

Expert explains how to raise resilient children

By JANET DUVAL

Special to The Independent/Free Press

Canadian families are in crisis. That's according to Dick O'Brien, a human relations consultant to school boards, corporations, and police forces, who spoke to more than 100 members and friends of the Canadian Federation of University Women — Georgetown at their annual spring dinner in May. The event included a celebration of the club's 25th anniversary.

"Every day I see good people in free fall: demoralized, overwhelmed by change."

The tragedy, he says, is that parents are inadvertently raising their children to be victims. They've given up on the future. They believe others are the cause of all their problems.

The most important gift you can give to your children, he says, is the fundamental belief that they can deal with life. The key issue isn't whether you have bad days, but how much power you give those days in your life. We have to build resiliency in our children — they're going to see 10 times the change that we have.

There's a learned helplessness mentality evident in people born since 1946. They believe security comes from outside of themselves. They're insatiable consumers who think

happiness comes from what they own, and who feel entitled to benefits if they put enough time into something. The result is the highest rates ever of divorce, depression, stress and suicide.

The maxim we must instill in children today, then, is "what I do has something to do with what happens to me."

Life isn't luck. Self worth comes from a track record of dealing with life, says O'Brien. "Difficulties are gifts, growth opportunities. They give children a chance to find out they can deal with life."

O'Brien described two young women: his own seven-year-old asking him to put the heads back on her Barbie dolls, and a friend's daughter arrested for stealing to support her cocaine habit. In both cases, he warns against being the rescuer. Parents must let children work out their own solutions to problems, to "build their choice muscles. It's not what happens in life it's how they choose to deal with it."

He let his daughter figure out which head went with which doll and encouraged to fit them together. "It took a little longer, but a caring parent must do that." Dick advised the distraught mother to leave her daughter in detention on Christmas Eve, "or in two years she'd be visiting her in the Vanier Centre for Women." The girl eventually arranged for assessment, found a lawyer, took treatment,

and began to turn her life around.

Children must learn to make responsible choices, to "respond, not react to life." They are responsible for the outcomes of their choices, even the unintended outcomes. "I didn't mean that to happen" isn't a good enough excuse. Let children learn from mistakes, or all their lives they'll look to someone else to pull them out of things, to

rescue them.

When children mess up, parents should "love what they are, and challenge what they did." Avoid verbal abuse, calling the child names, or they'll put their energy into hating you instead of examining the choice they made. Never confront them for more than a minute or so; they'll tune out whatever else you say.

PLEASE RECYCLE



THE HALTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

invites applications from members of the public for appointments to the

Halton Hills Public Library Board for the remainder of the term September 1995 to December 1997

The Library Board trustees oversee the expenditure of library grant monies, set policy for operation of the public library and develop long-range plans for facilities and services.

The Library Board meets at least 10 times a year. Members will also be asked to serve on standing committees.

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- a) is a Canadian citizen;
- b) is at least eighteen years old
- c) is a resident in the municipality for which the library board is established; and
- d) is not employed by the library board or the municipality".

(from An Act Respecting Public Libraries 1984)

Members of the Library Board serve without remuneration and are appointed for a three year term.

Please send your written applications and resumé to Linda Glover, Chair of the Board, 2050 Guelph Line, Burlington, Ontario, L7R 3Z2 by June 21, 1996.

Interviews will be held for all applicants.

