

Psychological abuse also takes a deadly toll

By FAITH E. POND
Herald Special

The following is a true account of an economically and psychologically abused Halton Hills woman, as received by regular Herald correspondent on family violence, Jacie B. Palmer.

In his book "A Season in Hell" Percy Knauth tells us that when a person's fantasy world is more real than the real world around him, he needs professional help. Because to this individual, his fantasy world appears to be real, he often cannot know he is ill. How can we help this person? How can we rescue the family?

I have lived in this house for

over 25 years. It is a stone and brick ranch bungalow, with a two car garage. It stands on three quarters of an acre, with a river drifting gently by, in a picturesque village, where one can still walk a dog late at night and feel relatively safe.

To the world outside, we are a normal happy family. Our children survived high school without being involved in the drug scene. They graduated from university and college, happily got married, and with more than the required time, one of them gave us an adorable grandchild to make our happiness complete. My husband goes to work each



Family violence panel discussion

From Committee For Improving Family Relationships,
Pamela B. Johnston, Chair

November is Family Violence Month. According to a 1990 Halton Social Planning Council study, one in four women in the Halton Region is abused and Ontario statistics state that one in four women in Ontario is sexually assaulted. As advocates for improved relationships among and within families our committee is sponsoring a panel discussion at the Halton Hills Cultural Centre Gallery on Nov. 26 at 7:30 p.m. The discussion will focus on "Family Violence - Abuse and How It Affects Its Victims."

All victims of abuse need help and support from their community to be able to deal with the violence affecting their lives. In particular, society has a responsibility to protect its women and children from abuse and part of that responsibility involves being able to recognize the symptoms. Ending abusive relationships and overcoming the effects of violence are not easy but as neighbors we must work together to help and support victims. We believe that, in Halton Hills, we can make a difference.

By giving members of the public the tools to help them recognize the characteristics of abuse the committee hopes that violence will be diminished in Halton Hills.

We invite the citizens of Halton Hills to come and to participate in this discussion. Short presentations will be followed by a question and answer period.

Participating as part of the panel are: Pam Johnston

(877-8877), a lifetime resident of Halton Hills and herself a victim of family violence, will share how that violence has affected her life and how she has been able to develop the support system to overcome the effects of abuse. She will also discuss the effects that this violence has had on her three younger children. Pam says: "I believe that if community members had recognized that I was suffering from the effects of abuse I would have received the help I needed much earlier."

Bev McKee (873-9372), a director of the United Way, has been a long time resident of Halton Hills who has volunteered her time to help establish Hope Treatment Centre on Highway 25, taken up the cause of battered women and abused children, and worked with the Children's Aid Society to help with their foster parents program. Bev is actively involved in helping reduce alcohol and substance abuse among women. Bev says: "I've worked with many Halton Hills families and the needs are enormous and the services too few."

Kim Smid (873-0272), a resident of Halton Hills, and a recovered victim of family violence, has utilized the services of Halton Women's Place. She will talk about her experiences and the effects of abuse on her life and how she was able to recover from that abuse. Kim says: "I just want to talk to women to help them to open up and admit the abuse that is affecting their lives. Even if I can contribute to one person getting help - it will be worth it."

There will be other panel participants.

husband had purchased there for my birthday and a jewellery store called twice to tell my my ring was ready.

Where he had once been generous to us he now cheats by failing to pay his share of the presents bought. He keeps me very short of necessary money, meanwhile going on expensive holidays and buying himself more clothes than we can possibly store.

Why have I put up with it? Because I know this man needs help and I've remained. What has been done to help him? Nothing! No one in authority has ever talked to him, although they have told me, and I have told him of the conversations. He tells me he is OK. Well, he certainly does not act as if he is OK. In the early days of his problem when I was planning to leave, he threatened to burn the house down with me in it. So, of course I did not leave. I'm afraid of this man who has been my lifetime partner.

However I don't want to go on like this. I am forever walking on egg shells. No, he doesn't drink. He just lies and cheats. He reneges on our arrangements, rejects us and our puritan values, constantly jabs at me emotionally, making sure to give the knife an extra twist for good measure.

When I confront him, he tells me I've got it all wrong, he could not behave badly and that it didn't happen like that at all.

What do the other family

members have to say? They say: "That man walking around in that body is not the man that's related to me!", "A lot of men go astray. At least he hasn't left you!". Sometimes I wish he would leave me. He puts on a beautiful facade to the outside world and to himself.

But I recognize I am to blame because I let him do it to me - to us! He needs to be hostile. It's the only way he can handle the anger that's within him because he won't admit it's there. "It's nothing to do with you", he often tells me. When we part he will abuse someone else because I won't be there to abuse! Yes, I know a lot about psychological patterns - but understanding does not make it easier to live with them.

I have to leave. It is the only answer. It is sad to give up after having given so much to make it work. I know it won't be easy.

And, one other thing, my husband has three brothers. The wives of two of these men took their own lives. But we don't like to talk about that.

ABUSE: A family of violence.

Feel free to contact Jacie by directing letters to her attention at the Herald. All correspondence will remain confidential. Should you wish to speak to Jacie, call the Distress Centre at 877-1211 and your call will be returned. If you are a woman or child in crisis or an abusive male wanting help, call the Distress Centre or dial 911.

day, and is held in high esteem by his business colleagues. What more could anyone want? And, yet, I am thinking of leaving - leaving this 40 year relationship because for the past six years I have been psychologically abused and remained silent.

After over 34 years of being faithful and always home by my side, my husband is "Off. Out. He HAS to do his own thing!". Every Saturday from dawn to midnight he takes off with some other woman - no not always the same woman - he changes partners! His princess of the moment is treated to expensive gifts and fine dining and dining. How do I know? I have been phoned by an expensive clothing store enquiring how I liked the sweater my

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PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE

WATERMAIN EXTENSION TO THE HAMLET OF GLEN WILLIAMS, TOWN OF HALTON HILLS, (GEORGETOWN) REVIEW OF THE DETAILED DESIGN

DATE: Thursday, November 21, 1991
 TIME: 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
 PLACE: Glen Williams Public School
 512 Main Street
 Glen Williams

This Information Centre is being held to provide the public with an opportunity to review the detailed design drawings for the proposed watermain extension.

Interested persons are invited to drop in any time during the above hours. Regional staff and the Consultant will be available to answer your questions regarding the project.

For further information, please contact Katrina Blom at extension 7612 at the following telephone numbers:

From Georgetown	878-8113
From Acton	853-0501

Joan A. Eaglesham
Regional Clerk