Committee committed to bringing new doctors to Acton, Georgetown

The acute lack of medical doctors in Acton has galvanized Halton Hills Council to redouble efforts to get physicians to locate here.

_Saying "the time is now for extraordinary efforts," Mayor Rick Bonnette has struck a Physician Recruitment & Retention Committee for the Town of Halton Hills. Comprised of interested members of the community, Councillors, the medical profession and the Chamber of Commerce, the committee will reinforce the efforts of regional staff in recruiting new doctors to Halton Hills. All four members of council from Acton are on the committee.

"We need new family physicians to service the growing needs of our community. In Acton, the situation is critical with 10,000 people being serviced with only three doctors, two of them part-time" Bonnette noted. "Georgetown also remains underserviced, and our efforts will continue to recruit additional doctors for that part of our community," Bonnette added.

The committee is broken into three working groups who report back monthly. One group is looking to improve the quality of promotional and tour efforts. A CD-ROM is in production that will be sent to interested medical professionals.

"Not only do we have fine working facilities, like our hospital and long-term health care centre, but we enjoy a superior quality of life," Bonnette added.

"Halton Hills affords rural splendour while still only 45 minutes from cosmopolitan centres and world-class research facilities in the Greater Toronto Area universities and major medical facilities. We will show touring medical professionals why Halton Hills is a superior location to settle and raise a family, something we already know.

The Capital Campaign & Facilities Subcommittee is looking in to the question of professional medical office space in Acton and Georgetown. Both centres need upgrading or replacing and lack of facilities is an obvious impediment in attracting new physicians to Acton.

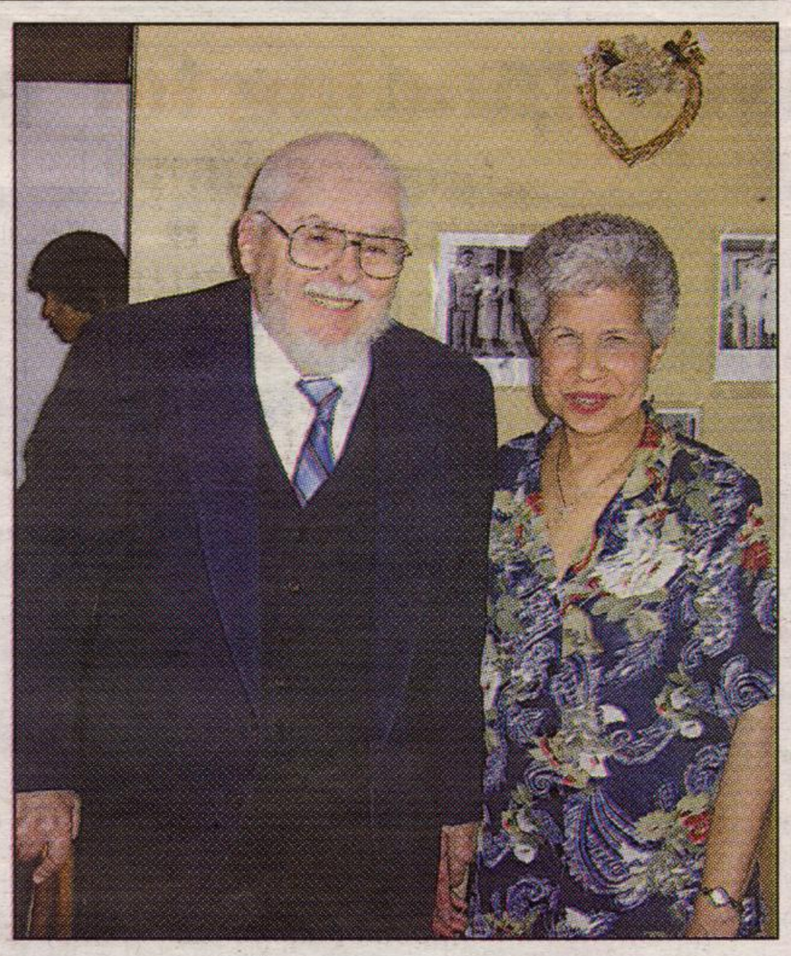
Various models across the province are being explored.

The Incentives & Publicity Subcommittee is looking at options, which may be offered to doctors to make our community more attractive. These can be as simple as food and lodging for weekend visits to more tangible incentives in return for a commitment to stay in the community for a specific period of time. When necessary, the Subcommittee will coordinate fundraising events and keep the public apprised as to the progress of the entire group.

"Recruiting is a community issue, not just a doctor, hospital or town staff issue," Bonnette told the committee when beginning this initiative. The mayor encourages those with ideas or contributions to become involved in this cause. For more information, call the Halton Hills Economic Development Office, Ms. Daphne Millar, at 905-873-2601 x2345.

"We must compete with many towns and cities for new family physicians", Mayor Bonnette said. "This challenge will remain a priority for your Council until such time as we recruit enough new doctors to care for the physical and mental health of all our citizens. I encourage your participation."

