

# Victims of crime should meet offenders

Unless he's needed as a witness, many victims of crime are only incidental to the justice system and that is wrong, according to Mark Yantzi.

A former probation officer, Mr. Yantzi is now director of the Kitchener based Victim-Offender Reconciliation Project.



MARK YANTZI

He explained the idea developed following a vandalism spree in the village of Elmira, which resulted in \$2,000 damage and 22 charges of wilful damage against two men.

"I was the probation officer doing the presentence report, and it was suggested to me that it might be a good idea for the victim and offender to meet and talk about what had happened," Mr. Yantzi said.

"I thought it was a good idea but, as a probation officer, I know it just wouldn't happen."

Inspired by the idea however, he included at the end of his presentence report on the pair "that it might be of some therapeutic value to have the victim and offender meet."

He even suggested it to the judge shortly before the final court appearance, where "at first he said he couldn't do it, but between then and the time he got into court he decided he could."

Those initial meetings produced some surprises, both for Mr. Yantzi and for the two offenders.

"Usually, we have this picture of the victims of a crime being very harsh and vindictive, but we also found there was a lot of understanding in some cases."

The experience of VORP, he said, points to a basic flaw in the way the justice system currently works.

"In our whole judicial system we have to get back to the idea of making right what was put wrong."

Mr. Yantzi explained that our justice system is currently laboring under two ideas of handling offenders—one holding that punishment is the answer, the other that rehabilitation is required.

"What both of these extremes have in common is that they forget about the person and what he has done and how that can be put right again," he said.

# Life of crime simply "a game for losers"

Getting involved in crime simply starts you in "a game for losers," according to parole and probation officer Dave Kiddle.

Mr. Kiddle, resident parole officer at Milton's Maplehurst Correctional Centre, told a weekend seminar at the facility that one small crime can be the start of a "lengthy process involving a number of people you have never met."

The crime, however small, will have a great effect on society as a whole and on the family of the criminal, he said.

"There are a great many people involved in this process, the police, lawyers, judges, parole and probation officers, jail guards and many other government officials," he said.

Perhaps the people who suffer most from the process are the family of the criminal.

The involvement, Mr. Kiddle said, many start the night of the arrest when they are asked to sign guarantees for bail to get their relative out of jail.

"Later, they may have to accept a much lower standard of living or even go on welfare, while you're in jail," he told a mixed group of prisoners and correctional workers.

"The wife and family of an offender go through a very bad time," he said. "In many ways it is harder than what the prisoner experiences because he is isolated from the results of his actions."

This strain on the family, he said, contributes to high divorce rates for prisoners and adds to welfare costs for the society as a whole.

"Even after he is released there may be problems," Mr. Kiddle said, adding that former prisoners can have trouble locating jobs and being bonded for a period after their release.

"The amount that was stolen may be very small compared to what the person who was convicted has to pay," he said.

"What is the end product of all the labor resulting from that one small act?"

# Champion Report:



STEVE ARNOLD

Champion News Editor Steve Arnold attended a panel discussion Saturday at Maplehurst Correctional Centre about crime—the offenders and the offended. Speakers included probation officers, convicts and ex-convicts. Steve filed this mini-report on the days' activities.

# A prisoner's way back into society

Paul is amazed almost every morning by the way his life has changed since the three years he spent in the Joyceville Penitentiary.

His last arrest and sentence, an 8-year stretch for bank robbery, was by no means the first time he had an inside look at correctional institutions in Canada.

Today, crime is behind him, thanks to a program called Seven Steps to Freedom.

Paul, who prefers that his last name not be used because he doesn't want to jeopardize the job he now holds, devotes a great deal of his spare time now to helping other prisoners realize the steps to freedom that he found during that stretch in prison.

"Every day I want to get out of Seven Steps, but I realize that if I do there's a chance that I'll start to go back the other way," he said as part of a panel discussion on the program conducted last week at the Maplehurst Correctional Centre.

Paul was one of four convicts serving time in Joyceville, near Kingston, when he helped to start the seven steps program.

The essence of the program is that convicts have to accept responsibility for their actions and for the conduct of their lives in the future.

Unlike other more religious programs it relies heavily on the individual and his acceptance of responsibility. It does, however,

acknowledge a power, which can help with a person's load of responsibility.

Paul shared his time on the panel with his wife Joan, two Maplehurst inmates, probation officer Dave Kiddle and Victim-Offender Reconciliation Project director Mark Yantzi.

According to Paul, as many as 90 per cent of all prisoners, marriages break up during the time he is in prison. Her experience shows why.