Linda Glover
Chair of the Board

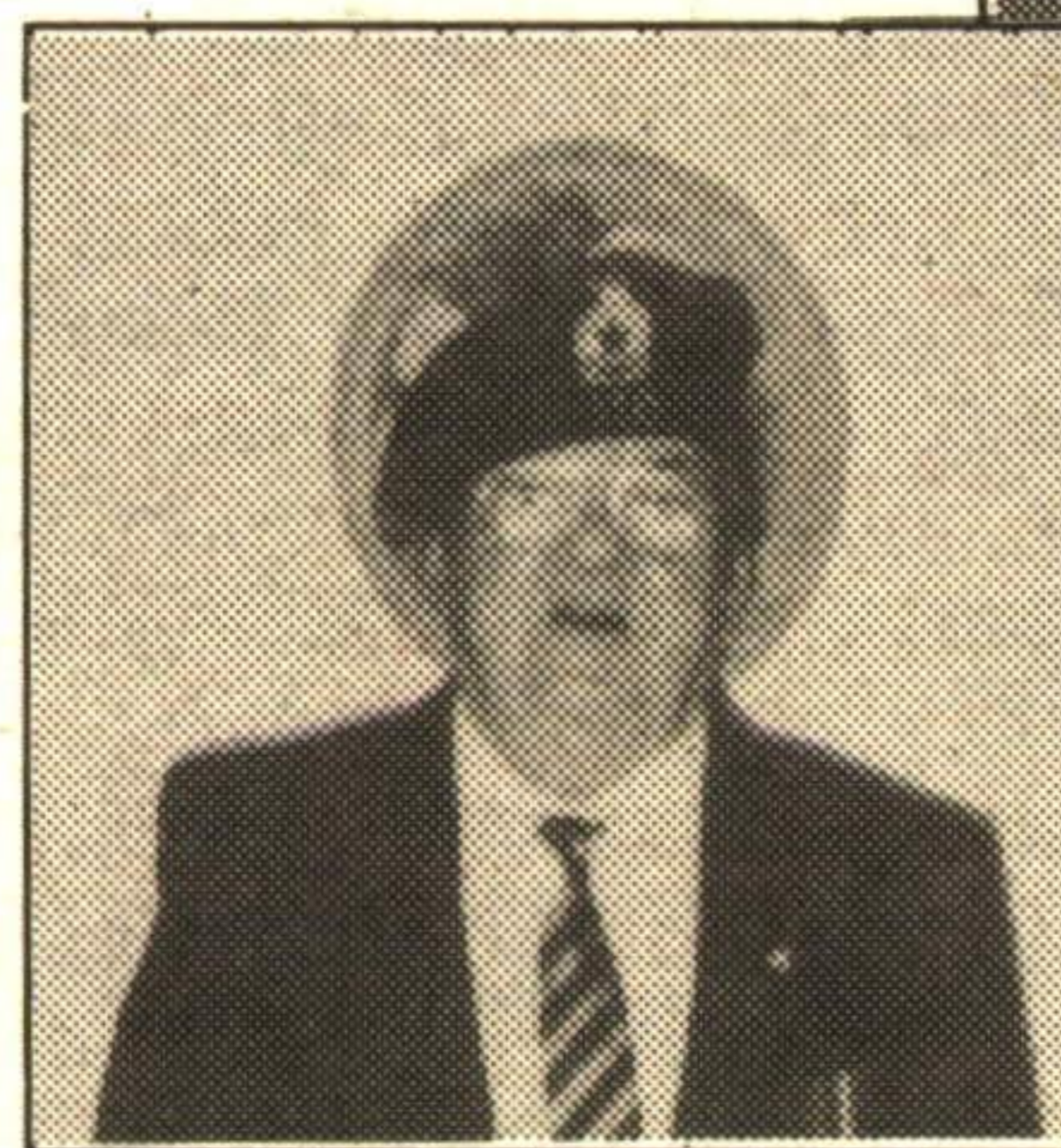
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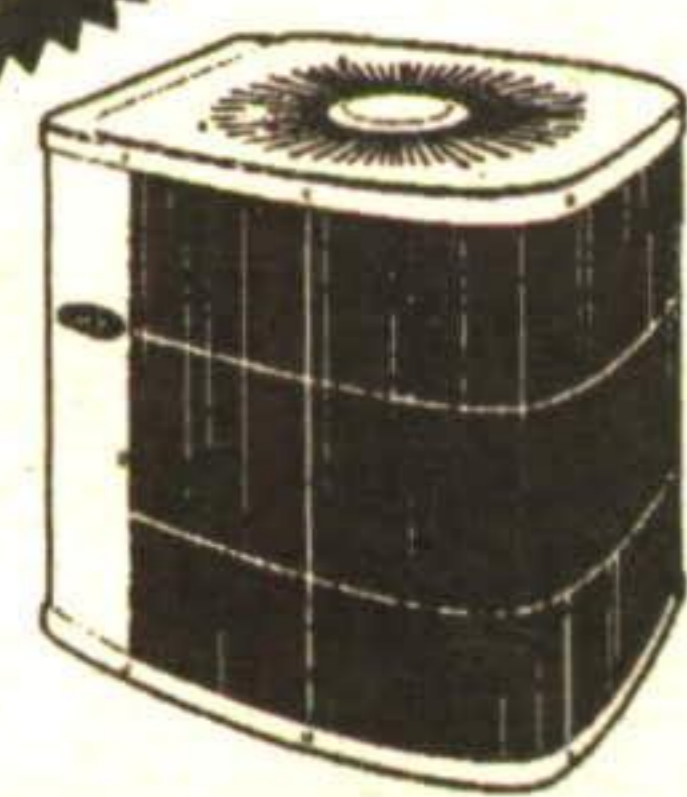


