

Three adults say going back to high school changed their life

By JANET BAINE

The adult education program has been running for four years at GDHS, and each year it keeps growing.

When it started, there were just 15 adult students. This September, 65 students had registered and three teachers work with them, said Sue Grant, supervisor of the adult learning program.

She estimates 80 per cent are women and only 20 per cent men. Many want to get out of factory work and into business.

Courses run all day and follow the same timetable as the rest of the school, but adult classes are separate.

"The adults are highly motivated. They are coming in with specific goals," Grant says. There's no time wasted on disciplining, it's an atmosphere of teachers and students working together for the same goals, she said.

For many, it's a sacrifice to come back to school, since they have to give up jobs or devote free time to school.

Often students don't pick up exactly where they left off in their high school education, since they may have gained skills in the working world which can go toward credits.

"Math is one thing that they usually have to go back to since it is not stuff that we use everyday," Grant said. Courses in accounting and computers are very popular among adult students, she said. Typing, or keyboarding as it's now called, along with English also help students in the business world.

A life management course is popular, she said.

"A lot are going back into the workforce and changing careers. It helps sort out what they're interested in," she said. It also helps them balance different responsibilities, like looking after families, work and school so they can work towards meeting their goals.

Other adult education centres are in Burlington and Oakville, she said.

It took Yvonne Soper nine years to get up the courage to go back to high school.

"I now have my high school diploma and I'm the only one in my family that does," Soper said proudly. She was one of the recent graduates from GDHS.

Soper was "housebound" looking after her children and longed to work in an office. She didn't have many credits left to get, but had unpleasant memories that made going back to high school difficult.

A year ago while recovering from major surgery, Soper decided she would make the move she'd always dreamed about.

It only took one semester to get three credits. High school was fun, with great support from teachers and classmates, she said. At times, it was a challenge to balance studying with other responsibilities, but this experience helps Soper now that she is working full-time.

In June, armed with her diploma and references from her teachers, Soper gathered her courage to apply for office jobs.

Starting part-time as a typist, she now works full-time and is just where she wants to be. "I wouldn't hesitate now to apply for a course at the college level," she said. That's something she never would have done before.

The most important thing Rosyln Levitt got out of complet-

ing her high school education was a different approach to life.

"It changed me. Everybody who knows me says I'm not the same person," she says. Credit for her change goes to a course on personal life management. She recommends it to anybody, whether they need to finish their high school diploma or not.

Levitt also got a new set of friends and a college scholarship by going back to school.

"I wanted to do it for a couple years. I was waiting until both my kids went back to school," she said.

Now a single mother, she's attending George Brown College for a year-long program on jewelry arts, which will teach her how to design and repair jewelry.

Levitt says she may have been able to get into college as a mature student without a diploma, but now she's more confident.

The University Women's Club presented her with a scholarship of \$450, which paid half her college tuition.

"It wasn't just the money, it was the recognition," she said. "You feel inadequate with all these women with university degrees, but they think it's wonderful that you've gone back and done this."

Once she completes the program at George Brown College, Levitt said she will probably work as a jeweller for someone else and eventually go into business for herself.



ROSYLN LEVITT

Going back to school was a decision which took David Long an hour, he said.

Long wanted to get out of factory work and become a correctional officer, but needed a diploma to do it.

