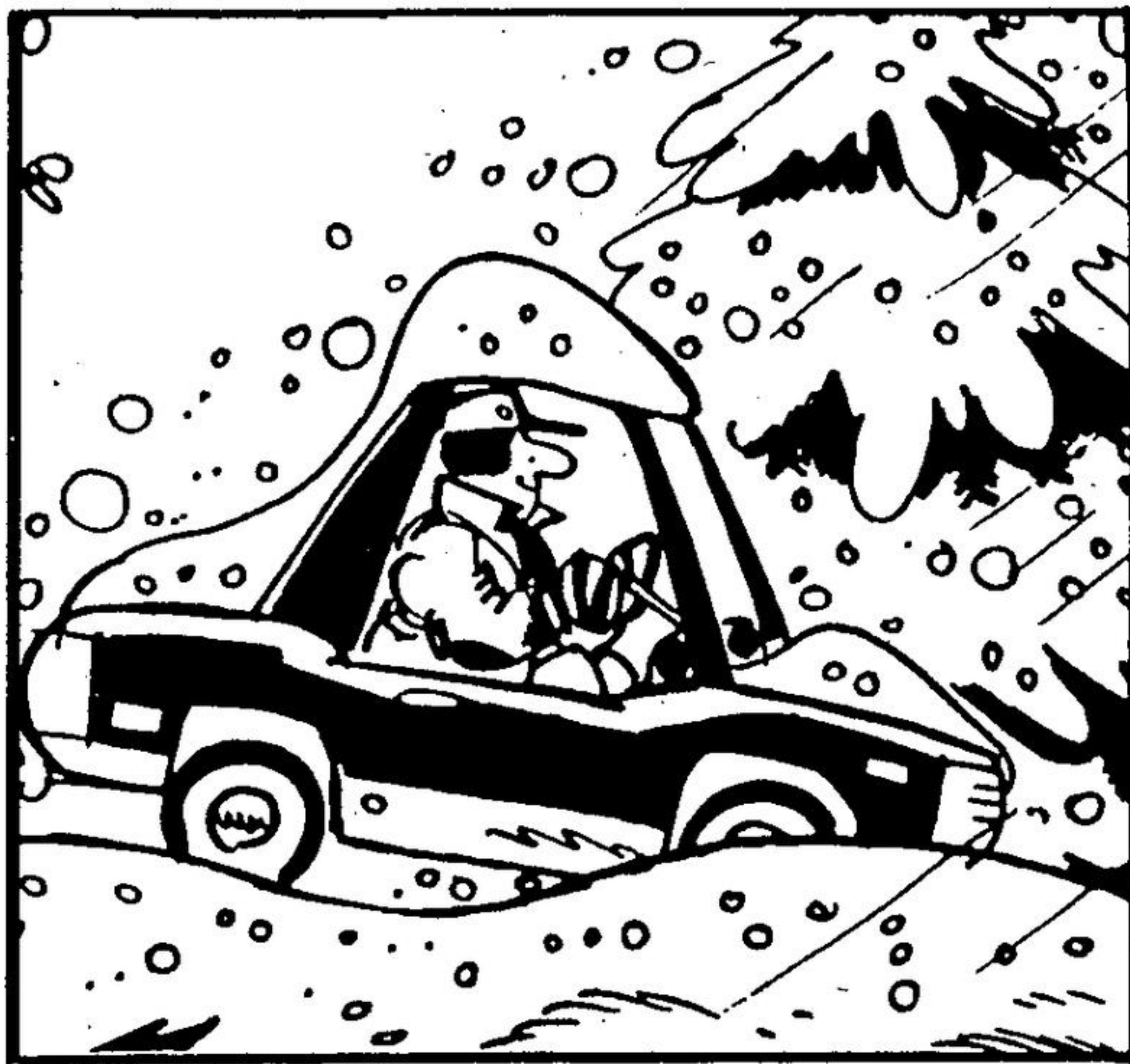
Lois Robillard, Linda James (vice-president city council) Susan Hills, Carol Parker, Carol Brunelle, Susan Schmeler (middle row, left to right) Carole Hunt, Angela, Cathie Ahearn, Stephanie Schmeler, Wendy Behling, Rebecca Behling, Elizabeth Kerr and (front row, left to right) Kendra Hills, Gillian Brunelle and Jessica Parker. (Herald Photo)



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