



Close inspection

David Verkerk takes a close look at the selection of stamps auctioned by Milton Stamp Club at Halton Centennial Manor recently. The club meets regularly on the last Wednesday of each month at the manor.

Love, not drugs needed by women

By JANE MULLER
Champion Reporter

Halton Women's Place has received considerable attention from many facets of the community but the hostel for abused women and their children is all but ignored by general practitioners.

This is a problem Jo Davis, the recently named director of Halton Women's Place, hopes to correct. She explains that almost all intakes have mentioned their situation to their family doctor. This fact indicates to Mrs. Davis that 90 per cent of referrals to the hostel should come from doctors. However, this is not the case.

Instead of a referral, battered women generally receive a prescription for sedatives. Mrs. Davis explains most of the women who utilize the facility have such drugs—although all do not take them.

She suggests if interest is created for one or two prominent doctors, a seminar could be organized to educate the medical community in the matter of wife battering and support agencies.

Mrs. Davis's history of involvement with Halton Women's Place includes volunteer work, employment as a staff member and several months as acting director. Working as a legal secretary for a time gives Mrs. Davis an understanding of the law, a somewhat frustrating facet of wife abuse.

The director admits the laws are in place to deal with this particular brand of assault but it is not being used to its full potential. A seminar organized by the shelter's board of directors last month brought the stumbling blocks which impede the courts and the victims to light.

Representatives from the legal profession, including a criminal court judge, lawyer and a Crown Attorney and a spokesman for law enforcement revealed the difficulties a victim of wife abuse faces.

One of the stumbling blocks Mrs. Davis would like to see removed is the waiting period, as long as a year or more, between the laying of a charge and the court date. By the time the case is to be heard a reconciliation can take place, usually not on the best of terms, or the women are subjected to repeated attacks in the interim.

A request has been made by the board of Halton Women's Place of Halton Regional Police to form a domestic response team and incorporate such a

team in the 1983 budget. In existence in some other municipalities, these teams generally consist of a police officer and a social worker.

A complaint heard at the recent seminar was the way in which police respond to domestic disputes and the lack of charges being pressed against the assailant.

These measures are a reflection of the hostel's changing role, says Mrs. Davis. Now that the hostel is established after two years of existence efforts are being made to "step out of the hostel and into the community."

Mrs. Davis has a theory concerning preventative measures which would check the symptoms of wife abuse. These measures should be based in education, according to the director.

"If you look at the types of courses available to girls in high school you'll see many are not relevant to their future," Mrs. Davis contends.

She suggests assertiveness training to develop self esteem could stop women from being "willing to become a possession."

"Marriage is a partnership, not possession," she said.

She feels that when women are looked at by their spouses as personal property it "gives the guy the idea that what he is doing (being abusive) is just fine."

"If they (women) get enough of a feeling of self worth they are certainly not going to become a victim," she said.

Mrs. Davis noted that prevention must be balanced. It must affect men as well in order to work. Self help counselling for batterers is just now beginning. In Halton, Dan Silvester has initiated a pilot program of self help.

"Not much has been done in that area," Mrs. Davis admits.

As the new director, she says only a few minor changes will be initiated at Halton Women's Place. She hopes the hostel will continue to have a high profile in the community it serves but admits they will have to remain active to succeed in this.

"One thing I don't want to attach to the hostel is that it is a feminist movement," stressed Mrs. Davis.

The path which residents chose to take is "strictly dictated" by themselves.



It is time to step out into the community according to Jo Davis, recently named director of Halton Women's Place. Now that the hostel for abused women and their children is well established, she will be trying to open new doors, some of which will lead to doctor's offices.

Boundary change

Milton could find itself as part of a brand new federal riding if proposed changes to local electoral boundaries are approved.

The proposed changes are part of a regular adjustment of federal ridings following information gleaned from the census conducted every decade.

In Halton's case, the new riding would be called Halton-Wentworth and would include the Town of Milton, Township of Flam-

borough and a portion of north Burlington.

The new riding would have a population of 81,736 and would be one of 10 new parliamentary seats created by the redistribution.

Under the new plan, Ontario would have 105 seats in the House of Commons.

Population changes in the area between Kitchener and Oshawa were the major reason for the redistribution, according to material provided by the Elec-

toral Boundaries Commission for Ontario.

The change would sever Milton from its traditional riding which includes Oakville and Acton.

Public hearings on the proposed changes will be held throughout the province in January and February to collect public reaction to the proposals.

Hearings in this area are slated for Hamilton, at the Royal Connaught Hotel, Jan. 14 starting at 9.30 a.m.

Religious right face new challenge

BY MARG LANGTON

A new group has formed to give members of the silent majority an organized voice.

Calling itself the Canadian Voice of Reason, the group is linked to a similar American organization that is trying to counteract the influence of the religious right-wing lobby that uses names like The Moral Majority to draw attention to its causes.

Voice of Reason member Nancy Harper, an environmental technologist at the Canadian Centre for Inland Waters feels, "the reasonable majority are often fragmented and the so-called moderate majority are not."

The group, which began in the Hamilton Unitarian Church, but is not restricted to church members, consists of people who want to make public answers to such figures as Renaissance International founder Rev. Ken Campbell of Milton.

Dr. Mel Weber, a research scientist who is chairperson of Voice of Reason explains their approach as one of keeping awareness of issues as they arise and feeding information to the press concerning immediate situations where action is needed. One of their first activities was to poll school librarians and principals in Burlington, Hamilton and Dundas about censorship of books in schools.

"We found there was no problem, that books are not being pulled off the shelves," Dr. Weber reports. "Halton is particularly sensitive to censorship because Ken Campbell tried to make it an issue five or six years ago."

Dr. Weber believes that the confrontation between Rev. Campbell and the school board forced the board to "get their thinking together" and to come out firmly against Rev. Campbell's approach. The Halton board now has written justifications on file for any book that might be considered questionable.

Anne Yarwood represented Voice of Reason in a television debate with Rev. Campbell on the Tom Cherington Show in

October. She has a Master's degree in religious studies from McMaster University, and is currently assisting with a course in religious studies on death and dying at McMaster.

"What made me disturbed and angry in the interview with Ken Campbell was the conspiracy he sees in universities and schools and all somewhat liberal institutions like the United Church," she recalls. His charge that these institutions have been corrupted by agents of the devil is one she finds "appalling" in light of the work for social justice that she sees them doing.

More information on Voice of Reason is available by calling 527-8441.

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