

## St. Joseph's school and community busy building Better Bridges for the future

BY ERIC BALKIND

What do you do when those great kids of yours get the best of you? How do you manage when you're facing up to the teen years and the incredible stresses which both parents and adolescents have to face up to these days? How do you handle the almost inevitable feeling that you're not up to the job? If you belong to the St. Joseph's school community — you C.O.P.E.

Better Bridges is a pilot project in Halton which brings together teachers, parents and other community organizations as equal members in a partnership seeking to develop effective ways of meeting the needs of young people in the middle school grades — 6, 7 and 8. Community Oriented Parent Education (or C.O.P.E.) is the first program which the St. Joseph's coalition has developed (under the Better Bridges umbrella) in order to meet their own needs. A variety of other initiatives are underway in

schools in Milton, Oakville and Burlington.

Better Bridges Coordinator Jim Shea is working closely with St. Joseph's Principal Caroline Hilton to help foster a community-based coalition which works together and on an equal footing to find effective ways to help kids and everyone involved with them to weather those tough teen years.

As Jim puts it: "This is an opportunity for people to work together on an equal basis. We all bring our own strengths and our own weaknesses and we do what we can do towards building a better community." He sees how essential it is for schools to get away from the older, authoritarian mode: "This is a way for people to open up and recognize that — yes, we can trust each other and ourselves to find the answers to tough problems. That's why I got involved."

Bringing together a variety of support services including

Children's Assessment and Treatment Centre, the Children's Aid, the Public Health Unit and Parks and Recreation provides resources that the community can understand and learn to use on a different basis to what is traditionally accepted; working together and on an equal footing helps to foster a genuine and lasting partnership. Prevention of problems before they become major has already been recognised as a major benefit.

When the resources and the people available through Better Bridges are at work within the school they quickly become accepted and students start to make effective use of them without feeling that they themselves are being singled out — an important factor for almost all teens.

As the program continues to grow the end result is intended to be school-based but community-owned and community-driven. Currently, the program is funded by the Premier's Council on Health, Well-being and Social Justice but ultimately, the hope is that it will become self-sustaining.

Questions regarding the Better Bridges program are welcomed and can be relayed to Jim Shea at St. Joseph's at 853-3730.



RED RIBBON DAY: Leathertown Fashions owner Peter Vidic (left) and Mayor Russ Miller do the honours at Wednesday's official opening of the Mill Street clothing store. (Joe Ingham photo)

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## Acton A.D.D. Support Group offers help

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK

A feeling that they were alone with their problem and a lack of information sparked two Acton women to start a support group for parents of children with attention deficits.

"When my 5-year-old was diagnosed six years ago I didn't know where to go for advice. Three years ago I met another Acton mother

with the same problem and we formed the Acton Attention Deficit Disorder (A.D.D.) Support Group," explained Donna Boyko in an interview Wednesday. "Parents need someone to talk to that has experienced what they are experiencing and can offer solutions that work."

