



# Champion COMMUNITY Page

## St. John's church members knitting for poor

By IRENE GENTLE

The Champion

**W**hen the nights are cold, it can make all the difference if hearts are warm.

So the members and friends of Nassagaweya's St. John's Anglican Church have been showing their hearts all year, one square at a time.

They're doing it by knitting adult-sized blankets to be distributed to the poor and homeless through the Wesley Mission in Hamilton.

"We began about January this year," said one of the project's principle knitters, Judith Reed. "It's actually quite a bit of work."

The blankets are knitted square by square, with about 56 needed to complete one cover.

About a dozen people have put together almost 20 blankets so far, which have been shipped out to Wesley for distribution.

"We chose Hamilton because we're in the diocese of Hamilton," said Ms Reed.

Since the blankets are made from donated or left-over yarn, it seemed appropriate to construct them one square at a time.

The result is an often brightly-coloured patchwork blanket that's both hand-made and toasty.

"I tell you something, these things are warm," said Ms Reed. "They wrap around your body and are really cozy."

They'd have to be. The initial idea behind the project was to hand the blankets out to those with little means in their own homes.

But the demand at the Wesley Mission changed that.

On some nights, up to 70 homeless people pile into the mission in search of a warmer place to sleep.

But with mats available for only 50, many are forced to lie on the floor when the demand is highest.

At those times, a St. John's blanket will provide some small comfort through the night.

"It really is an eye-opener," said Ms Reed.

"But it's better than being out in the street." Those making the blankets manage by knitting wherever possible. Ms Reed makes hers while manning the Halton Railway Museum and while watching TV.

"I'm one of those people who can knit without looking at what I'm doing," she said.

And the St. John's minister also helped keep the project growing.

"We got permission to knit squares while we listened to the sermon," said Ms Reed.

Though tackled largely by church members, the project has gained a non-denominational following. Not all participants belong to the Anglican church, and the Wesley Mission is affiliated with the United Church.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

St. John's Anglican Church members Joy Dougan (left) and Judith Reed are two of a team of parishioners and friends knitting blankets to keep the needy warm this winter.

But it was recommended as being the most appropriate place for the blankets.

"It's charity," shrugged Ms Reed. "It doesn't matter."

Though the blankets have already been dropped off to Hamilton — just in time to help the homeless who may have been displaced by the immense dumping of snow this week — the work continues.

Ms Reed plans on making some scarves and dropping them off over the holiday season. And

in January, many will likely resume their knitting all over again.

"We hope to continue, yes," said Ms Reed. "We could go buy blankets for \$10 or \$15 but they're not near as warm as these are."

And a trip to Wesley to drop off the bounty served to ease any concern about the mission itself.

"They have showers and laundry and serve lunch every day and a snack at night for the people staying there," said Ms Reed. "And I was so

impressed with how clean the place is. It's immaculate."

She was also happy to learn the mission has computers available to help people with job-searches.

"That, to me, is really important," said Ms Reed.

Anyone interested in helping out with knitting can call St. John's Anglican Church at 854-0785, or visit the church to pick up needles and yarn.



### It's Christmas On the Town!

The town is bright with christmas lights and sounds of celebration. The windows are a wonder, with their cheerful decoration. Peoples' hearts are happy, and joy is in the air. It's Christmas on the town tonight; It's Christmas everywhere! Our heartfelt thanks to all our friends, whether far or near. We wish you Merry christmas, and a wonderful new year!

From the staff of **The Canadian Champion**  
191 Main Street East, Milton 878-2341