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Report decriminalizes wife assault: Greer

By KIM ARNOTT
Special to *The Champion*

The executive director of Halton Women's Place has wasted no time in letting politicians know what she thinks of kicking abused women out of crisis shelters after 48 hours.

In fact, Theresa Greer has already sent a four-page letter to the government and arranged a meeting with the region's four MPPs to discuss the recommendations contained in a controversial report commissioned for the Harris government.

The recently-released report suggests battered women should leave shelters within two days, solicit help from neighbours in protecting themselves and consider not filing criminal charges against their spouses.

"The idea of decriminalizing wife assault is absolutely ridiculous and a tremendous step backward," said Ms Greer. "We need to recognize that wife assault is a criminal assault and it is a crime."

Halton Women's Place, which offers crisis services to abused women locally, was



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.....
- THERESA GREER

not consulted by the authors of the report, which Ms Greer said "seemed to come right out of the blue."

Ms Greer said women are staying in the two Halton shelters (one in Milton and one in Burlington) for longer periods of time than they did three years ago because of welfare cuts and a lack of affordable housing in the area.

Three years ago, the average stay in the two shelters operated by Halton Women's Place was 14 days. This year, the average stay was 30 days.

Abused women who seek shelter need time to obtain restraining orders, get legal advice, deal with custody issues and find housing, said Ms Greer.

The idea that women should get a restraining order, "which is often not worth the paper it's written on," then return home within 48 hours is clearly unreasonable, she added.

And while she believes women and children should not be forced from their homes by abusive spouses, Ms Greer said women often do not receive the necessary financial support to stay in the family home.

"In theory, it sounds great, but where's the support for that?" she asked.

Halton Women's Place has provided emergency shelter to 304 women and 452 children as of mid-December.

The Burlington shelter has 20 beds and Milton has 14 beds.

The organization has also answered more than 1,900 crisis phone calls and dealt with more than 35,000 information and referral requests.

Ms Greer also said she was pleased with plans by Halton Regional Police to establish an officer liaison program for the local women's shelters.

According to Police Chief Peter Campbell, two Halton officers will be assigned to make regularly scheduled visits to the shelters in order to meet with

• see SHELTER on page 10



Photos by GRAHAM PAINE

U-Haul

Two-year-old Taylor Alexander discovered a little snow and his mom Sharlene were the right combination for enjoying winter near Laurier Avenue and Commercial Street Saturday. Mild temperatures made the runs more comfortable but the fun short-lived.

Brown or Reed?

Which MP are you going to call?

By BRAD REAUME
The Champion

Who you gonna call?

Halton-Peel MP Julian Reed isn't necessarily the contact for Miltonians with a federal case despite the change in riding boundaries that take effect January 9.

He can be your man in Ottawa if you want him to be, he said. However, if you've been dealing with Oakville-Milton MP Bonnie Brown then to avoid confusion you should continue to use her as your contact, the long-time politician said.

Confusion has arisen because riding boundaries have changed substantially in southern Ontario due to

population growth. Milton will fall into a new riding of called Halton that will be in place for the next federal election, which could occur as early as the spring of 1997 or as late as the fall of 1998. Until that time, the old riding boundaries prevail.

Julian Reed, the current MP for northern areas of Halton and Peel, will run in the new Halton riding, which is similar geographically to the provincial riding Mr. Reed at one time represented. Generally the riding is north Halton as far south as Upper Middle Road in Burlington and Oakville.

Ms Brown will run in the new Oakville riding, which consists of the heavily populated sections of Oakville.

Hospital welcomes new administrator



Allan Halls

The Milton District Hospital Board of Directors has appointed Allan Halls as the new executive director succeeding Brian Brady.

Norm Flemington, chairman of the hospital board, announced the appointment following the recommendation of a board-appointed search committee.

Mr. Halls holds a bachelor's degree in economics from Wilfred Laurier University and received his masters

degree in Science, Health Administration from the University of Toronto in 1982.

He held positions as assistant administrator at Cambridge Memorial Hospital from 1982 to 1985 and assistant executive director of Norfolk General Hospital from 1985 to 1991.

Since 1991, he has served as executive director of Clinton Public Hospital.

Mr. Halls will commence his duties at Milton District Hospital on February 3.

NEWSLINES

Visit town hall for levee today

Milton residents of all ages are invited to this afternoon's (Wednesday) traditional New Year's Levee at the Town Hall.

