



Overcoming handicaps. Heather Cole, a kindergarten pupil at Sunningdale School, sits on Annis Dixon's lap, as both watch and listen to Mary Ann Rae of Milton play her accordion. Annis Dixon, of Oakville a victim of multiple sclerosis and Mary Ann Rae, blinded at a very young age, discussed their handicaps with the school's youngest students.

(Photo by Ron Turenne)

Blind Milton woman helping kids understand disabled person's plight

by Wilma Blokhuis
What is a disabled person?

That question is the theme of a study program of the Kindergarten children at Halton's Sunningdale School, and their introduction of what International Year of Disabled Persons means. The program was spearheaded by the school's two Kindergarten teachers, Dolores Guthrie and June Fish, and was aimed at instilling an understanding in the young uninhibited minds of the school's Kindergarten pupils. They learned that a disabled individual is 'just like everybody else,' with similar interests, desires, hopes and feelings—and only appear different because of their visible disability.

A visit by two women—one blind and the other confined to a wheelchair, highlighted the children's study about the disabled. Last week, Annis Dixon of Oakville (who has a son at Sunningdale), a multiple sclerosis patient who calls her wheelchair "my best friend;" and Mary Ann Rae of Milton, a blind musician, came to chat with the children. Primary grade children were also invited, and hence, the auditorium was filled with curious and inquisitive little minds.

What is a disabled person? "A person who can't walk," was one answer. "Somebody who can't see," said another. A third stood up to say the "disabled are handicapped people."

Rather than just speaking to the children, both women encouraged the questions.

The first discussion was with Mary Ann Rae of Milton, who brought her accordion to entertain the children with some of their favorite songs. A self-taught musician, she also plays drums and chord organ. She led a band called the Radiants for two years, quitting in 1969. "I had a four-member band, and I was the only woman! We played within a 50-mile radius of Milton." Today she sings and plays for pleasure.

The children were enthralled with her music, and though she could not see it, every hand went up with enthusiasm upon mentioning familiar titles of songs they have learned in school. Yet, Mary Ann (as she wishes to be called) knew how the

things, and I'm very sensitive to the smell of food and spices. I just go ahead and prepare the food, just like mommy does.

Mary Ann Rae ended her discussion with the children by asking them to write her a letter. "Kids are not inhibited," commented Annis Dixon, who has been confined to her wheelchair for six years. She opened her discussion by asking the children responded, by singing and clapping along.

A sample of the children's discussion with Mary Ann Rae follows: How do you find your way around the kitchen? "When I go to a house, it takes me only 10 minutes to find everything. Once I'm used to the house, I can run up and down stairs. I enjoy baking, take care of my two dogs, wash dishes—I wash floors just like your mommy does at home."

Do you have any problems getting around?

"It is harder for me than for you, because you can see and I can't. God has given sight to some, and has taken it away from others. I haven't been able to see since I was a little girl. I grew up blind, and I'm used to it."

How did you get blind? "When I was a little girl, the doctor made a bad mistake, and put things into my eyes that were too strong and hot. My eyes were burnt out."

How do you read?

"I have a machine, a talking book machine, and I can get all kinds of books, and I can read them by earphone. I read just like you, except that I hear the words and you can see them."

How do you cross the street?

"I can see shadows, but not a shape or color. I listen for motors, and when I don't hear anything, and don't see any shadows, then I can cross."

Do you watch TV?

"I love TV, but I can't see the pictures. But, I do have pictures people give me, and I keep them. I really like Little House on the Prairie, and I can get an idea of what is going on from the music and the way people say things. I like it as much as you do."

How do you cook? "Easy. I don't cook anything special. I organize things, because I know the shapes of

children "why can't I walk?"

A variety of answers ranging from broken bones in the legs, to sore legs, ended with one boy standing up and saying "You have multiple sclerosis."

"My legs are weak," Annis Dixon replied. "I have a disease called MS—multiple sclerosis. When I left up my left hand, it is because my brain tells it to do this, through the nerves. Because I have MS, my nerves cannot tell my legs to work properly, so my muscles have become weak, and that's why I can't walk."