"It was a great shock the last time Paul was arrested, not just to me but to the rest of the family to," she said.

Joan described how police surrounded her home and finally burst in to arrest her husband on three counts of bank robbery.

"I didn't know what was happening and I was very angry because I thought they were picking on him," she said.

Her anger spilled over into the courtroom where she was once removed because of her emotional outbursts during the trial.

When her husband was sent to the Kingston area to serve his prison sentence, she faced many more problems than she experienced during the early stages.

"We all suffered physically, emotionally and financially from that experience," she said, describing how she struggled every week not only to make the decisions that had once been handled by her husband.



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LET A "PRO" SELL IT by JACKIE VERDURMEN

Selling your home yourself is no easy undertaking. Basically, it means attracting the right prospects—people who are ready, willing and financially able to buy. Not those who are curious to see what your furniture looks like from the inside.

You can attempt to make this sale yourself, or you can have someone else handle the difficult negotiations. Frankly, the best way to market your home—probably your most valuable asset—is the

professional way. Just as you would go to a doctor or a lawyer for medical or legal aid, you will want to go to a professional Realtor for assistance in selling your home.

His technical skill, business experience, list of bona fide prospects, contacts with financial institutions, and professional reputation are all at your disposal to expedite the sale of your home at the best possible price. This is the reason why—nationally—75 percent of all homes are sold through professionals.

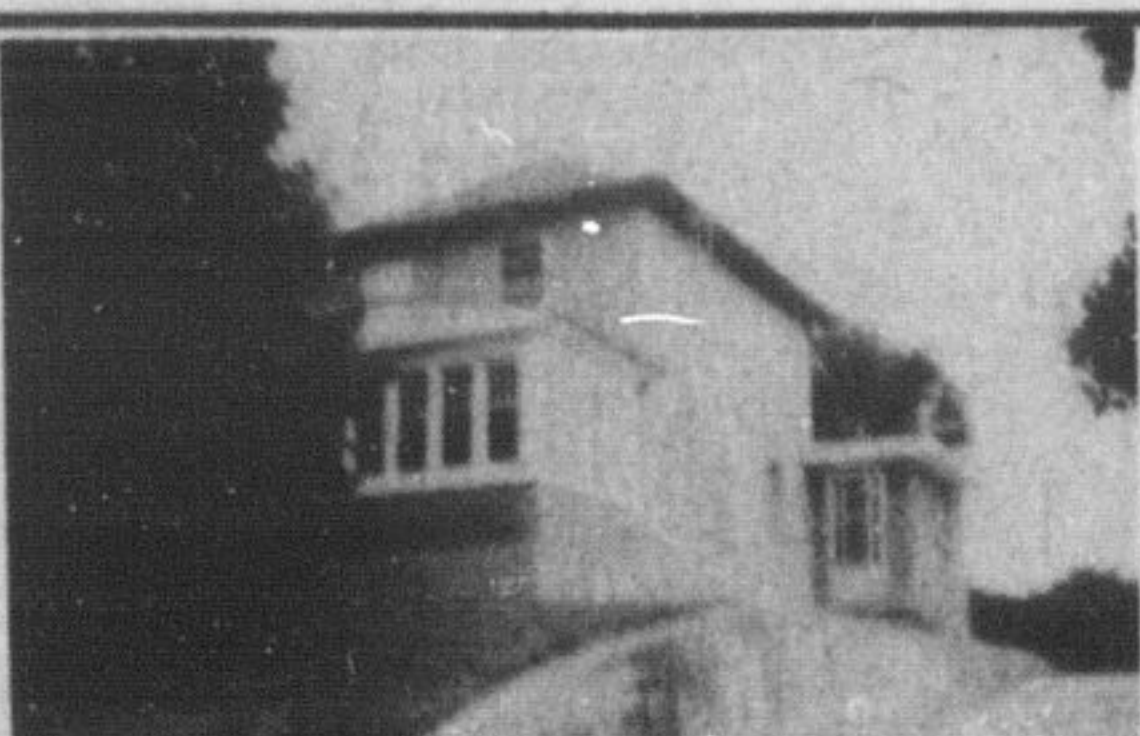
### YOUR PICK OF THE WEEK



—Tastefully decorated Brick Bungalow  
—Large eat-in kitchen  
—Extra insulation  
—Large fenced in yard  
—Partial finished basement  
—11 1/2% mortgage



—Newly listed backsplit that's a pleasure to show  
—Large eat-in kitchen  
—Extra insulation  
—Large fenced in yard with fruit trees  
—Mortgage at 10 1/4% till 1983  
—To view these excellent buys call Jack or Bonnie at 878-0565 or 878-6955.