Meanwhile the committee noted six doctors in Georgetown are taking new patients. They include Dr. Kiran Udaya Chirla, Georgetown Medical Associates, 1A Princess Anne Drive; Dr. Anthony F. Farragos of the same address; Dr. Sarah Helen Ferguson of William Osler Health Centre, 1 Princess Ann Drive; Dr. Judy May-Chee Ming, Suite 200, 99 Sinclair Ave.; Dr. Gabriel Ting, 1A Princess Anne Drive and Dr. James Ja-Ming Ying, 83 Mill St., Suite 102, Georgetown.



Celebrate 50 years

Residents of Acton for 46 years, John and Helen Rowe celebrated 50 years of marriage at a reception at their son Robert's home at R.R.1 Georgetown last Saturday. The Rowe's entire family and many friends and acquaintances attended to join in the joyous celebration including Helen's sister from Jamaica, a surprise visitor. John was secretary-treasurer of the Acton Agricultural Society for many years and Helen is a longtime member of St. Joseph's Catholic Women's League. The couple was married in St. Eugene's Church in Toronto in March of 1955.

World Day of Prayer at St. Joseph's

St. Joseph's Church will host the 2005 World Day of Prayer on, Friday March 18, at 7 p.m. This annual ecumenical service is presented in unity with the many Christian churches in the Acton community.

Christians around the world will be focusing on the country of Poland in 2005. The service this year was written by the women of Poland and reflects the theme, "Let our Light Shine."

Poland with a population of 83 million, tries to balance the influences of the West and the East. Since overthrowing the communist regime in 1989, Poland has been transformed into a free-market economy. This created both opportunity and high unemployment. Women and children are most affected by the unemployment rate, and are increasingly at risk from traffickers.

Participants in the World Day of Prayer will not only learn more about this country and its unique culture and heritage, but will join Christians in more than 170 countries and 2,000 communities across Canada who have gathered together to pray and take action in solidarity with the people of Poland.

World Day of Prayer was begun by women in Canada and the United States in 1922. The offerings received at each World Day of Prayer service are forwarded to the national office. A large portion is used to prepare and provide resources for the following year. Grants are also provided. In 2004, grants were awarded to projects in Bangladesh, India, Haifa and the North of Israel, as well as Jamaica.

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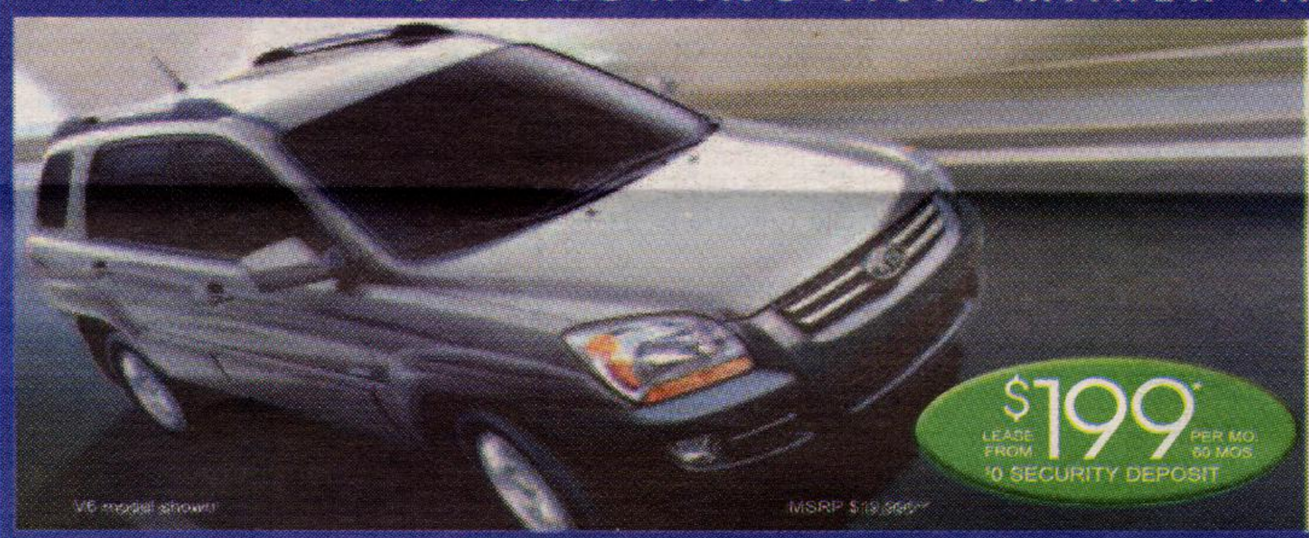

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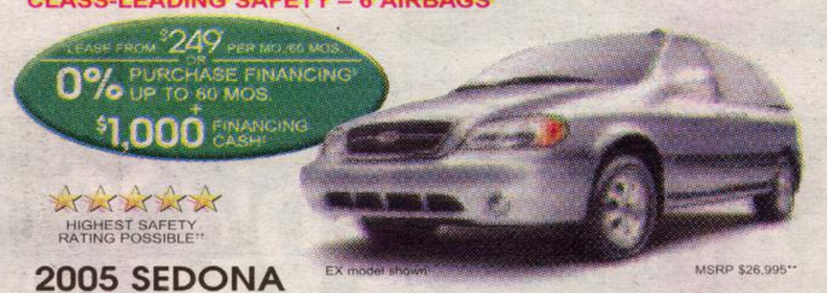

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