



Photo by JOHN WARREN

Eight-month-old Claton Deathe sure loves his mom's job. Elayne Deathe of Milton works for Discovery Toys Canada Inc., which sells educational toys, books and games. Here, Claton tries out marbleworks.

Her toys help kids learn and grow

By KAREN SMITH

Elayne Deathe really stands behind her products.

The Milton mother was a regular customer of Discovery Toys Canada Inc. for six years before becoming an educational consultant with the company seven months ago.

The Oakville-based company markets educational toys, books and games that you won't find in stores for children of all ages. They are unique, Mrs. Deathe says, because most of them are multi-purpose so children stay interested.

The toys keep parents and local daycare centres and nurseries happy too, she adds, because they are safe and durable as well as educational.

"The toys speak for themselves," she says. "We really put a lot of emphasis on co-operative games which encourage sharing."

The number of home demonstrations Mrs. Deathe attends is an indication of how popular the toys are. At least twice a week, she visits homes where people have gathered to learn about the products.

"It's nice to see people as excited about the toys as I am," says Mrs. Deathe, who holds a diploma in early childhood education.

During the nine years she worked in the field, Mrs. Deathe noticed that

children became bored with certain toys after a short period of time. She says that's one of the reasons she purchased Discovery Toys for her eight-month-old son Claton and her nieces and nephews, who are entertained for hours.

Among the frequent sellers, Mrs. Deathe says, is a picnic tote made in Denmark which holds four place-settings including forks, spoons, knives, plates and glasses with lids and straws. This toy encourages dramatic play, socialization and one-to-one correspondence.

Another popular item is marbleworks, a construction toy which involves sending marbles

through tunnels, into hoppers, over bridges and around circular chutes. This toy demonstrates cause and effect and principles of gravity and motion.

Owned by an American, Lane Nemeth, the company started in the United States in 1977 and expanded to Canada three years ago.

Mrs. Deathe is planning to hold a Discovery Toys open house Sunday, Feb. 11 at her Third Line home from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Products will be on display and visitors will have a chance to win door prizes — toys of course.

For more information, contact Elayne Deathe at 878-2670.

Region looking for brave people

The Halton Region Safety Council is seeking brave people.

Nominations are being accepted for awards which recognize citizens who have performed an act of bravery in the saving or attempted saving of lives during 1989.

Also being accepted are nominations for individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to public safety over and above any job requirements.

Nominations should include the name and address of the nominee with a brief description of why they should receive the award, and sent by February 15 to: Constable Jocelyn Eastwood of the Halton Regional Police (12 Division), 155 King Street, Milton, Ont., L9T 1K1.

All nominations will be forwarded to an awards committee and winners will be honoured at a banquet at the Muddy Duck Banquet Hall in Milton March 30.

Court staff gathers to thank Lil Houston

Milton resident Lil Houston, Halton County's first lady court constable, has retired after 36 years, four months and three weeks of service.

"She's been a citizen who has served her community and country well... an exemplary woman," retired county court Judge Alan B. Sprague told a gathering of about 60 of Lil's family, friends and co-workers last Friday.

"Lillian, we are all going to miss you so much... I hope you come back as often as you want," district court Judge James Carnwath said on behalf of the gathering in the courthouse for the afternoon tea.

Halton County Law Association treasurer David Harris presented a plaque to Lil in appreciation of her "amiability, courtesy and diligence."

"This is the first time I've been lost for words," replied Lil.

Lil began her career at the old county courthouse and jail, where the town's offices are today, on August 3, 1953. She held the title of assistant matron and was paid \$2.50 per day.

"Women had just been permitted to sit on juries," said Lil in an interview. When she began working as a matron, the courthouse was a couple of blocks from her home.

Part of Lil's routine during any jury trial was to lead jurors in and out of the courtroom. Juries have a special room near the courtroom. She, like the jurors, listened to all the evidence, but she never gave them her opinion. She has her own views on some trials, but she kept them to herself, at least during this interview.

When jurors were deliberating about the verdict in their courthouse room, Lil made sure no one bothered them. When jurors failed to reach a verdict during the day they were kept overnight in a hotel, and Lil had to stay with them to ensure they were left alone.

The trial Lil remember's best is the one that upset her the most. A truck driver with a load of steel had been unable to stop in time to miss a small car that was carrying a mother, her father and her child. The mother survived the crash, however she witnessed the fiery deaths of her son and father.

During the trial, Lil was on hand to take care of the mother. But the survivor had to testify. "When we had a recess, she was crying and I was crying. I tried to comfort her... That was very, very upsetting."

One of the longest trials Lil was on



Lil Houston is retiring after 36 years of service.

duty for was that of Milton businessman Louis Nadalin in 1984. The fraud conspiracy trial involving more than \$7 million of investors' funds went on more than three months. The shortest jury trial she was present for lasted two days.

In the old days, some judges demanded that witnesses and jurors be properly dressed before entering the courtroom, but not everyone came to court in their Sunday best. "At one time a lady always had to wear a hat. You couldn't go in without a hat. And some judges insisted men had to wear a suit jacket, shirt and tie. They don't now," said Lil.

To ensure that the dress code was complied with, courthouse staff had an assortment of clothing that would be lent to those lacking a tie, hat or jacket.

Winters for Lil have become a real bother. Snow plugs up the driveway and it is difficult for her or her husband of 55 years, Cliff, to shovel. Last winter was particularly bad. Lil walked from her green painted house beside the United Church, on Main Street, across town to work at the Steeles Avenue courthouse. She did that trek just the one time.

"Punctual, loyal, and always alert" runs one of the lines in a poem about Lil read aloud at her retirement party by long-time court official Mel Dunn.

For her party, several former employees and friends returned to the courthouse to welcome Lil to their ranks. Lil, a tall, slender lady, will be 75 years old in July.

"I loved working up there. I just loved meeting the people. I'd still be there if I wasn't so old," she said, gently self-mocking. Although she is somewhat reluctant to leave the job she did so well for 36 years, Lil's sense of loss can only be lessened by the fact that so many well-wishers



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