

Fewer beds don't signal cutbacks

BY TIM MORGETROYD

The Acton Tanner

Fewer beds at the Halton Womens' Centre will not mean services are being cut back, says the Centre's executive director.

"Services are not moving south," said executive director Theresa Greer last week. She is worried about local battered

women hearing rumours that fewer beds at the Milton shelter mean budget cutbacks, or a shift of services to the new Burlington shelter scheduled to open Jan. 1, 1994.

"We want to reassure Halton people we will maintain services in North Halton at the same level, despite the Burlington shelter," she explained, "although we're decreasing the beds at the Milton shelter.

"There are 18 beds now, but it means families here have to share rooms with other families. So we'll have 12 beds in Milton and 20 in Burlington, and the same level of outreach services," said Greer. "The house (shelter) was probably built for a family of six or eight people, so we're hoping this will mean more livable space, and less crowding.

"Traditionally the summer months have been the busiest at the shelter, but over the last two years we've found we're busy all

the time. It's more constantly busy now with no pattern. There used to be months like November-December and May-June that were less busy, but not this year," she said.

When the shelter first opened 13 years ago they averaged a 50 per cent occupancy rate, but Greer noted the sharp rise in demand for services since then. Their occupancy rate now averages 80 per cent of available space. Crisis calls have been increasing 25 to 30 per cent in recent years and last year the calls almost doubled, jumping a dramatic 96 per cent.

"Part of it is recognition of the Centre, and people talk about it more," explains Greer. "I also think violence is more prevalent in our society now. There's so many reasons for this: a breakdown in traditional institutions in society, too much violence in the media and movies, video stores with violent movies everywhere."

All this adds up to a greater tolerance of violence, and in her opinion more of a reason than a poor economy, which is often blamed for increased domestic violence.

Greer says she is often asked if more women suffer beatings and abuse when the economy suffers, "but it's hard to tell. I don't think because you've lost your job you go home and beat your wife. It's a factor, but not the only thing."

For her two of the biggest factors are judges who look the other way and children who have violent role models. Young boys have idols like Arnold Schwarzenegger they try to be like, "and it's surprising how you can become more like people you play.

"Kids have lots of rights and no responsibility. I think we've lost that along the way," says Greer, adding the courts continue teaching people as they get older they don't need to take responsibility for their actions. "Just look at the light sentences so many men get for beating their wives.

"We have a false sense of security if we think (violence) is all in the States. People would be surprised at the level of violence just in Halton."



ARE YOU GETTING SLEEPY? Acton's Mac Hunter, 4, sits with his teddy bear and his dad Hugh last Wednesday at the Library. Mac's listening intently to a story being told by librarian Marie Vickery during the Sleepytime Stories half-hour summer program. (Doug Harrison photo)

Acton Scouts return from Calgary trip

DOUG HARRISON

The Acton Tanner

Third Acton Scouts Nicholas Fread and Donald Brooks went white water rafting and visited the Calgary Stampede on a recent 10-day trip to Kananaskis, Alberta.

Oh, yes, and they attended the Canadian Scouts jamboree.

Fread, 14, and Brooks, 13, were the only two representing the Acton contingent as they joined the First Glen Williams group on the four-hour flight.

Among the on-site activities

they participated in were: trying to push a golf ball through a maze and moving a barrell with six ropes between two wooden spikes without tilting it.

"It took our group a couple of tries," said a laughing Fread in an interview Monday.

Fread, who returned home on Sunday, mentioned that a couple of groups from California and two from Australia made the long haul.