Was What is it like to be

in a wheelchair?

"It was hard at first. Six years ago, I used to walk, run and play games. In the beginning (six years ago), I was sad, but I have learned to do lots of things. I can drive." (She became a victim of the disease shortly after the birth of her six-year-old son Bryan).

How do you get MS? MS is not only in my legs, but in my whole body. It (affects) the spinal cord, which is straight down your back."

How do you get dressed? I get dressed like everybody else. I can

stand if I hold onto something. I can even walk a little bit, but it is safer to sit down, because I shake."

How do you get upstairs? "I live in a bungalow, so I don't have to worry. But if I lived in a big house with stairs, I would have an elevator, because I do have four steps leading to the side door."

How do you cook? "It is hard to reach into the bowls to stir, because I am sitting down. I get really tired."

Do you legs hurt? No, my legs are not sore. My muscles are

weak, so I can't walk. It is like being sick in bed for a long time, and when you get up, you feel weak. That's how my legs feel, they do not hurt, they just feel tingly. I have no broken bones."

How do you reach the gas pedal and the brake? "I don't drive with my feet. I have hand controls near the steering wheel."

Do you have any animals? No. Maybe I should get a dog to pull my wheelchair around!"

Newspaper's past reviewed by Nelson

Several green outfits appeared to honour St. Patrick at the W.I.'s March 17th meeting in Milton United Church Hall, chaired by Vice-President, Mrs. J. Hamilton.

Members enjoyed a delightful glimpse of the Burlington and Nelson of yesterday as told by Miss Marjorie Harris.

Growing up in Burlington as the daughter of the town's newspaper editor, Miss Harris was able to relate many items of interest gleaned from old copies of "The Gazette."

Recalling an earlier visit to Nelson, Miss Harris told of once being asked to judge a baking contest at the village fair, since she had recently graduated from McDonald Institute.

As she was tasting the entries, an indignant lady scolded her—not realizing that the tiny Miss Harris was sampling in a judicial capacity.

Mrs. Barbara Alton gave an informative report from a meeting with the Halton Board of Education at which she represented the W.I.

The purpose of the meeting was to gauge the reaction of lay persons to proposals for unifying courses of study for primary grades in Halton County.

Tentative plans were made for an all-day tour in June which will include a boat cruise on the Grand River.

Tickets will be available for anyone wishing to go along. Members also look forward to hosting a dessert luncheon and euchre party at the Boyne Centre on April 7th.

Council ban asked on wildlife in captivity

The Ontario Humane Society has asked for Milton's help to voice opposition to a proposal which would allow wild animals to be kept in captivity under certain conditions.

Tom Hughes, Executive Vice-President of the Ontario Humane Society, said his group had studied what might happen if suggestions of amending legislation to keep wildlife in captivity were approved, and found this suggestion should be turned down.

The proposals were made Aug. 25 by Ontario Minister of Natural Resources Jim Auld. Mr. Hughes' appeal to Milton came Feb. 16.

Mr. Hughes said he feels any changes would be unenforceable and that "in any case, it will encourage the proliferation of wild animals in captivity the majority of

which will be quickly rejected when they are found to be unsuitable as pets and will be brought to the humane societies and public grounds for destruction."

He said not only would the humane society be opposed to destroying the animals but it should be made known to the Minister and the public that animals "not be permitted to be taken into captivity in the first place, no matter how

Dollar man sought

Halton Region Conservation Authority is looking for a new financial administrator.

Dennis Veerasammy, who served in that capacity over the past two years, tendered his resignation last week.

His resignation was announced at a meeting of the entire Authority

cute or attractive" they are when young.

He said such animals should be "treated as wildlife and allowed to lead a normal life in the wild."

Other concerns expressed are that wild animals may be simply turned loose in cities to starve; might light to the creation of many "underfunded" private zoos, and would raise the spectre of rabies attacks.

Thursday evening by the organization's general manager Murray Stephen.

Mr. Veerasammy replaced Max Hatherley, who retired in the summer of 1978.

