

# Milton TOPS Club's Group Therapy Program Whittles Excess Pounds off Local Ladies

**By Roy Downs**  
Too much turkey and trimmings over the recent holidays, ladies?

Find yourself raiding the refrigerator more and more these evenings?

Weight getting to be such a problem your clothes aren't fitting?

It sounds like you're a candidate for a Milton club known as "T.O.P.S." The initials stand for "Take Off Pounds Sensibly" and its members do just that.

**Losing for 10 years**

"Milton Wonder TOPS" is the name of a local club founded almost 10 years ago with the prime purpose of shedding some excess avoirdupois from local ladies, and is affiliated with the international TOPS organization with headquarters in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Over the years the TOPS program of careful weight-watching coupled with group therapy, will-power and incentives has led to the successful shedding of untold extra poundage from its members.

Club leader Mrs. Karl Cartwright and her executive have decided to launch a membership campaign to boost their club roster and they're issuing a warm invitation to any ladies with a weight problem to come out and give TOPS a try.

**"Group Therapy"**

TOPS is a non-profit organization that refuses to be identified with any commercial firm, reducing method or diet control program. Mrs. Esther S. Manz of Milwaukee, who founded the program in 1948, after she began worrying about M.A.S. (Middle Age Spread), calls it "group therapy for the obese".

She got together with a few friends who were sincerely interested in losing weight and launched her organization with a meeting where they all sat around and

discussed their weight problem, frankly and without fear of being laughed at or misunderstood. She told a newspaper about it and was flooded with applications. Soon TOPS was growing by leaps and bounds and branches were being founded across the states. The movement began in Ontario when a club was founded in Dundas 11 years ago.

**Encouragement, Incentive**

Mrs. Manz explains the success of TOPS this way: "The purpose of TOPS is primarily to help all the overweight who are sincerely interested in losing pounds sensibly. It is based on the principle of group therapy—getting together a group of people who have a problem in common and discussing it frankly, without fear. The members of the club compete with each other in a friendly fashion, while attaining their ideal weight and maintaining that weight. The success and enthusiasm of the group provides encouragement and incentive to those individuals who lack the will power to accomplish their goal alone."

"TOPS also provides a social outlet to help overcome the underlying cause of obesity, such as frustration, lack of confidence and loneliness. TOPS is not a course of a few weeks or months duration. It is a well planned, continuing program dedicated to helping the overweight, bringing them recognition and awards for a job well done and utilizing that success and know-how to help all others who will put themselves in a position where the club can aid them."

**Began with 14**

The Milton club was formed by Mrs. Bernice Erwin, a former resident of town. She advertised for members and called up a few friends to get it started. There were 14 members who joined at the first meeting, six of whom are still members.

Today the club membership stands at 14, although it has climbed as high as 18 in recent years. Members come from Milton, Kilbride, Norval, Zimmerman and elsewhere throughout the rural district surrounding the town.

Helping Mrs. Cartwright on the executive are the co-leaders Mrs. E. Smith, secretary Mrs. A. Hankins, treasurer Mrs. C. Watson and weight recorder Mrs. A. Kingdon. Anyone can join TOPS if they are 20 pounds overweight, but it is recommended that members' dieting be carried out under the supervision of a doctor.

**Lo-Cal Luncheons**

Members meet weekly on Wednesday evenings at the home of members. Fees are \$4 annually (\$6 for the initial two years plus 25 cents an evening to cover expenses.) Needless to say, any lunches served at the club functions are of the low-calorie kind.

The meetings are about one-half business, and one-half social. Each member's weight is recorded weekly and figures are kept confidential by the weight recorder. A 10 cent fine is levied on anyone who has gained a pound since last meeting, and you must pay a 10 cent levy if your weight remains the same two weeks in a row.

In practice it's horrible. Wives persecute husbands in the afternoon with shopping, scrubbing, repairing, nagging. If you sleep in the afternoon, you lie stark, staring, insomniacal, at night. If you work or play, you fall asleep in the middle of dinner, baked potato half chewed.

Nobody goes to bed any earlier than they ever did. And what we wind up with is a peadantry of red-eyed teachers, frayed at the edges, facing a gaggle of yawning teenagers, some of whom were up at 5 a.m. to catch the school bus, every morning at 7.45.

But losers are rewarded by a five cent per lost pound bonus. Each member gets an emblem to wear on their dress for the next week — a turtle for those who show no loss or gain in weight, a top for a loser, and a little pig for those who gained weight.

**Crown "Queen"**

At the end of the year the TOPS member losing the most weight in the year is crowned the "Queen of Tops" and receives a gift. Milton members who won the award in recent years have lost up to 18 pounds in a year.

The social end of the TOPS program is a varied one. The girls enjoy a get-together just to chit-chat and besides they occasionally stage club visits with neighboring clubs. Among the district clubs are TOPS groups in Dundas, Kitchener, Hamilton, Hespeler, Preston, Galt, Waterdown, Burlington, Oakville, Streetsville, Port Credit and Brampton. There are presently 215 clubs in Ontario, with a total membership of 4,500. They often hold a Valentine, Halloween or Christmas party, and the odd steak barbecue is thrown in.

**Dream Come True**

"It must have been a wonderful dream-come-true for Mrs. Manz, the founder, to see the way TOPS has grown," said Milton leader Mrs. Cartwright.

