

# YSN elects Bill Tom chairman

Milton resident Bill Tom has been elected chairman of the Board of Directors of the Youth Services Network, Halton Region (YSN). Mr. Tom is a vice-principal at Georgetown High School. He was vice-principal at Milton High School for several years.

YSN is a region-wide organization whose primary purposes are to provide a vehicle of communication for and among youth, youth-

servicing agencies and the public, and to take part in determining the needs of youth. The YSN annual meeting last week marked its entry into its second year of operations.

Other residents of the northern part of the region serving on the 28-member board are Irene Harrison of Milton and Ann Pickering, Marilyn Searjeantson and Pat Mason of Halton Hills. Colton Roberts, vice-principal of Robert Baldwin

School in Milton, is a new member of the board was well. The constitution calls for one-quarter of the board members to be youth under 25 but of voting age.

The YSN annual report notes the network completed its objectives for 1977. It is publishing a monthly newsletter, has compiled a youth directory for the region, sponsored a community forum regarding the re-organization of children's services and was instrumental in setting up a children's services steering committee for the region, held a conference on youth and the law, and established liaison with many community groups.

A full-time co-ordinator, Peter Gillespie, was appointed last June.

Current activities include planning for a spring conference related to youth and

employment, working with student leaders in Burlington and assisting in the development of a handbook for student governments in Halton secondary schools.

The development of area sub-committees continues. Milton and Halton Hills lag behind Burlington and Oakville in this respect but the network hopes the more equitable regional representation on the new board will strengthen the local groups.

The new chairman, Mr. Tom, said priorities for 1978 include expanding the membership of YSN, expanding sub-committees in the north and developing a means of communication to bring an exchange of ideas between the adult and youth worlds.

YSN receives one-third of its budget up to \$10,000 from the province, provided the amount is matched locally by

cash or in-kind services. (YSN delegates told the regional community and social services committee last week they will be looking to the region for grants in the future.)

Burlington Regional Councillor Don Carter, who brought greetings from the

city to the meeting, told the membership he would support YSN's requests for financial assistance at the municipal and regional levels. "I can assure you of my support," Mr. Carter said. "I may have put my neck out, but I feel the answer lies in youth."



BILL TOM, newly-elected chairman of the Board of Directors of Halton Youth Services Network, chats with Deb Wellwood and Sue Mellor, two young people from Acton who attended the YSN annual meeting.

## Listen to youth YSN is told

"Youth Services Network doesn't exactly reach out and grab you like a Yamaha or a Kawasaki," said community psychiatry consultant Tony McLean in challenging YSN members to find ways of reaching uninvolved youth.

Good marketing technique is to look at the most resistant population, Mr. McLean said. "What will turn those kids on will turn on the kids in the middle."

Mr. McLean, a member of the faculty of psychiatry at McMaster University and consultant at Oakville-Trafalgar Hospital, acted as facilitator for the planning portion of the YSN annual meeting.

Mr. McLean advised YSN to listen to the ideas youth have for solving youth problems: "Get the experience and wisdom of adults pushed to the side for awhile and let the enthusiasm, energy and miracle-working of kids take over."

Given this kind of opportunity, youth in the east end of Hamilton ended up forming their own association, putting out a newspaper, finding work for young people and setting up training programs. Residents of Wesley House, a Hamilton group home of which Mr. McLean was once director, run the home. Two happenings that theoretically are assumed to be impossible, he said.

Rising to the challenge, adult members of YSN

listened while young people in the audience brought out their ideas for reaching uninvolved youth — "stoners" (kids on drugs), those who complain there's nothing to do and those who lie around and watch TV after school to the late show.

Among the ideas put forth was a recommendation for personal contact. "If you put up posters in the school, it's almost like a challenge to rip them down," a student commented, adding the posters were sometimes used to set fires in the waste baskets.

Tongue-in-cheek, YSN executive director Peter Gillespie duly noted the need for non-flammable posters.

"Kids go to the malls to relax and have a good time, so maybe they'd look at posters if they were put up in the malls," another commented while a third advised Mr. Gillespie to mix with youth at local football games.

Organized activities are available for those who want them. What is needed is an unstructured place to socialize, was yet another comment.

Rather than arrange things for people, YSN should make it known it was available to help people who had ideas of their own, members were told. "If it's pushed down their throats, they don't want it," a young girl said while another added: "If you see everybody else having fun, you join in."

A young man complained his latent leadership talents were not developed in school. "I was a stoner," he said. "Not once did a teacher come up to me to say my ideas were valuable to the community."

Young people in the audience wanted activities, such as the conference on youth and the law, to be spread around the region, citing transportation problems. They do not want to be bused to activities in other areas.

Ideas gathered at the meeting will be worked on at YSN planning committees and local sub-committees, Mr. Gillespie said.

### Award at Sheridan

Sherry Suttie of Milton will receive a secretarial award at Sheridan College in Oakville today (Wednesday).

The award, donated by Bell Canada, is given for outstanding academic achievement. It will be presented along with 22 other secretarial and business awards.

## Children's Aid needs volunteers

Halton Children's Aid is looking for volunteer drivers, to help them bring mothers and children to their offices in Burlington, or juveniles to court in Milton, and sometimes to programs in Georgetown.

The mileage is paid, so the volunteers, ideal for retired people, are not out of pocket. Of course they won't make money either, but the need is great and the job satisfying.

Frequently children have to be brought to Burlington once a week for perhaps eight weeks, and these children are surprised to find someone cares enough to do this for them.

"I can't begin to emphasize how important this work, and how necessary it is to the functioning of Halton

Children's Aid," stated Chris Armstrong, Volunteer Co-ordinator.

At present there are 80 volunteers involved, most of whom become so involved they stay with the job, and frequently assume other duties as well.

The play therapy sessions for troubled children are not frivolous. It is a way of getting to know the child who will not normally talk out their feelings.

There is also a need for volunteers for work with children once a week in Georgetown. The time requirements are flexible.

Anyone who feels they would like to help the Children's Aid should call Chris Armstrong at 878-2375.

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