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Serving Acton and the surrounding communities of Eden Mills, Limehouse, Nassagaweya and Rockwood

Tuesday, July 14, 1992

## St. John ambulance brigade fading fast

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK

The Halton Hills St. John Ambulance brigade is down, but not out. Their uniforms may be shabby and they will be kicked out of their headquarters by the end of the month, but the five dedicated first aid volunteers vow to carry on.

"Peoples' safety will be at risk if we don't continue, but we are facing a serious challenge," lamented brigade member Yvon Essiembre of Acton last week.

"We live on donations and we aren't getting any. We also raise money by offering CPR and life-saving courses but there hasn't been a lot of interest. We didn't even have a penny this past spring to take out our mobile first aid unit.

"We are struggling to find money for new uniforms. Our first aid unit needs work. We need new members and more people interested in learning first aid. Our landlord doubled the rent on our Norval headquarters and we have to move by the end of the month," Essiembre said.

Brigade members receive free standard first aid and home health care training. Some members also have CPR training and all must pass provincial standards each year. Members volunteer their time, about 30 hours a year, to do first aid duty at community events in the area.

"We were out on Canada Day and at the Pioneer Festival and hope to make it to Acton's Leathertown Festival next month but it's hard when the same small group has to do it all. We use our own cars and gas when we can't afford to take the mobile unit out," Essiembre said.

Despite a local public relations campaign the brigade can't seem to find new members, more dona-

tions or a place to set up its headquarters. The brigade is talking with Acton Social Services and Information Centre (ASSIC) about sharing space at that organization's Willow Street office.

Essiembre said he doesn't understand why more people aren't interested in the brigade. "It's very poor that in a town of this size we only have five people willing to get free training to help save lives. We are in serious trouble but we will continue because we are needed," Essiembre promised.

The brigade is offering a standard first aid course starting tonight (Tuesday) and running July 16, 21 and 23 — all evening sessions.

The CPR course will be taught July 18 and 19. Both courses are taught at the St. John headquarters in Norval.

### Public meeting on statutory holiday openings

At a special public meeting tomorrow (Wednesday) six Halton retailers will ask Regional Council's permission to open on nine statutory holidays including Christmas, Easter and Canada Day.

The applicants include the old Hide House in Acton and its satellite operations, Flight-Line, Leathertown West Warehouse and the soon-to-open Tannery Run.

All businesses will argue that they should be permitted to open under tourist exemptions to the Retail Business Holidays Act. The recent government decision to allow Sunday shopping did not cover the statutory holidays but gave Regional Council the authority to deal with requests.



THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD: Young girls and boys listen with rapt attention at the morning assembly of the Vacation Bible School, held last week at Beth-El Christian Reformed Church. The school's second session runs Aug. 17 to 21 at Acton Baptist Church. Registration begins on Aug. 13. (Frances Niblock photo.)

## Are Acton senior citizens at risk?

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK

A lack of government programs could put the lives of some Acton senior citizens at risk. Peggy Balkind, executive director of Acton Social Services and Information Centre (ASSIC) agrees with many of the findings in a report to the province from a special panel on seniors' problems.

Balkind sat on a committee that submitted a brief to the Senior Citizens Consumer Alliance for Long-Term Care Reform Panel.

That group's report on Ontario's proposed long-term care proposals said Ontario is not taking the needs of seniors seriously enough and the existing long-term care system is inefficient and uncoordinated.

"I think we are projecting that could be the case because there are going to be more seniors staying at home. The whole government thrust is to get seniors in their homes, which is great," Balkind said last week. "What the Prov-

ince has to do is put in support to do that. There is some money set aside for increased home support services but we don't feel it's sufficient to fill the gap."

The report says the lives of seniors will continue to be at risk if drug education and awareness programs for doctors and seniors aren't introduced soon. Balkind said over-medication is a local problem. "There is a general consensus everywhere that doctors

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