Mr. Stephen said the departure was "no reflection on the Authority."

Tenders for 401

Ontario Transportation and Communications Minister James Snow announced that tenders have been called for resurfacing on Highway 401 from 0.8 miles west of Highway 25 westerly for 3.5 miles.

This project is for resurfacing this section of Highway 401 to current design standards including partial paving of shoulders. These improvements will provide a smoother driving surface for the motoring public.

Tenders will be opened for this project at ministry headquarters in Downsview April 22.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION for September 1981 THE HALTON ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD

ADVANCED registration for those children who, in September 1981 will be attending kindergarten in the Separate Schools in Burlington, Oakville, Milton and Georgetown will be held at all Catholic schools on

Thursday, April 2nd, 1981
9:00 a.m. to Noon
1:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

AGE OF ADMISSION AND REQUIREMENTS

- Children are required to be 5 years of age on or before December 31st, 1981
- Birth and Baptismal Certificates
- Family O.H.I.P. Number

For further information, please contact the principal of your nearest Catholic school.

J.V. Sherlock, Chairman of the Board
C.G. Byrnes, Director of Education



A winner

Sean Foggin, 9, of Vanier Dr., Milton won the monthly McDonald's coloring contest and was presented with his prize of a Ronald McDonald wrist watch by Susan Neilson of McDonald's.

Five groups join

Five after-car agencies for offenders have joined forces for Community Corrections week in Peel.

From May 11 to 15, the Elizabeth Fry Society, Peel-Halton branch; The Bridge; the John Howard Society of Peel; the Salvation Army, Brampton; and the St. Leonard's Society of Peel will raise the consciousness of Peel citizens concerning viable alternatives to incarceration.

The Prison Arts Foundation has agreed to lend its exhibit of paintings by prisoners to the cause.

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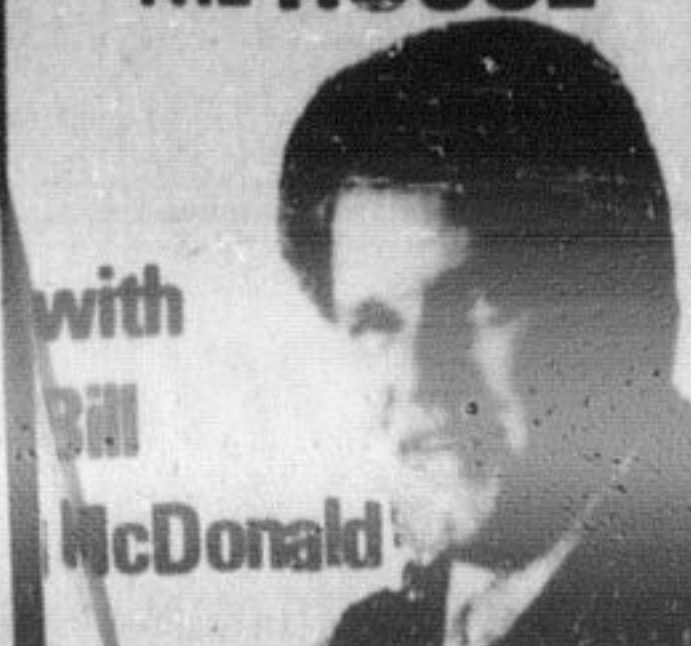
Specially tailored in a young men's fit in both seat and thigh. A 65/35 polyester/acrylic fabric that stands wear yet will always look fresh and neat. With extension waistband in 7 big spring colors. Sizes 28 to 38.

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- Milton Mall, Milton
- Burlington Mall, Burlington
- Hopedale Mall, Oakville

AROUND THE HOUSE



with McDonald's

Crude and healthy snacks placed in a low cabinet will encourage young children to help themselves.

When painting with a roller, place a roller tray in a large, sturdy plastic bag before pouring in the paint. Bag will flatten with weight of the paint and prevent the tray from getting messy.

When a rec calls for whole walnut meats, soak nuts in their shells overnight in a solution of salt and water. When shells are cracked, there's a good chance the meats will remain whole.

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