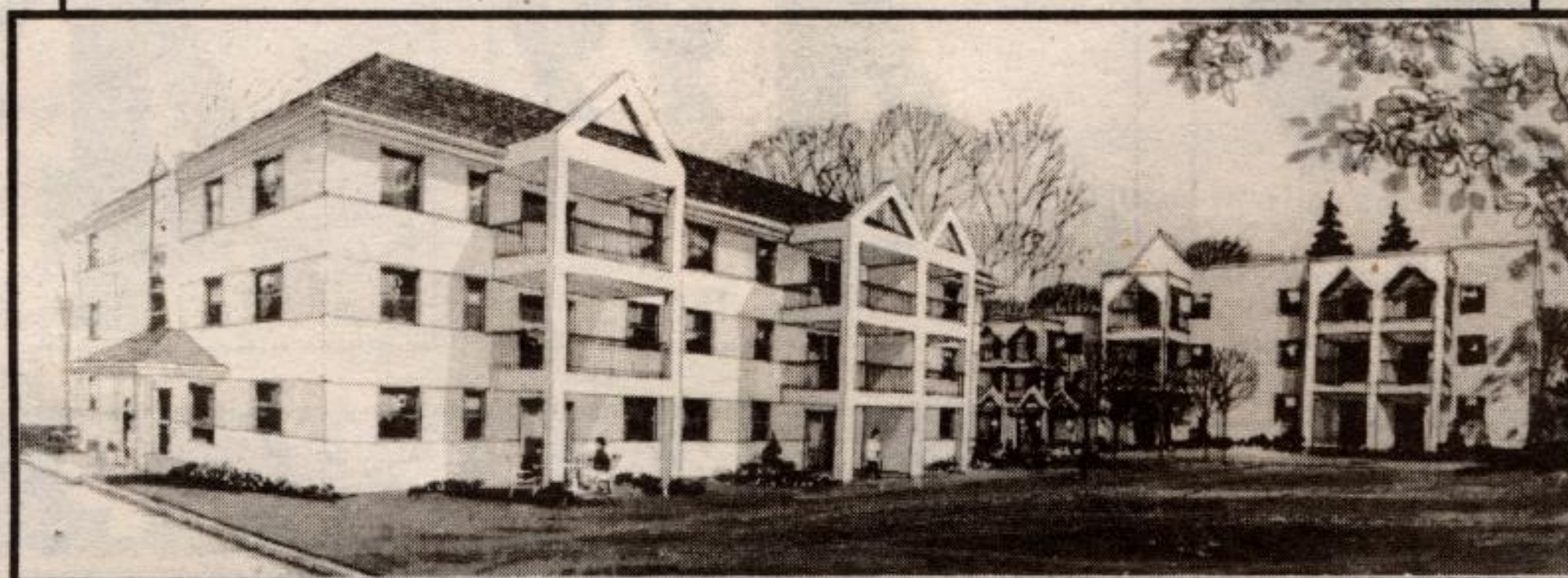
One night Fread walked over to the Newfoundland site and indulged in some special Newfoundland bread that was dipped in molasses and unskinned fish "that was fairly salty."

There were even some trades made at the jamboree — of the badge and pin kind.

Fread said he picked up some contingent badges — acquiring all but Prince Edward Island's and New Brunswick's.

Fread and Brooks would like to give special thanks to the Acton Scouts and Acton Rotary Club for making the trip possible.

ERAMOSIA NON-PROFIT HOUSING CORPORATION



Request For Expression Of Interest

The Eramosa Non-profit Housing Corporation is applying for Ministry of Housing funding to build a new community housing project on land adjacent to Squires' Lodge in Rockwood. The proposed new building would provide units suitable for seniors, families and handicapped persons, with both market and assisted units available. With community support and MOH approval the project could be built and available for occupancy later next year. However, the Non-profit Corporation must provide a preliminary list of prospective tenants and a survey of needed unit types in support of their application by July 30, 1993.

Interested persons please contact **Jim Reed** at **856-4190** as soon as possible for inclusion in the survey.

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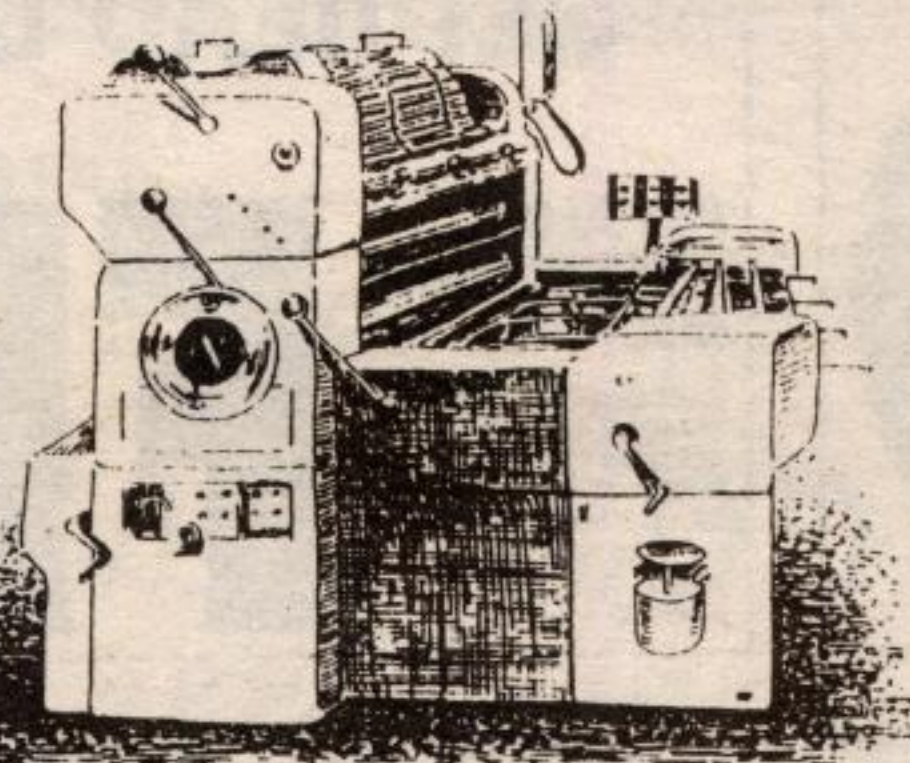
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