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VOLUME 5, NO. 34 • 75 CENTS (.70 + .05 GST)

'ACTON'S OWN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER'

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 1996

## New drug program causes major headaches

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The Acton Tanner

At least one Acton senior temporarily went without necessary medication, one local pharmacist had a prescription thrown back at him in anger, and at least 175 Acton seniors have been wrongly classified. That's the ugly fallout after six weeks under the new Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

Under the new program single senior citizens with an income under \$16,018 and married seniors with an income of \$24,175 or less, now pay a \$2 co-payment for every prescription they have

filled in the year.

A single senior with an income of more than \$16,018 now pays the first \$100 in prescription costs and after that a maximum \$6.11 dispensing fee. Married seniors with a combined income of more than \$24,175, each must now pay the first \$100 in prescription costs and after that, a dispensing fee of a maximum \$6.11.

Prior to this anyone over 65 years of age had their prescriptions paid for fully by the government and for many local seniors and two of Acton's pharmacists, the new program has caused huge

headaches.

"The government has admitted that it has at least 5 per cent of seniors in the wrong income category, but I've handed out 70 forms to people who need their classification changed and Bill Yundt at Acton Pharmacy has already handed out at least 150 forms, so you know that the 5 per cent figure from the government is not even close," complained Glenlea Drug Mart pharmacist Gary Barton on Friday.

"Right now I'm hanging onto bills for quite a few patients, waiting until we can bill the Ministry [of Health]

when they are in the \$2 category.

"People were shocked the first time they came in to have a prescription filled under the new program. That first week was probably one of the hardest weeks I've worked in 25 years because the program had not been explained well enough by the government," Barton said.

"I had one lady throw her prescription back at me, saying she wasn't paying no damn \$100 and she told me where I could stick the inhaler that she was prescribed. After she settled down, she got her prescription and is

dealing with me again."

Pharmacist Bill Yundt at Acton Pharmacy, who is also holding onto bills for some seniors waiting to be reclassified, said it is typical of the government to make people prove that the government is wrong.

"I have people who are in the wrong category and when they try to get help, the government tells them they have very little financial information on Ontario residents. When there's doubt, they dump them into the \$100 bracket and it's up to the seniors to prove differently," Yundt said on Friday.

"There is a lot of confusion and it takes between 10 and 15 minutes to explain the

new program to people because it was so poorly publicized," Yundt said, noting the government's computers are just now beginning to accept third-party billings.

"We have piles of third-party billings to do - you have no idea how much paperwork we have to do with this new program."

Both Barton and Yundt stressed that if any one has questions about the new drug benefit program they should come in and talk to them.

Both pharmacists will also explain the new program at a seniors meeting to be held next month. You can also get information by calling the Ministry of Health at 1-888-405-0405.



### HOMETOWN PLAYERS!

The Acton Soccer Club held its end of season Fun Day last Saturday at McKenzie-Smith Bennett school. On hand for the games was the Acton Tanner mini-squirt team. Team members Marcel Van Helden, Chantel Little, Curtis Marcoux, Meagan Speakman, Todd Speakman, Stephen Van Helden and acting coach Monica Van Helden stopped to show their winning smiles. (Eve Martin photo)

## 'Miss Acton' pageant returns

Tradition has won out over political correctness as the name of the Acton Fall Fair pageant has been changed back to "Miss Acton Fall Fair" after two years of being called the Acton Fall Fair Ambassador pageant.

The initial push to change the pageant's name to ambassador came from the CNE, which sent out a letter six years ago saying it was changing the name of its pageant and suggested all other fairs follow their example. At the time Acton pageant officials received a letter from a citizen complaining that the existing name was sexist and out-dated and some members of the Fair board agreed.

"Originally [the pageant committee] didn't want to change the name but we found that a lot of other fairs had changed to ambassador and it got to the point where

our representative was just one of three who was not called an ambassador, so we gave in to the political pressure - political correctness and that sort of thing - and we changed it," explained Miss Acton Fall Fair chair Linda Robson last Thursday.

Robson said that a lot of people and local businesses complained about the change to ambassador for the two years that the pageant name was changed.

"People said they liked the Miss Acton name and that there was no need to change it, so in January the pageant committee decided to resume the old name."

Robson noted that several other fairs have dropped the ambassador title and reverted to using their old names as well.

"I've heard from quite a

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