"Perhaps the best way to close this article is to repeat the invitation to come out and try TOPS if you think you have a weight problem, and to quote the TOPS pledge:

"I am an intelligent person. I will control my emotions not let my emotions control me. Every time I am tempted to use food to satisfy my frustrated desires, build up my injured ego or dull my senses, I will remember even though I overeat in private — my excess poundage is there for all the world to see what a FOOL I've been."

As well, there's always a provincial "recognition day" when Ontario losers are honored.

The movement has also branched out to include a "Sir TOPS" club for men. (Incidentally, if any male readers are interested, it's easy to start a men's TOPS—just three charter members are needed and the Wonder TOPS would be glad to get one going in town.)

Provincial recognition days also acknowledge Teen TOPS and Tiny TOPS (those under 12 years) who have participated in the program.

**Florida Next**

Milton members had so much fun at New York last year they started a fund to finance their transportation to the 1968 convention in Florida, and they're already booking for Toronto this year.

TOPS members realize that compulsive eating is their worst enemy. "If you aren't hungry, you aren't losing," is one of their many mottos. Sometimes they have to shame themselves into

diating, therefore the "piggy" awards at the weekly meetings. They also pair up as "pals" and each pal is responsible for keeping an eye on the other, weight-wise.

The pal system finds its best advantage when one TOPS member is tempted to delve into a huge piece of cake, or grab a quick snack at bedtime. According to the TOPS manual, pals are encouraged to telephone each other and report their temptations, so the pal at the other end of the line can talk, cajole or shame them out of it. And it works, too, just like AA works. Just as an alcoholic is only one drink away from a bender, a TOPS disciple is just one snack away from a complete dietary revolution.

**Many Activities**

Mrs. Ann Ptolemy, games chairman, gave an excellent report and answered several questions. She stressed the point of reading the bulletin board for activities of the club.

The business girls are competing for the Early Bird Trophy in a seven week draw and the ladies' section is competing for the Millson Trophy in a seven week draw at present.

Wednesday mornings, two three-week Sweepstakes are in progress.

Liz Frame, social convener, reported on plans for a Valentine Tea on February 14 at 2 p.m. Court whist will be played. A St. Patrick's bridge is planned for later. Tickets to the bridge social will be restricted to avoid overcrowding.

**132 Members**

Jean McDuffie on memberships reported 132 members.

Members were urged to attend out-of-town bonspiels for curling experience, fun and good fellowship. Listed below are rinks who have visited out-of-town and all

reported having enjoyed themselves thoroughly.

Skip Liz Farley's rink went to Erin recently, winning one eight-cent game 9-5 and losing two 8-7. Along for the trip were vice Pat Noble, second Glad Merritt and lead Barb Durman. Pat Nichol's rink including vice June McCuaig, second Jessie Anderson and lead Hazel Porter played two 10-end games in Lambton recently, winning one and losing one.

Business girls went to Thistle Club, Hamilton, and they were skip Dolly Wheeler, vice June Fish, second Joyce Rowley and lead Dorothy Walker. Business girls on a trip to Toronto were skip Joyce Rowley, vice June Fish, second Mary Surbey and lead Nancy Mackenzie.

## Curling Club Ladies' News

The ladies' section of the Milton Curling Club held an open meeting on Monday, January 17, in the lounge of the club.

Prior to business, all enjoyed seeing a film on curling, courtesy of a brewer.

With Mrs. June McCuaig in the chair, the balance of the meeting consisted of a question and answer period and reports of various committees.

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## DRUMQUIN

# North Trafalgar Club Sees Slides of England

By Mrs. A. Ball  
(Intended for last week)

The North Trafalgar Community Club held their January meeting at the home of Mrs. J. D. Cordingley with a good number in attendance.

The meeting opened with the singing of the club Ode. The president, Mrs. A. McCracken presided for the business period. The minutes of the last meeting were read by the assistant secretary, Mrs. J. Hannah. Several thank you cards and letters were read from friends who had been remembered at Christmas.

\$25 is to be donated to the North Halton School for Retarded Children. A euchre is to be held in the Percy Merry school on Thursday evening, January 27.

The meeting closed with the benediction. For the program, Mrs. D. Dalgleish showed slides of her visit to England, also some taken in Detroit.

Lunch was served by the hosts and a social time enjoyed.

**Successful Event**

The First Drumquin Guide and Brownie Mother's Group held a very successful euchre and bake sale at the Boyne Community Centre on Thursday evening. Twenty tables of euchre were in play.

Prize winners were: ladies, Mrs. Montgomery, Mrs. A. Ford and Mrs. V. Bradley; men, Fred Johnston, Lorne Chamberlain and Gordon Leslie. Consolation prizes went to Mrs. G. Leslie, Mrs. Sammitt, Mrs. L. Chamberlain, Mrs. Bill Hill and Mr. Ward.

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Lucky draw prizes were won by Frank Peacock, Mrs. Bill Bradley, Mrs. Jim Saliba, Mrs. Ruby Sullivan and Mrs. Elmer Bailey. The oldest lady present was Mrs. Gertha Peacock and the oldest gentleman, Robert Inglis. The couple married the longest was Mr. and Mrs. Ward and the couple with the largest family was Mr. and Mrs. Virus. Those with their birthdays nearest to the date were Mrs. Irene Saunders and Cliff May. The many prizes were donated by merchants in the local towns.

The evening concluded with lunch served by the ladies in charge.

**New Son**

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. W. Harris on the arrival of their son at Oakville - Trafalgar Memorial Hospital on Wednesday, January 19. A brother for Dianna and Heather.

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