

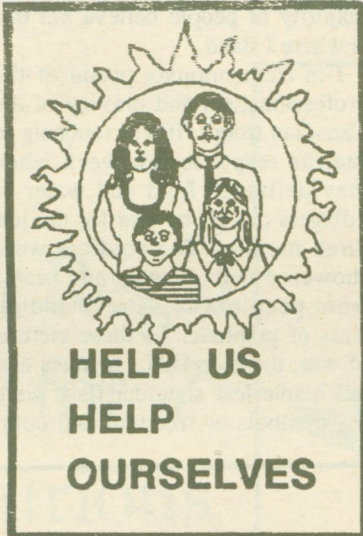
OP ED

Family violence Society's stereotypes tough to break

By JACIE B. PALMER

Stereotypes among society are difficult to break. The cycle of domestic violence will not be broken without a change in thought patterns among our community members.

One abused woman was desperate to get out of her situation and sought help from others. She tells it this way: "I didn't know where to turn. Anyone could see there was something terribly wrong with me. I was angry, emotionally distraught and crying much of the time. I couldn't cope with anything — my job and my family. In desperation I went to a couple I thought would help me. Instead I was told that I was taking this situation far too seriously and that if he wasn't belting me across the head, I wasn't being abused. He was only choking me, grabbing me, controlling and confining me. The psychological abuse was awful. This just further compounded my situation and it was months before I talked to any-



one else. I was lucky! I finally got support from more enlightened individuals who couldn't empathize with my situation but were aware of and had seen the existence of abuse."

Many persons support the notion that a woman provokes violence against her and somehow deserves

to be treated in this ghastly way. Some people believe she gains satisfaction from being hit.

If you are a woman who even suspects she is being abused, you should go to your doctor, minister or other professional and discuss the situation with him or her. The very fact that you are upset and thinking in terms of abuse means you are likely experiencing some form of violence against you.

Members of our community who are not cognizant of issues surrounding abuse may say things like: it's your lot in life, verbal abuse is no big deal, you got yourself into this situation — live with it, stay with him for the sake of the children, he's your husband — you can't leave, you must have done something to make him behave that way or you won't make it on your own. Don't listen to these uninformed people! Don't believe them!

Men abuse because they want power and control over their partner. An abuser does not abuse his

partner because of her actions or reactions. He has simply not learned to behave in appropriate ways. He learned to physically abuse others from his father who was a poor role model. He may believe that physical abuse, manipulative, devious and controlling behavioral patterns are the norm — rather than the exception. He has the problem and he needs help.

Often he will not change, nor recognize his problem unless he is confronted with a crisis. Like an alcoholic who desperately fears the loss of his job, the abusive male may treat to the threat of the loss of his partner or family. Even the threat of loss may be enough for him to seek help. Sometimes even the possibility of being "found out" by friends will cause him to act in a positive way and seek help.

So much is dependent upon the background of these men. If they've been subject to unrelenting abuse during their formative years and early adulthood a male abuser

will have more difficulty in dealing with this ingrained inappropriate behavioral pattern. A man with a less abusive, less destructive childhood may have an easier time seeking help and modifying his behavior. He may even regain control. In any case, the victim must protect herself and her family. Our children cannot be happy and well-adjusted unless their major care-givers, their mothers, have their needs met.

We need to ensure that our community supports the victims of family violence. These women are the heart of family and influence your children and mine.

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.

Cartoonist joins Halton Hills This Week

Born in Hamilton ("You have to have a sense of humor to admit THAT!"), but bred in Georgetown, Peter Roe now brings his artistic talents to the pages of Halton Hills This Week.

A York graduate of English Studies, an occasional stand-up comedian, and an active member of Georgetown Little Theatre, Peter has honed "For Pete's Sake" over the last eight years, and feels the world is ready for it. "Well, Halton, anyway. True, North York was the first community to be exposed to "For Pete's Sake" through York University's major

campus paper, but now that I'm free and back home, I'd like to see what my neighbors think of it."

"For Pete's Sake" follows the adventures of Pete (the artist's persona) and his friends through the greatest peril of all-life. Peter's influences include the Marx brothers and Andrew Dice Clay "for the strip's sarcasm," Bobcat Goldthwait and Monty Python "for the silliness," and The Commitments "for the soul." Nevertheless, "For Pete's Sake" is primarily comprised of its creator's soul, and hopes to find its own niche in the highly competitive comic strip industry.

Activity Line Playing is fun

By LAURIE BURNS
Exercise Physiologist

Our kids can't all be wrong. Playing is fun, and it isn't just for the young. If we play as adults, we can alleviate some of the stresses of our adult life.

Let yourself go, (maybe Peter Pan had the right attitude after all) and enjoy some of the activities you need to do. There are so many ways...ride a bike, play hide ad seek with your kids, badminton, take a hike, go dancing, the ideas are endless. The list of activities can go on

and on but, remember it is your choice.

If you haven't been active in a very long time, check with your physician to see if there are any restrictions or recommendations for your activity choices. Some health conditions like asthma, diabetes and high blood pressure can be affected by physical activity. These conditions will all be affected positively by exercise but, it is important to consult with professionals. The choices of activities you do will depend on many things. They may

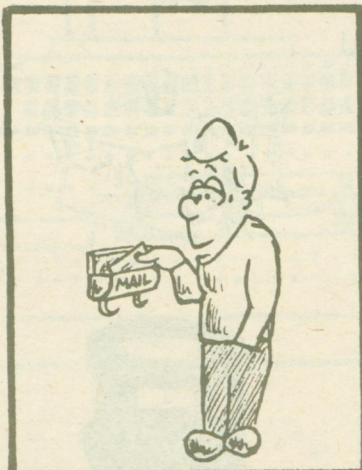


be different when you are 60 than when you were 35. Different for you now as an adult than when you were in high school. They will depend on your abilities and interests. The choice is yours to make and will be as individual as you are.

Playing is simple, it is doing, it is being active.

For Pete's Sake

by Roe



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