**IF MORTGAGES COUNT! COUNT THIS ONE**  
This two story stone older home has a large 13 1/2% mortgage till August 1985. For all the other pluses of this home call Bonnie or Jack 878-0565 or 878-6955.



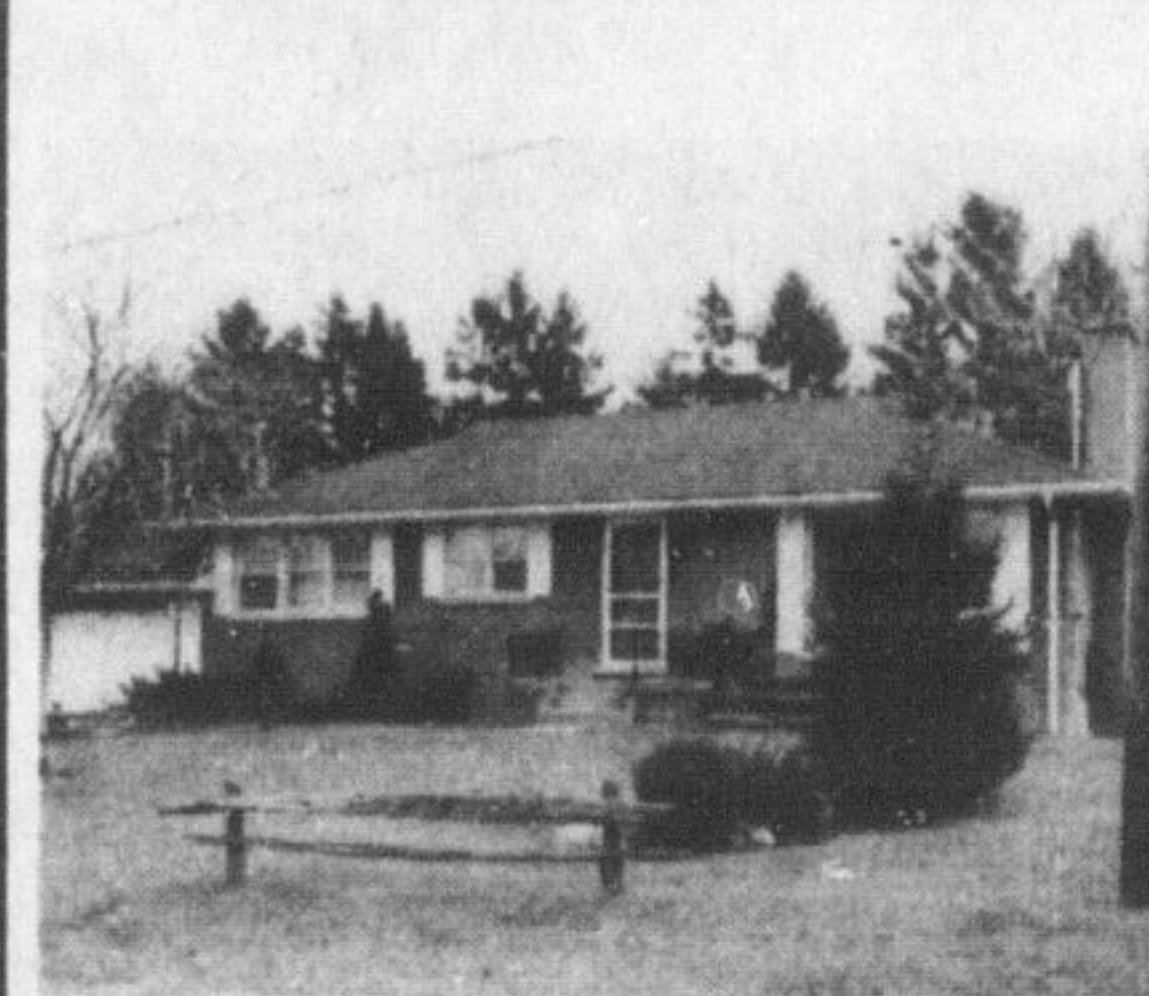
**CHARMING BACKSPLIT**  
You'll see the value in this lovely 3 bedroom backsplit, conveniently located close to schools, shopping and the GO Train. Call Stella Parton at 878-0565 or 622-1122.

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Building—5 apartments  
Rejane Petroff 878-8282 or 878-0565 or Janice McMaster 878-2942 or 878-0565.

