

Women's Centre loses funding

By **WILMA BLOKHUIS**
Special to *The Champion*

The Women's Centre in Oakville has lost its \$45,000 in annual core funding from the Ontario Women's Directorate effective tomorrow.

"We're shocked," said co-executive director Melvina Walter. "The Ontario Women's Directorate changed its funding formula last year, but we still meet most of the new criteria of promoting violence prevention and economic independence."

The centre, officially known as the Women's Support and Information Centre of Halton, learned the bad news September 21 "and we're still in shock," said Ms Walter.

She vowed the centre will continue to operate with funding it receives from the Trillium Foundation, the Oakville United Way and the Halton Healthy Community Fund and its own fundraising.

"But the \$45,000 we received from the Ontario Women's Directorate is our core funding, which pays our rent, utilities, administration costs and our part-time staff," said Ms Walter, adding the centre has between 35 and 40 volunteers, a number of them trained facilitators.

"We've had several calls from people who have heard about this, and they're in shock."

The centre is contacted, by phone and in person, by between 200 and 300 Halton women per month who need counselling for such things as abuse and job loss.

The funding cut was contained in a confidential fax sent to the centre, said Ms Walter.

The centre's board of directors met Monday night and has drafted a letter to the Ontario Women's Directorate asking for an explanation.

Ms Walter is seeking community support in hopes of reversing the Ontario Women's Directorate's funding decision.

Melanson seeks re-election in Ward 2

By **IRENE GENTLE**
The Champion

Once Ward 2 Councillor Art Melanson gets a taste for a thing, he hates to let it go.

Take Milton, for example, which he travelled to from the Maritimes to play on local sports teams in the late 1940s. Fifty-two years later, he's still here.

And take public life. Mr. Melanson ran for the first time in the late 1960s as a trustee for the separate school board. In 1970, he decided he liked it so well he was going to aim for town council. He won a place at the table, but retired in 1978 to run his own Main Street clothing store, Knight's Menswear.

"I was out until 1986," said Mr. Melanson, who places his age at somewhere in the seventies. "But the interest was always there. I was always a community-minded person."

He still is, and to prove it is running for another council term. If he succeeds, he plans to fight for the building of more arenas, parks, playing fields and ball diamonds in town. "We have to have places for children to play. Lit diamonds, since most of the activities take place in the evening."

If he gets re-elected, Mr. Melanson will also push for a beefed-up transit system.

"I don't think the dial-a-bus system is working at all," he said. "I'd like to scrap it right now. I think we have to bite the bullet and provide that service."



Art Melanson

The former merchant also has a keen interest in the durability of the downtown core, especially with growth peeking around the corner. "The downtown is very near and dear to me. There's going to be great things happening in the Main Street in the next year or so."

One difficulty faced by downtown merchants is the tendency of time-strapped people to shop where they work. Mr. Melanson learned that while toiling in menswear stores in Brampton and Oakville. "I've seen a lot of local clients and customers come to those stores. It's very difficult to keep that loyalty in the downtown core."

In his years around the council table, Mr. Melanson has helped shape the growth that will soon be busting down Milton's doors. And he wants to stay on board to keep it manageable. That means pushing developers to front-end growth and supply necessary recreational opportunities through parks and arenas, he said.

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