

Realty office closes

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claims that as his primary interest. Mr. McCrudden's acquisition beefs up his sales force in a tough market and gives him a fancier address closer to the downtown core.

The five full time NRS agents will move to Realty World and are expected to take most, if not all of their listings with them. "To date we've picked up all their listings," Mr. McCrudden said. Vendors have the option of dropping their listings if agents switch firms, but such is usually not the case. People are accustomed to dealing with their agents and tend to accept such moves, both men said.

Mr. McCrudden said "no money is being paid out" in the arrangement, which essentially sees Realty World assuming the NRS operating costs in return for more troops and what Mr. McCrudden acknowledged is a better suite of offices. "My offices are not the most superb. They get me by."

He hopes the move will bump his 1990 sales to 160 transactions from 125 in 1989, which in turn is double his market share from three years before, Mr. McCrudden said. The deal is to close July 1. With the staff acquisition Mr. McCrudden hopes to "personally focus more on running the office than selling."

For Mr. Mallalieu it is "simple economics. The market is tough all across the province, across the country. Real estate sales are down 30-odd per cent, I think it is. Real estate incomes are severely down. You cannot continue to operate if you don't have income."

The added staff gives Realty World "about 20" agents, Mr. McCrudden said. The additional staff plus their listings expand Realty World to "third or fourth in size" locally.

That does not mean any radical shift in marketing for Mr. McCrudden. "One step at a time." He does plan, however, to target "a little more commercial" sales into his mix. Currently Realty World's business is approximately 80 per cent residential, he said.

"I'll end up working with Jack (Mr. McCrudden)," Mr. Mallalieu said. His efforts will probably be devoted primarily to property management, which he considers more rewarding. Mr. McCrudden praised that as "a hell of a strength," which "fits in quite well" with Realty World efforts to diversify.

Oakville, Milton and District Real Estate Board president Anell Francis characterized the news as a shrewd move in a slow market. In the case of some smaller firms, "those that are merging are sensible. I think all brokers are looking at costs. No one really felt the market would come to such a slowdown in numbers."

Lots of roadblocks

A frustrating walk in seniors' shoes

By JANE MULLER

One water wing, one set swim goggles tinted yellow, one each wrist and ankle weight, ear plugs, surgical gloves, cane and shopping list... it's standard equipment for walking a mile in the shoes of an elderly person.

Going that mile was an experience filled with frustration and some humiliation for participants in a workshop designed to give the able-bodied a taste of the physical degeneration they can expect as they age. The *Through Other Eyes* session at Milton Mall on Monday opened the eyes of participants to the challenges the elderly face.

Try finding a set of baby sleepers in the right size when your vision is impaired. Margaret Strecker, Halton Centennial Manor administrator, was to find a 12-month size.

"I couldn't read the labels so I just grabbed one that looked big. I figured the kid would grow into it," she said after the exercise ended.

Try balancing a full shopping basket and a cane while locating the 500 ml bottle of shampoo. It's not so bad when one's cane is simply a prop but in reality the cane would be needed for support. That's the realization Helena Moniz, marketing manager for the mall, came to as she laboured through her task at an unaccustomed slow pace.

Gained empathy

Phil Adams, special advisor to the Office for Senior Citizens' Affairs, gained a new empathy for those his provincial government department serves. He was on hand to officially kick off Seniors Awareness Week in Halton and to take part in the simulation exercise.

He commended the Region for its initiatives related to services for seniors.

"Every rock we turn over it seems Halton has been there and gone down the road with it," said Mr. Adams.

Kudos were also thrown in the Region's direction for its implementation of the Good Neighbours program. This initiative is aimed at encouraging neighbourly attitudes and deeds toward the frail and disabled. Each workshop participant wore a Good Neighbours t-shirt to promote the most recent project of the Region's Elderly Services Advisory Committee (ESAC).

Among those wearing the t-shirts was regional and local councilors Brad Clements and Bill Johnson. Mr. Clements and Royal Bank manager Paul Spizeli were at a greater disadvantage than most of their workshop counterparts as both are "non-shoppers".

But even for the seasoned shoppers like Halton Regional Police deputy chief Bob Middaugh, the trappings of old age made the task

difficult. The goggles he wore restricted his vision to the point that items high on the shelves could not be identified.

For Pat Hillhouse, chairperson of the Halton Board of Education, encountering mall shoppers with legitimate disabilities was embarrassing.

The consensus among simulation participants was that the visual and audio impairments caused the most frustration. Workshop coordinator Wendy Leaver, a detective sergeant with the Peel Region police, explained that the limitations old age brings can cause seniors to become isolated. They don't want to be faced with the obstacles that *Through Other Eyes* brought to the attention of Monday's participants.

Asked for help

Many participants admitted to asking for help in finding items. Ms Leaver was quick to ask if this was normal behaviour and each said it was.

She then indicated that older people who can't function without help often don't ask because they never would have before they became frail.

Rose Harrison, manager of seniors' services at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, took asking for help one step further. She enlisted the help of ESAC chairperson Dr. Greg Thomson to help carry her heavy shopping basket around Shoppers Drug Mart Pharmacist Gary Banks confessed to giving his list to store staff and having them bring items to him.

That could have been the tack of Halton North MPP Walt Elliot as well. But he did the shopping for himself and said that as a youngster he did the same for his elderly aunts and uncles to earn his allowance. Monday's exercise reinforced the significance of that service to his relatives — which he continues to perform today.

In addition to finding all the items on a shopping list the participants were instructed to find and use a public telephone. It was noted that signs are needed to indicate the location of telephones in the mall and that Bell Canada should enlarge the print in the directories.

Mall manager Marianne McDougall admitted the mall could do a better job with signs indicating the location of washrooms.

The Office of Senior Citizens' Affairs co-sponsored the *Through Other Eyes* workshop along with ESAC as part of Halton-wide Seniors Awareness Week activities. Milton Mall, Zellers and Shoppers Drug Mart were co-hosts and European Pastries supplied the refreshments.



Photo by JOHN WARREN
Greg Thompson and Rose Harrison struggle through their shopping lists as participants in a simulation exercise that let them see through the eyes of the elderly.

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