

# Halton Legal Services faces new challenges

The newly elected Board of the Halton Community Legal Services, will find providing legal services to the low income community in the Halton area a lot more

challenging. There have been significant and extensive legislative changes to the law governing social assistance and disability recipients, and the rights and responsibilities

of landlords and tenants.

In addition, the clinic's future operation and structure may be significantly altered by changes to the legal aid system which are ex-

pected to be proclaimed in the near future.

According to Colleen Sym, the clinic's executive director, this is an especially critical and vulnerable time for low income individuals who may be unaware of the legislative changes and the severe penalties imposed for a breach of their responsibilities under the legislation. For example, social assistance recipients are now required to participate in employment assistance activities. This includes community participation activities such as volunteer work, training and job searching. Another new condition restricts the number of days that a recipient may be out of the province, without prior authorization.

An applicant's failure to discharge these and other responsibilities can result in the termination of assistance for various time periods depending on the particular situation. These penalties are extremely serious since there is an absence of hostels in the Halton area. Effectively, a penalized recipient could end up homeless.

Adding to the significant changes impacting on low income individuals is the Tenant Protection Act which has replaced the Landlord and Tenant Act effective Jun 17, 1998. Highlights from the Act include: the removal of adjudication on landlord and tenant matters from the court in Milton to the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal (the

nearest Tribunal office to the Halton area is in Mississauga or Hamilton), the legal right of a landlord to charge any rent, unrestricted by guidelines, to a new tenant (this is known as vacancy decontrol), the requirement that applications respecting breaches of a landlord's or tenant's responsibilities be filled within a year of the alleged breach. Unfortunately, many tenants are unaware of these and other significant changes to the landlord and tenant relationship until a problem arises.

Since the changes are extensive and significant, individuals are advised to contact the legal clinic to discuss any issues that arise concerning social assistance, disability benefits, and the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants. The clinic provides free legal advice to financially eligible callers, and in appropriate situations is able to negotiate on behalf of clients, assist in the preparation of legal documents, and provide representation at social assistance hearings.

In addition to providing legal services and representation to low income individuals, the clinic will continue to provide information sessions on the impact of these changes to tenants, associations and low income service providers.

The changes in legislation couldn't come at a worse time for low income individuals in the Halton area, a

legal services spokesperson said. The Ontario Legal Aid Plan, which provides funds to the clinic, is currently being restructured. Hugh Tye, Executive Director of Hamilton Mountain Community Legal Services and Co-chair of the Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario, indicated during his speech at the Halton clinic's annual general meeting on June 24 that issues to be addressed over the next months include funding and delivery of legal services by clinics, community involvement in the administration of clinics, relocations and mergers of clinics, geographic expansion of clinic services to areas currently without community clinics, and internal operation of clinics.

With all of these issues, the new board has a critical year ahead of it. Foremost in their agenda will be working towards the preservation and improvement of legal services the clinic currently provides to low income individuals in the Halton area.

Current board members include Ken Hearn who has replaced Tom Beer as chair, Pat Heroux (vice-chair), Cathy Jubenville (secretary), Keith Ramsden (treasurer), Don Carroll, George Chadwick, Monty Hyde, Susan Kuechler, Jane Munro, Sandra Perry, Sandra Ross and Don Thibodeau. Leaving the board after several years of service are Tom Beer and Rochelle Hayes.



**THEATRE CAMP:** Acton's Little Theatre Camp put on a performance July 23 at Acton High School. Performers include Megan Finnie, Megan McClusky, Zoey Glass, Karly MacPherson, Cassie Hunter, Ashley Holman, Megan Brown and Neal Dawkins. - Ellen Piehl photo

## Rockwood Conservation Area a treat!

Summer is a great time to be outdoors, and there are lots of places nearby with beautiful scenery and fun things to do! One of my favourites is the Rockwood Conservation Area. (Just take Highway 7 through Rockwood and watch for the sign at the edge of town!) This Park has so much to offer on a hot summer day, with lots of shady trees and water nearby.

The potholes are circular wells dug into the stone by retreating glaciers, and the trails take you right in the midst of them for a close up look! Rent a canoe for about an hour and you can check out all the cliffs and caves from a fish-eye view! Climb around in the many caves and caverns, or walk the scenic trails. Nothing here is too difficult or treacherous for little guys that are about four or five and up.