Mayor Gord Krantz and local councillors will host the event, which runs from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. The theme of this year's levee is local art. A mixed media of local current and historical artists will be set up.

Tours of the municipal building will also be held. Complimentary refreshments will be provided by the Milton Historical Society as well as councillors' families.

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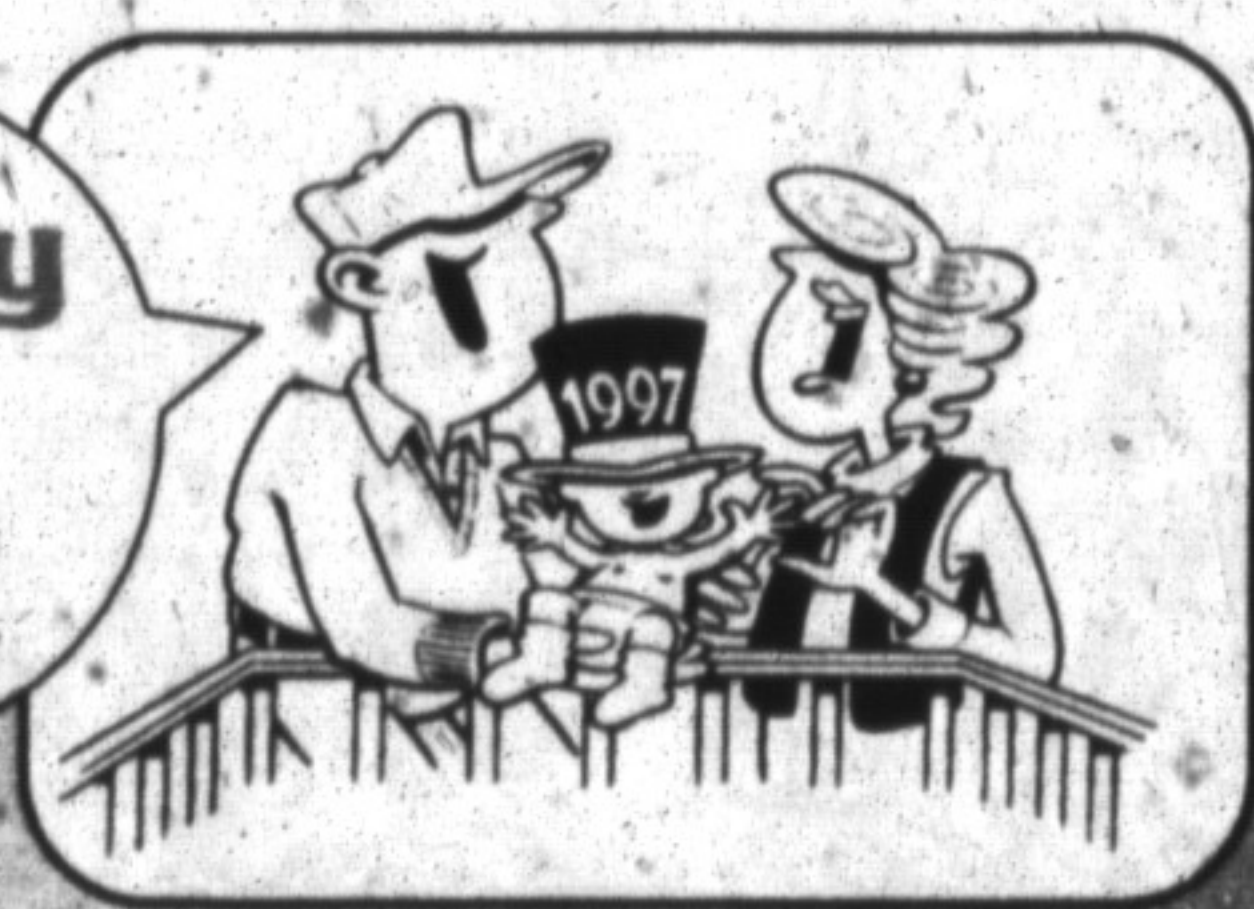
MILTON MALL

Open Dec. 31 9:30 - 6:00
Closed January 1st

WITH OUR THANKS

A new year is a new beginning, and we wanted to start off right by expressing our appreciation for your valued support. Hope the New Year brings all kinds of great things for you and yours.

Happy New Year!



Looking forward to serving you for many more years.