### A GOOD LIFE AT ITS BEST



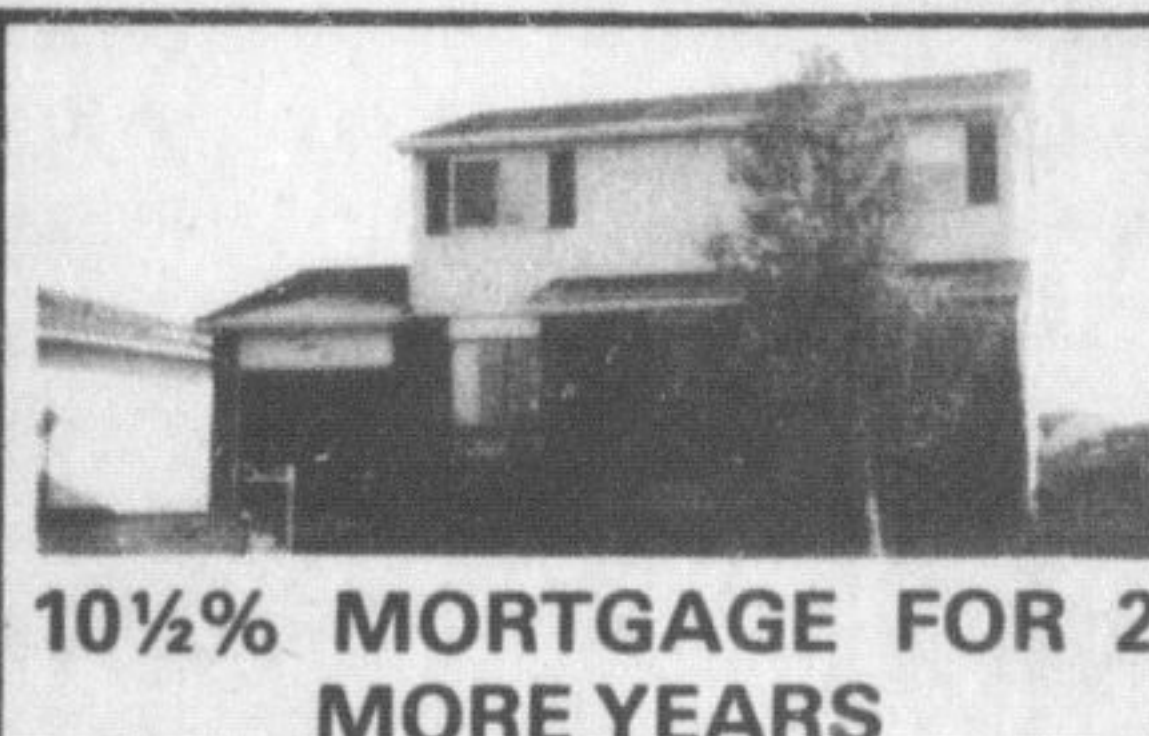
**ALL LOTS ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL**  
This three bedroom house is situated on an extra large lot, eat-in kitchen, plus wood burning stove in basement. Close to schools and GO transportation. For more information call Janice McMaster 878-2942, 878-0565 or Rejane Petroff 878-8282, 878-0565.



**IMAGINATION WON'T DO IT**  
You must see inside this beautifully decorated 3 bedroom Cape Cod home with eat-in kitchen, den or family room, pine staircase leading to large recreation room with stone fireplace and wet bar, large Play room, professionally landscaped yard, fully fenced. Plus many extras. To view call Rejane Petroff 878-8282, 878-0565 or Janice McMaster 878-2942, 878-0565.



