

Red Cross workers resign over staffing issue

BY LISA TALLYN
Staff Writer

A majority of the members of the Halton Hills Red Cross Society branch council recently resigned after they didn't receive a reply to a letter recommending a change to staffing at the office.

El Lloyd, president of the council for the past three years, said 10 of 12 members of the branch council resigned on August 11. He said the two who didn't resign were not at the meeting.

"It was a tough decision to make," said Lloyd. "I kind of regret having to resign. The Red Cross has done so much over the years."

He said the "straw that broke the camel's back" and led to the resignations is the fact the council did not receive a reply to a letter sent to the Red Cross Halton East

field operations manager recommending only one staff person work out of the local office, instead of the three currently working there on a rotational basis.

Lloyd said the council felt the rotating staff made it difficult for communication, achieving stability and staff to get to know the community. He said about 15 months ago the council received word from the West Central Region office that the Halton Hills office was slated to close, but within about six weeks that was retracted.

Susan Lynch, Red Cross manager of field operations for east Halton, said the Red Cross has been going through a lot of changes and has been restructuring to provide a more efficient delivery of services.

She said until March there was one staff person working in the Halton Hills Red Cross office but with the restructuring that changed. Now the

office is staffed on a rotating basis by a community services co-ordinator, field manager and co-ordinator of volunteer services.

She said the council doesn't normally meet during the summer and the response to the council's letter was recently mailed. She added through ongoing meetings and communication, she had discussions about the staffing of the office with the council.

"I'm sure it can be improved, its an ongoing process," said Lynch about the Halton Hills office. She added, however, she believes the office is now operating more efficiently than it was and that each person offers their own expertise.

"I felt that the branch here lost its community base or centre when our manager's position went," said long-time Halton Hills Red Cross board member Erica Thompson, one of the volunteers who resigned.

"I felt the loss of a person, someone who is familiar with the community, was a major setback," she said.

She added it was a "loss of autonomy" for the Halton Hills branch council.

Lynch said when a volunteer leaves the organization it is always "a major loss."

"They are much respected and have been with us a long time. I think they were probably tired and maybe this is what they wanted to do anyway."

Despite the resignations, both she and Lloyd stressed the Red Cross office is still open four days a week and all the programs are offered.

Lloyd said the senior's men luncheon organized by the council will be held this October.

Lloyd and some other council members will remain on the council through the end of the year to ensure a smooth transition.



Guide to the Outdoors

Julie Pomeroy

Calling all Nature Lovers in Halton Hills! Are you looking for someone to go bird watching with? Would you like to learn about local fauna and wildlife or go for nature walks? We have an excellent club in Town called the Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club. I just received the fall newsletter. The indoor meetings are held on Tuesdays starting at 7:30 at Centennial Middle School on Delrex Ave. On September 12, there will be a presentation on Wolf Behavior. The next outdoor meeting scheduled for Sept. 16 will be Electro-fishing in Silver Creek led by biologist Bob Morris. The club has a wonderful children's program and on Sept. 30 the Junior Naturalists will tour the historic lime kilns in Limehouse. For membership info. Call Margaret 878-6255. For the Junior Program call Bev at 877-9053.



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