You can go swimming at the beach with plenty of picnic tables nearby for lunch or snacks. Be sure not to miss the ruins of the historic woolen mill, the majestic stone walls and trickling stream are soothing and peaceful. The ruins have been used as a backdrop for several plays and even a movie or two! Nearby you can hear the water pouring over the waterfall under the bridge and then slowing to a winding river around the islands and trees.

Right near the park gates there is a locally based mini golf course featuring holes named and shaped after the mill, the potholes, the pavilion, and other parts of the park and area. It has a full 18 holes that keeps kids of all ages entertained. Mini-



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golf costs \$4 per round; canoeing is \$9 per hour with a \$10 deposit. The park gate admission is \$3.25 for adults (15 and over), \$1.75 for 6-14 years and five and under are free.


So, if you have never been to the Conservation Area in Rockwood, be sure and check it out! If you have been, then you too know what a treasure it is, so visit it again! I would suggest going on a week day as this is a popular

park for weekend visitors and campers. Enjoy a relaxing day of outdoor adventure and fun!

Oh, and if this hot, sunny weather turns wet - here are some indoor activities for the young ones - six to eight-year-olds can decorate a stone to be used as a paperweight, and nine to 11-year-olds can decorate a t-shirt to enter in the fall fair! Remember this year's theme is "Sunflower Days."



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2. RCI - *Majesty - 7 night Western Caribbean* - Cruise the blue waters of the Caribbean this fall for only \$1383, including port charges. Departs Miami on Sundays - perfect for honeymooners! Rate based on Nov. 15/98, category X.
3. CELEBRITY - *Century 7 night Eastern/Western Caribbean* - Sail with a Celebrity to the Caribbean in five-star luxury. Rates from \$1519, including port charges. Departs Ft. Lauderdale every Saturday. Rate based on Nov. 14/98, Western sailing, category 12.
4. CUNARD - *QE2 - 6 night Transatlantic* - The ultimate cruising experience aboard the legendary QE2. Rates from \$2399, based on cat M5 on Aug. 4/98. Rate includes one-way transatlantic air, and gratuities.
5. ORIENT - *Marco Polo - Grand Antarctic Circumnavigation 25 Day Cruise Tour* - Experience the beauty of the Antarctic Circle this winter on an unforgettable journey! Sailing Jan. 25/99 with rates from \$11,959, based on category 1.
6. RCI - *Rhapsody - 7 night Southern Caribbean* - Voyage to the islands of the Southern Caribbean this fall and winter with great rates from \$1594, including port charges. Based on Dec. 5/98 sailing, category N.
7. WINDSTAR - *Wind Surf - 7 night French and Italian Rivas* - Set sail for the Mediterranean with white canvas sails billowing in the wind. Wind Surf sails from Nice, Saturdays July 18 through Sept. 26/98 with rates from only \$4550 for a stateroom cabin. Cruise fare includes all on-board gratuities.
8. RADISSON - *Radisson Diamond - 9 night Mediterranean* - Cruise the Mediterranean this fall on the world's only twin-hulled cruise ship. Rates from \$8449 for category E on Sept. 9/98. Cruise fare includes gratuities, and complimentary wine with dinner.
9. CELEBRITY - *Galaxy - 7 night Southern Caribbean* - Cruise the Caribbean this fall and winter in Celebrity style. Departing Saturdays from San Juan. Rates from \$1629, including port charges for category 12, based on Nov. 7/98 sailing.
10. SILVERSEA - *Silver Wind - 14 night Barcelona to Athens* - Enjoy the very best of the Mediterranean this summer in six-star luxury. Experience all-inclusive value with Silversea. Included in your cruise fare are all-suite accommodations, roundtrip airfare, complimentary beverages, on-board gratuities and port charges. Rates from \$13,699 for a Vista suite, sailing Aug. 4/98.

LIMITED SPACE IS STILL AVAILABLE FOR THE SUMMER - INQUIRE FOR DETAILS!

TORONTO DEPARTURES. All offers are subject to availability at time of booking. Prices are per person in \$Cdn based on double occupancy and include airfare from Toronto. Port and departure charges are additional unless otherwise stated. Certain restrictions may apply. For full details contact

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