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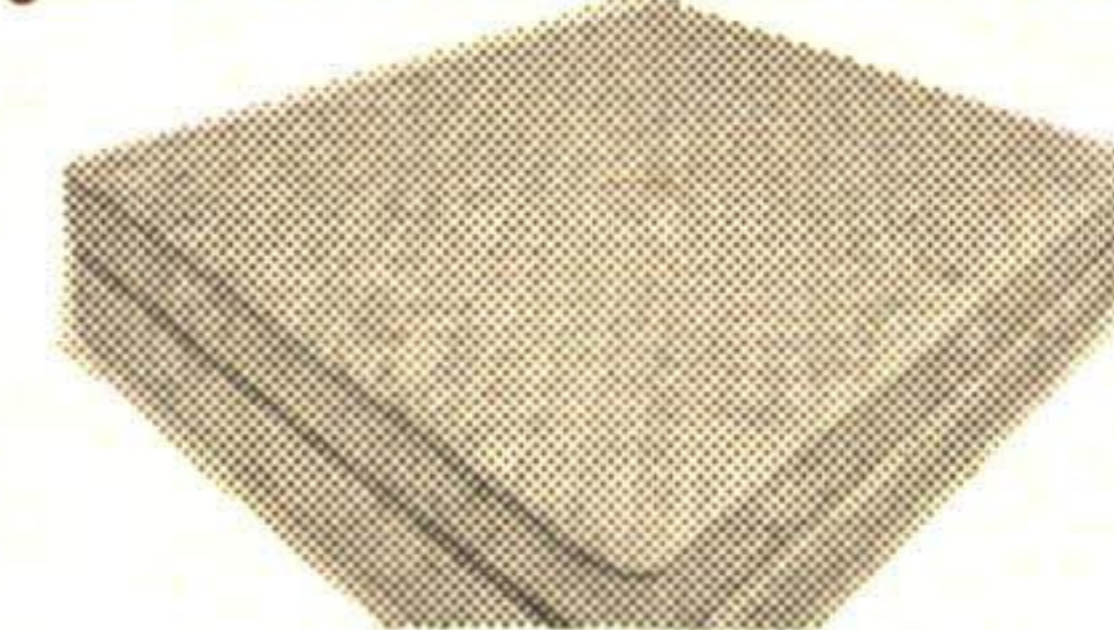
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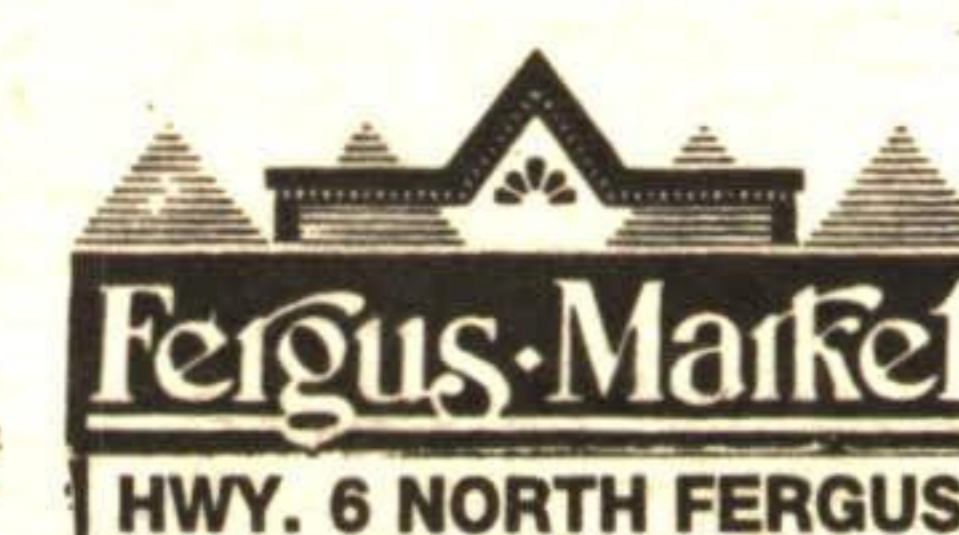


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