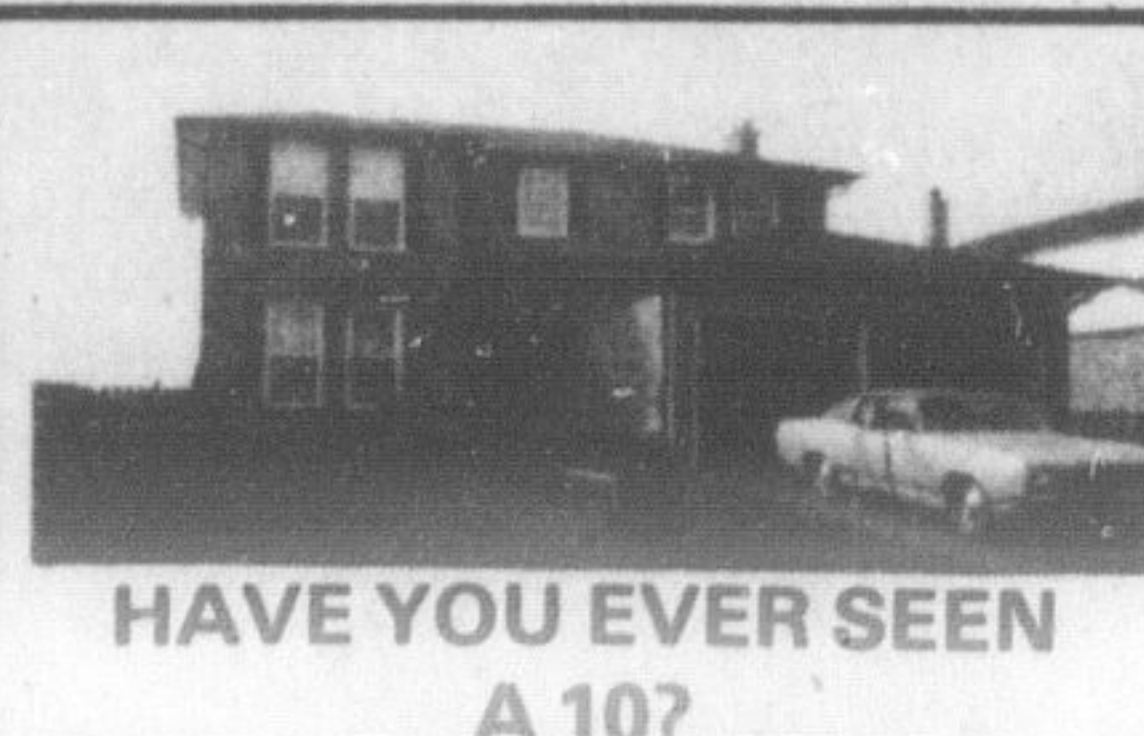
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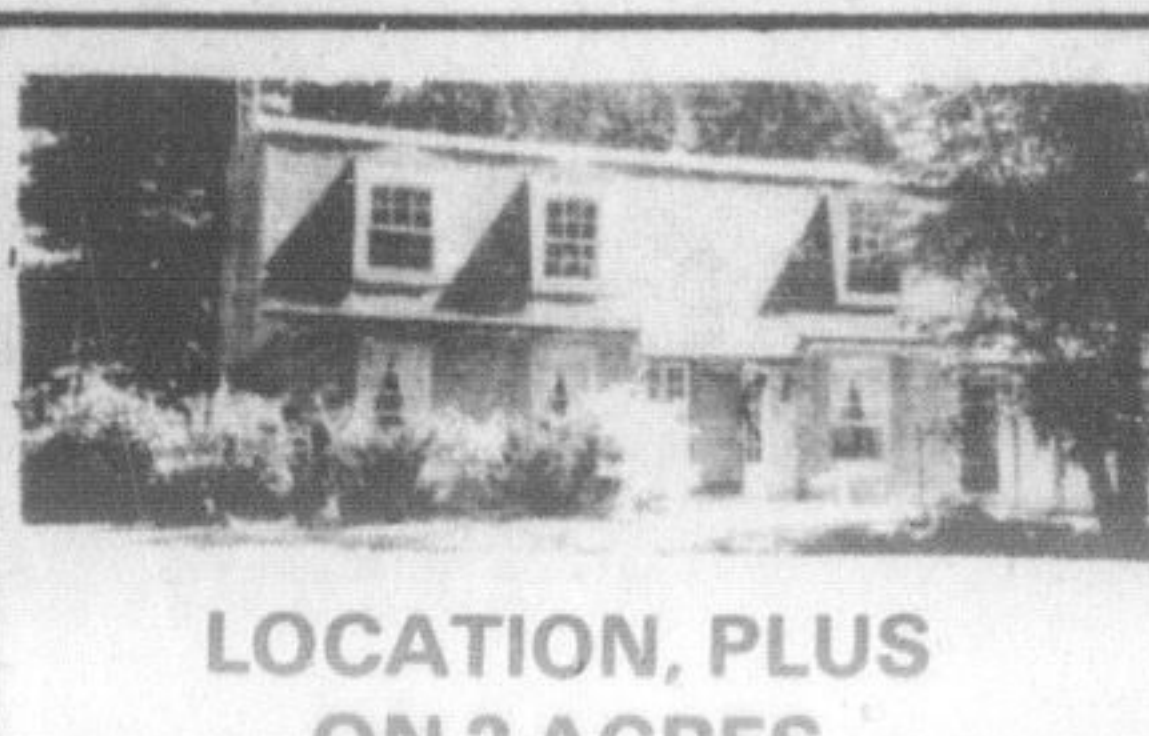
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