

Students fighting the system

Join together in search for answers

By **CAROL BALDWIN**

Special to The Independent/Free Press

Halton students have joined together to fight the system, because the system is destroying their world by laying off their teachers.

The students aren't sure who is at fault but they're determined to find out and do something about it.

After school on Tuesday (March 26) representatives from every high school in Halton, except Oakville's White Oaks Secondary School and Milton's E. C. Drury, sat at tables in a large circle and listened to Linda Glover, the chair of the Halton Board of Education, three Oakville trustees — Penny Siebert, Linda Lane and Neil Reid, and the superintendent of education services Keith Johnson, explain the board's decision to lay off 380 high school teachers, then reinstate 199 of them. But, after hearing all the explanations, Scott Kubacki, the Oakville-Trafalgar High School representative said no one is taking responsibility for the layoffs. "The government is blaming the board (of education) and the board is blaming the government and the unions."

The information meeting organized by Kubacki and fellow student council members failed to provide them with the answers they were looking for, but it did convince them that some cuts were unavoidable and some action on their part was necessary.

After the question-and-answer period between the students and their guests from the Halton

Board of Education, the students made some concrete decisions and did some planning. This cohesive group of student representatives left the round-table discussion with a name — The Halton Students' Alliance, and a plan of action.

"We are going to continue with our pink ribbon campaign," said Kubacki, describing the campaign as "support for the teachers because this is hard on students and really hard on teachers, especially those who have been cut. We are saying that we are aware of what's going on, that our education matters and that we want to get involved."

To demonstrate how involved they plan on getting, the students have formed two committees, one to formulate and distribute a petition and one to encourage letter writing.

"I've been in touch with a lawyer concerning the wording of the petition, and we've been looking through a copy of the proposed budget ... trying to get all the information from all sides," said Kubacki, noting that the students haven't decided where to send the petition or the letters — to the provincial government, their MPP, the board of education or the teachers' federations. "We're going to create an information package with addresses, an example letter and information on what we are trying to do. Then, students can choose and make an informed decision."

The next meeting of The Halton Students' Alliance will be after school (about 3:15 p.m.), Tuesday, April 2, tentatively set at T. A. Blakelock High School.

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CORRECTION
We wish to draw your attention to the following in our "1996 Annual Catalogue" Sixth Correction Notice
Page 247: Item 4, Bucket-Style Seat Covers, 32-6011X.
Copy Should Read: 34.99 each, not 34.99 pair.
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