

Is your teen driving you nuts? This may help

By **KAREN SMITH**
The Champion

Parents ready to tear their hair out can vent their frustrations while learning what kids are up to these days through PEP.

Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) — a Milton-based support group made up entirely of parents — meets regularly to discuss their problem kids as well as keep up to date on what's happening among local youth.

"The idea is to come out and talk to everyone else," says Ellen Cavan, a PEP co-founder.

Frustrated parents of youths ranging in age from 12 to 18 come to the group complaining about their runaway children. Others are con-

cerned that their kids are using drugs or stealing. And some parents are at their wit's end because their children are skipping school and are just generally defiant.

"They're so wrapped up in themselves they can't see past their noses," Ms Cavan says.

"I've been through it. I can help somebody else," adds Brenda Strode, another co-founder who regularly attends the group's twice-monthly meetings.

Meetings also serve as networking sessions so parents — many whose children are friends — are aware what's happening among youths.

For example, parents can pass information on to each other about places and practices they have found to be questionable.

"Otherwise you take your kid's word for it and that's not always accurate," Ms Strode says.

PEP believes disputes between parents and youth occur universally, however Milton is prone to problems for two reasons that feed each other. Milton has a large youth population, but few outlets for recreational activities, Ms Cavan says. Therefore, many kids look for trouble out of boredom.

The behaviour difficulty is "not coming out of our homes," adds Ms Strode. While problems vary from family to family, unruly teenagers have the same things in common, said Ms Cavan. They all exhibit a lack of respect for authority and have short attention spans.

These days Ms Strode says, the problems she

dealt with have been resolved — something most other troubled parents can eventually look forward to. "It's nice to know there is a light at the end of the tunnel."

Next week PEP will enter into a new phase. The organization will hold its first special information session — Parents Drug Awareness Night. The event, in which Halton Regional Police will teach parents all about the drugs their kids could be using, will be held Monday, Jan. 22 at 7:30 p.m.

The session takes place at John Martin House on Margaret Street. The facility is also home to PEP's meetings every second and fourth Monday of the month. For information, call Ms Cavan at 875-4894 or Ms Strode at 878-7790.

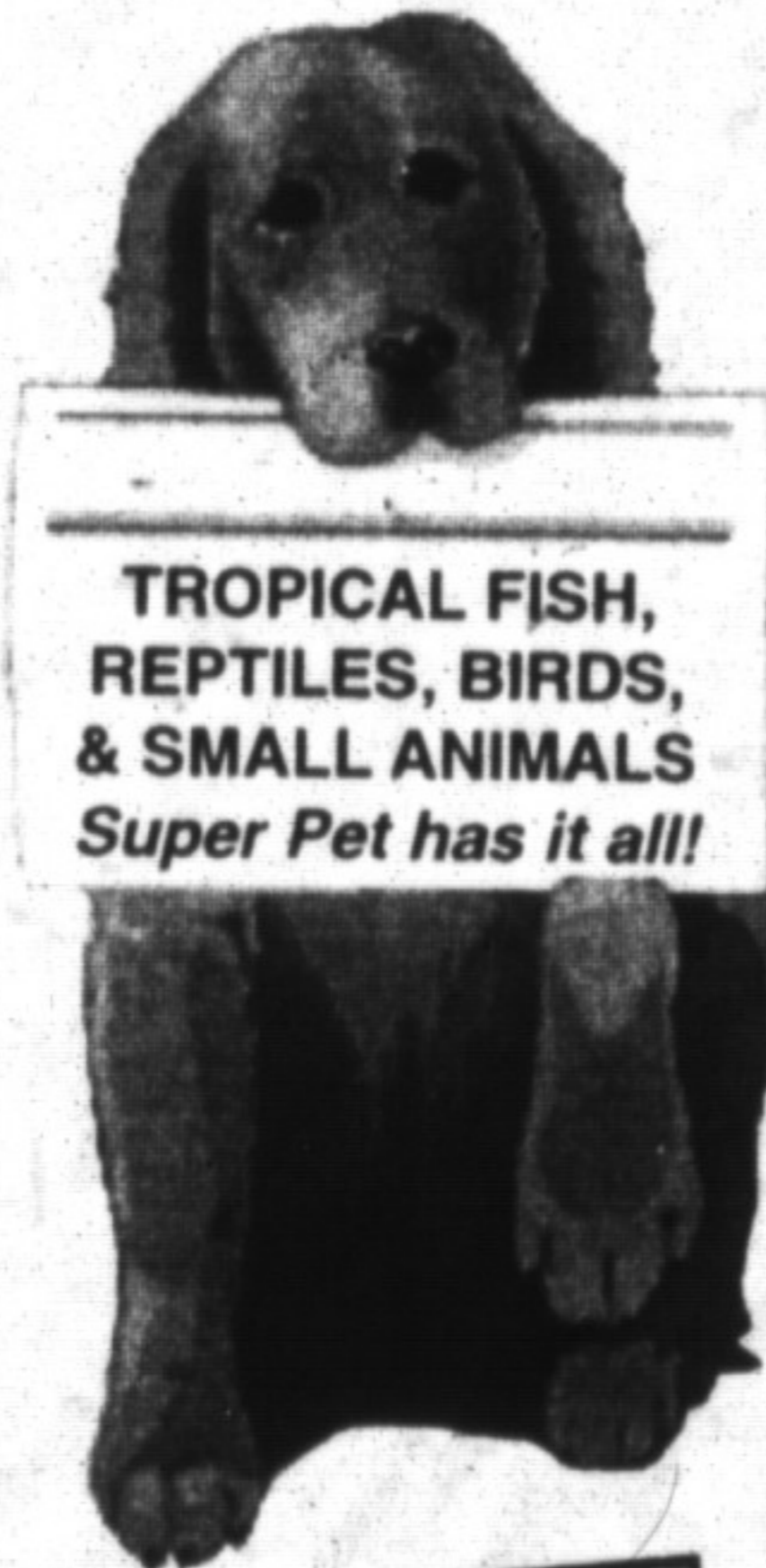
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Volunteers wanted to bolster morale in moms

The Halton Regional Health Department is looking for volunteers to assist in meeting the needs of breastfeeding women.

Without such support, many women quit nursing in the first six weeks of the infant's life. Volunteers are asked to support more than one woman during her nursing experience.

This would involve at least one contact before the baby is born and daily calls the first week the new mother is home.

It is recommended that a volunteer maintain regular contact,

perhaps weekly for the first three months of the baby's life.

The contact is made by phone, although the volunteer

and new mother may choose to meet together if they wish.

Volunteers are trained to recognize when they need to help the new mother by providing her with contact numbers within the Halton Regional Health Department, as well as other community services.

For more on Halton Breastfeeding Connection, contact

Rebecca Drotos at 853-2592.



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