

OP ED

Family Violence

Murder in Halton Hills - June 27, 1992

By JACIE B. PALMER

This past weekend a Halton Hills woman was slain by her male partner. It is sad to realize that forty percent of all Canadian homicides occur between spouses.

We, the citizens of Halton Hills, are lulled into a false sense of security simply by living here. We have nice homes, picture perfect yards, a rural atmosphere and a way of life that makes many outsiders want to move here. However, living in an executive neighborhood, having a good job or prestigious position does not make a person exempt from being abused nor from being an abuser. Abusers and victims come from all economic and cultural backgrounds.

Some of us better wake up and take a look around because there is violence here. Some of it may be hidden behind closed doors but concerned individuals should be watching for the tell-tale signs. Children are growing up believing they are dumb, useless and bad. Some believe their only purpose in life is to be beaten physically and emotionally. Violence is a secret the family wants to keep.

During this past year we've heard that child abuse and child sexual abuse in Halton Hills has increased dramatically. Ron Copland, Executive Director of the Children's Aid Society, has assured the public that the increase is not simply increased disclosures.

We all have a societal responsibility to help and care for each other. Our children's futures depend upon our actions to curb the violence in our society.

We have to start with the violence in our own lives and then work outward by directing our efforts toward our schools, other institutions, the media and governments. We must press for changes which will result in a reduction of violence.

Recently a woman, who, only a few months back, escaped from an abusive relationship, was telling me that somehow we have to reach women and get them out of their unhealthy relationships. How? That's the problem.

Most victims don't want to admit they've been party to an abusive relationship. At one time, I thought I'd been involved in a single abusive relationship. Despite my reading about the cycle of violence and my understanding that violence usually penetrates generations of families, I was unable to recognize the abusive past for what it was. While some abuse may be unintentional, the results remain the same for a victim.

One study reports that of 225



suicide attempts, 83% of them were made by abused women. Women take too much responsibility for the happiness of others and try to help those who do not want help.

Like the alcoholic, the abuser must determine in his own mind to change. He has to want to take that step. Only then will he change.

If you are a woman who has found herself in a relationship in which you always seem to be doing all the giving and receiving very little or nothing in return, you may be being abused. If you are depressed, experience tremendous emotional highs and lows, are isolated from family and friends, or feel suicidal, you may be a victim of violence.

Take that first step and tell someone. If that person doesn't listen, don't stop there, tell someone else! You will find a friend who will listen and believe you!

The Halton Hills woman who was killed probably thought it couldn't happen to her. She probably thought he'd never do it. She probably thought she was in control of her life.

Don't allow your life to remain out of your control. Take the steps you need to regain control and give yourself the opportunity to live a more fulfilling life. Building a positive future depends on recognizing the mistakes of the past and taking action to ensure they don't re-occur.

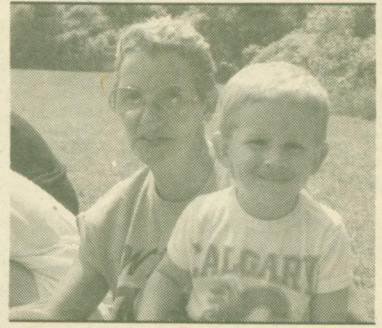
Statistics from Ontario Women's Directorate Reports.

Feel free to contact Jacie in confidence by directing letters to her attention at Halton Hills This Week. All correspondence will remain confidential. Jacie can be reached in person through the Distress Centre at 877-1211. Leave a message and Jacie will get back to you. If you are a child or woman in crisis, call the Distress Centre or 911.

What does Canada mean to you?



"It means that people think that we're friendly!"
• Aeryn Kennedy, Georgetown



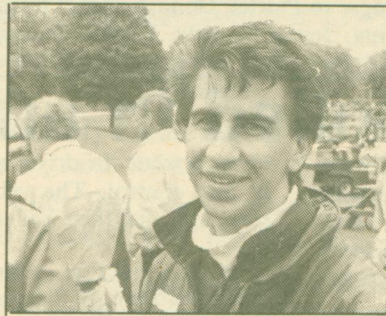
"Freedom. I'm proud to be Canadian!" w/help from his aunt and grandmother.

• Bradley Woodworth (almost 3 years old) Acton



"Being Canadian is being involved in the nature around us, and being able to experience the culture around us."

• Gwen Morris, Georgetown



"It's gotta mean something when Americans say that they're Canadian when they're in Europe."

• Dave Culla

MP reflects on Canada's 125th

By Garth Turner
Halton-Peel MP

Let's take a few minutes to think about Canada. After all, this Canada Day is a special one - marking 125 years of Confederation, and also coming at a time when the future of the country itself is being debated.

Over the last few days, as I travelled on business, I was reminded again of the beauty of this place. From the Ottawa Valley, my trip took me through southern Ontario, to northern Alberta, across the Rockies and into the fields of peat moss on the lower mainland of British Columbia.

Everywhere I went, I talked to people about what Canada means, about our future together and what they think is right and wrong with the country. Let me make this report to you:

- Thousands of miles from here, people feel the same bursting pride. They are not surprised that the United Nations found this to be the best country on the planet in which to live. They're aware that a million people a year try to get into Canada from other countries, because of Canada's reputation as some kind of paradise.

- Everywhere, average people want the national bickering to end. They want the Constitution fixed, and Quebec recognized as an important part of a unified country. Canada, they say, is stronger for

being French and English, immigrant and aboriginal and for having regions so different from each other.

- In a packed Town Hall meeting in British Columbia, people were eager to hear what folks in similar meetings in Georgetown and Bolton had to say about Canada. They want it unified, I said, with a strong economy, less government, lower taxes and common-sense laws. It turned out the people there think the same way we do.

In a church hall in Edmonton, I heard a Metis sing a song he had written about Canada, as seen through the eyes of Canadian soldiers who had given their lives for our peace and freedom. It was powerful, and moving. The congregation responded with an outpouring of support.

- Everywhere, I sensed that people want this Canada Day to mark a new beginning. The common people don't believe the country should suffer because a bunch of politicians can't agree on Senate reform. They don't believe that special interest groups should be setting the national agenda. They have compassion for native people, but even aboriginals were telling me their leaders are getting radical.

Somewhere over the last couple of years, we lost perspective on Canada. Growing negative and cynical, we forgot about all the

things that make this country one of the most favored anywhere.

While 35 million Americans have no health care, every Canadian is guaranteed protection. While people in Yugoslavia fight a bitter civil war, the world selected a Canadian soldier to lead the UN convoy into embattled Sarajevo so hundreds of thousands of people there could get relief.

While an economic recession continues across most of the western world, Canada has been earmarked by international bodies for the fastest recovery and greatest job growth. And Canada was applauded just days ago at the UN environment summit for having the best Green Plan in the world.

Measured against perfection, Canada has a lot wrong with it. But measured against all the other countries of the world, this nation is an oasis of tolerance, wealth and quality of life.

This Canada Day, let's celebrate that. Fly a flag, march in a parade, come to a picnic, be with your family - find your own way to be a patriot. Dorothy and I will be at many community events across the riding, before I have to return to Parliament in a few more days, and I hope we have a chance to cheer Canada together!

The true north - strong and free, and ours.

HTH HALTON HILLS HTH

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