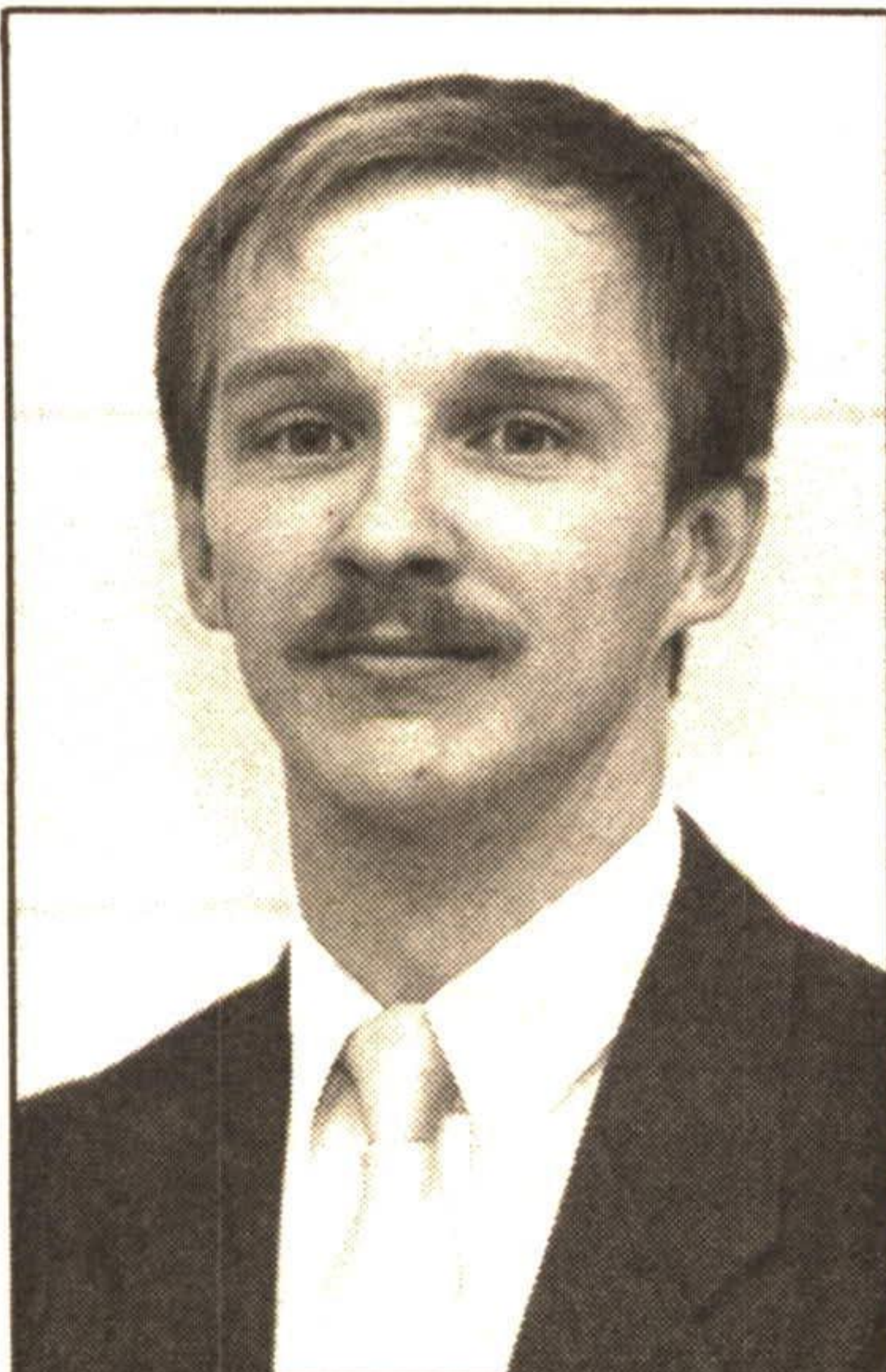
He went to GDHS during the day, while working the 4 p.m. to midnight in a factory. Long was the only man in the classes he took from September to June.

"A lot of men are still, unfortunately, the main breadwinners of the family," he said. That may be a reason why fewer men go back to high school, he said.

Now he's working as a correctional officer.



