

# OP ED

"Op Ed" — old time newspaper term meaning the page opposite the editorial page. This page has traditionally been held open for opinion pieces, letters, and comment from various sources.

## Family Violence: Are you that special man?

By Jacie B. Palmer

Today I want to look at a snapshot of a person I've completely overlooked in previous columns — the man who becomes involved with a woman who is recovering from an abusive relationship. Likely he's become a part of her life prior to having any knowledge of her past. It may take a long time before she can share her secrets but the signs are there in their conversations. The following is an excerpt from a letter contained in Susan Forward's book *Men Who Hate Women and the Women Who Love Them*:

"Remember how worried I was that I would never fall in love again, I'd never get over what's his name, and the days of romance were over for good. Well, I met a terrific guy. He doesn't yell, he isn't demanding or insanely possessive, and I love him completely. I don't miss for a second all those crazy scenes I had with Bob. I used to think all that fighting was love and passion but Randy is tender and soft-spoken and twice as exciting". This woman has gone through the process of re-evaluating her priorities and shifting her values to those which build a solid and lasting positive future — common interests and mutual respect.

I pity the first man I allow into my life. I've forced myself to remain alone because I want to be ready to interact in a mature way. No man needs to have to deal with all that garbage. I'm sorting myself out and then will allow others to participate in my life. An abused woman may be very adept at using manipulation to get what she wants. She has used survival techniques which were necessary to maintain her life within the abusive relationship and now must discard them to be able to relate to others in a responsible way. Often she is angry and, most often, that anger is at herself for putting up with violence. A woman who has been abused may jump to the wrong conclusions with the least or no provocation. She may be wary of all men and hesitant to trust. With his every action she might look for hidden motives and covert signs of abuse. She needs to spend time regaining her self-confidence and self-respect. The emotional highs and lows and passion of the abusive relationship must be replaced with peace, contentment, trust and confidence in the new non-abusive friendship. That takes time. Believing she deserves someone thoughtful, considerate and kind is very difficult. She's become used



to hurt, pain and anger.

Along comes a man who seems to care and the panic sets in. She may have heart palpitations, be short of breath or get a headache. All indications she is frightened of the unknown future — and scared to death of men. Any man developing a relationship with a woman who is still recovering will have to understand without really being cognizant of all the fact. He will need to be consistent in his behavior patterns to show her he won't hit or play mind games with her. He will have to be patient, caring and gentle — always looking for subtle and hidden messages which go beyond her words. He will need to listen carefully to what she is saying and recognize that some of her messages will be mixed. He needs to ask questions when he is curious but must accept an incomplete answer because she may be unable to share the pain she feels. In short, he will have to be a MAN and not a boy in man's clothing. He will need the patience of a saint! He will be special and she will treasure him!

Having said all this, I can attest to the fact that when I do develop a healthy relationship with a man I will be worth his efforts! Many victims, myself included, believe the lengths they had to go to maintain

the abusive relationship have given them a better understanding of behavior patterns of the male of the species, in particular — his wants, his needs and his desires. Often these women have trusted, given, helped, cared for, understood and loved to the extreme. They have placed more effort into building and maintaining an abusive relationship than their job or any other relationship. They recognize that beginning again with someone takes real work and once they commit themselves to another relationship will be flexible and caring demonstrating the capacity to become an excellent partner.

We all need to learn that being honest with each other will benefit and not hurt. Dropping the facades most of us maintain for our own protection hinder the development of solid, mature relationships. A lasting relationship must prove to be a shelter from the storms of life — and not a hurricane. Victims of violence have learned a hard lesson and have a real desire to change and to succeed in a healthy and positive way.

That special man who comes along will be worth every effort she takes to build and maintain their friendship and she will be worthy of him. Anything worthwhile is not built instantaneously but takes commitment and time.

Are you that special man? Are you willing to be open and honest and share your life with a special person?

**Feel free to contact Jacie in confidence by directing letters to her attention at Halton Hills This Week. All correspondence will remain confidential. Jacie can be reached in person through the Distress Centre at 877-1211. Leave a message and Jacie will get back to you. If you are in crisis, call the Distress Centre or 911.**

## Activity Line Fitness for forty plus

Physically fit people generally live longer, perform better, and get more out of life.

**BLOOD PRESSURE:** Regular exercise is effective in reducing blood pressure.

**LDL CHOLESTEROL:** Regular exercise harmful LDL cholesterol while increasing beneficial HDL cholesterol.

**BODY COMPOSITION:** Regular exercise promotes fat loss while preserving muscles.

**ARTHRITIS:** Regular exercise helps keep joints flexible, helps build and preserve muscle strength, and helps protect joints from further stress.

**OSTEOPOROSIS (BONE LOSS):** Regular exercise can potentially prevent most forms of bone loss which accompany aging.

**I.Q.:** Improved circulation from regular exercise typically increases I.Q. in older people.

**OXYGEN IN THE BLOODSTREAM:** Regular exercise creates a 40-year offset in oxygen carrying capacity — in other words, a fit person of 70 years has the same oxygen carrying capacity as an unfit person of 30.

**SICKNESS:** Exercisers feel sick almost 30% less often than non-



Laurie Burns

exercisers.

**DIABETES:** Programs of regular exercise can help diabetic s cut down on the amount of insulin they must use.

**STRESS MANAGEMENT:** Exercisers are 100% more likely to find ways to relax and are 300% more likely to be able to relax when under stress.

**BOWEL IRREGULARITIES:** Regular exercise is helpful in relieving constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, indigestion and other gastronomical disorders.

"Physical fitness is the basis for all other forms of excellence". — John F. Kennedy

## Thanks to residents' group

### To Residents of the Moore Park Neighbourhood

Recently a group of concerned parents got together to discuss the impending implementation of Junior Kindergarten (September 1994). After much discussion with Dick Howitt, our School Trustee, our objective was to poll the neighbourhood to obtain a fair representation of opinion. We put together a survey that stated the facts as they are (costs, Ontario government position and expectations) and did not approach it from a philosophical view. The survey question was "Do you feel that the Halton Board of Education should be forced to

implement a Junior Kindergarten program at this time, without time to study alternatives, considering that the required tax dollars will come through an estimated 8% increase in your tax bill"? The results, after randomly polling half of the neighbourhood, were: 91.3% opposed and 8.7% in favour. These results have been passed on to Dick Howitt to be presented to the Board.

I'd like to thank the group members for their time and my neighbours for participating. We hope our efforts will bear fruit.

Jocelyn Present

## For Pete's Sake



## by Roe

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