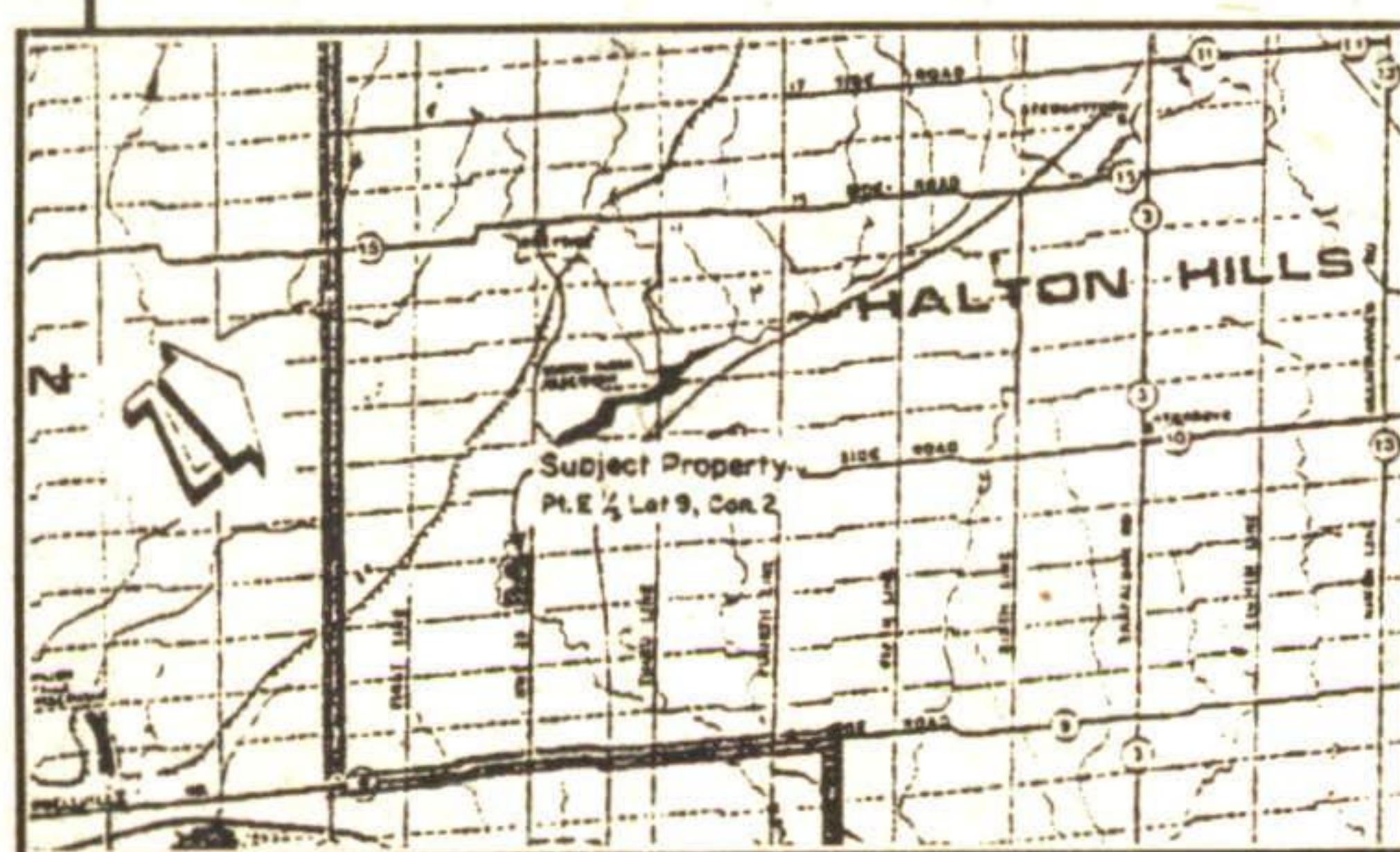
Boyko said local doctors and the school system are helping, but it is up to the parents to make sure their child is getting the best education possible.

"The schools are working with us and providing people to come to our meetings and workshops but this group is for parents to sympathize with each other and to make life easier for each other. These are children with very high activity levels who have to be kept busy and often have behaviour problems at school or at home," Boyko said.

Some children with A.D.D. have learning disabilities and some are very bright, so getting a proper diagnosis is the key.

"This disorder can be controlled with medication, but that might not be the right approach for each child. We help the parents become advocates for the children to find out what is best for their child. We also offer a shoulder to cry on when things get tough. What happens is parents become very guilt-ridden and feel it's all their fault the child has turned out this way, when in fact A.D.D. can be either hereditary or birth-related," Boyko explained.

The Acton A.D.D. support group is holding its fall meeting on Thursday, Oct. 29 at 7:30 pm in the staff room at M.Z. Bennett School. For more information call Donna at 853-4416 or Wanda at 853-3803.



### NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING Ward 2 — Highway No. 25

Council for the Town of Halton Hills will conduct a Public Meeting to examine and discuss a proposed amendment to the Halton Hills Official Plan in order to permit a plan of subdivision consisting of five (5) single-family lots on a private internal subdivision road.

The subject property is located on the west side of Highway No. 25, between No. 5 and No. 10 Sideroads, with the property being described as Part of Lot 9, Concession 2, Town of Halton Hills (Esqueusing).

Further information is available in the Planning Department.

ALL INTERESTED CITIZENS ARE WELCOME

DATE: Monday, Nov. 23, 1992

TIME: 7:00 pm

LOCATION: Council Chambers, Civic Centre

## THE MEETING PLACE Restaurant & Pub L.L.B.O.

PRESENTS

### HALLOWE'EN BASH

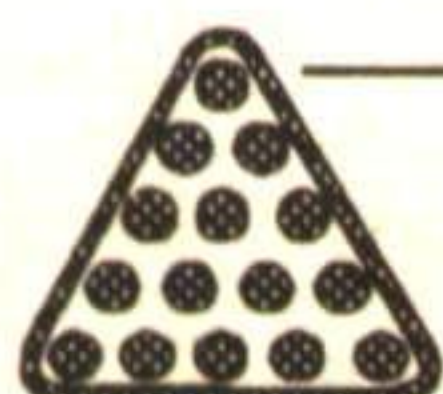
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