YVONNE SOPER



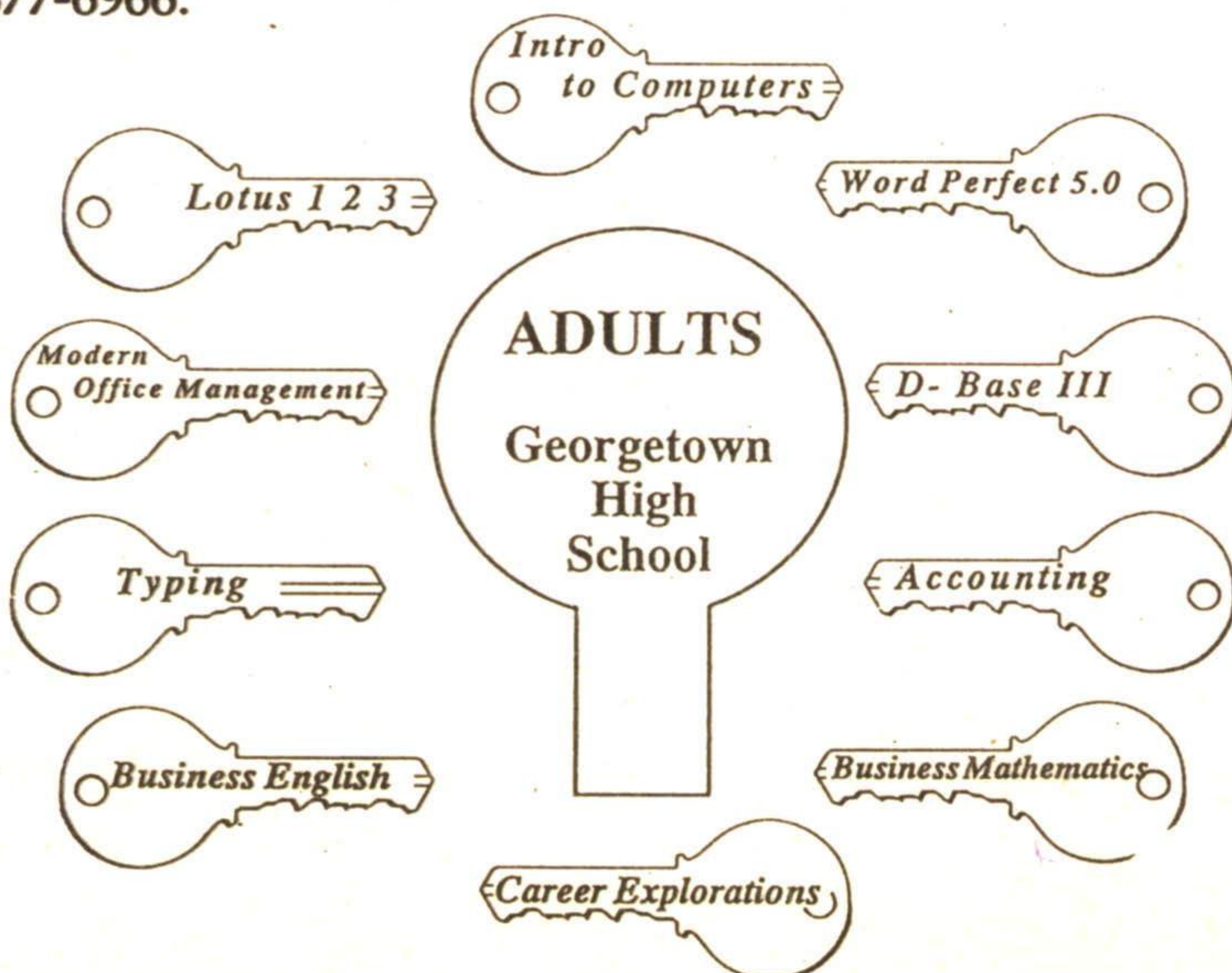
DAVID LONG

Next classes in February

The second semester of adult day classes at Georgetown District High School start Feb. 4, 1990.

Courses are in English, math, keyboarding, introduction to computers, word perfect, lotus 123, D-Base III, modern office procedures, accounting and personal life management.

Registration dates are January 24 to 30, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Phone Sue Grant for an appointment or information at 877-6966.



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