

Violence turns viewers off

National group aims to increase ranks of TV wise



The shoot-out, resulting in several bloodied bodies is followed by the customary car chase. The television screen displays the faces of horrified pedestrians, dodging vehicles travelling at disastrous speeds.

Such is the programming which causes the average teenager to have witnessed an estimated 13,000 murders on television by the time he is finished high school. Esther Caldwell is one of more than 250 Canadians who have united in their concern over television violence.

The Milton woman, who is the mother of two young children, joined the Canadian Coalition Against Violent Entertainment (CCAWE) in the spring. Since becoming a member she has joined the organization's national executive and is regional advisor for Milton and area.

"Basically we want to make the public more aware of violence. This organization is not setting out to be a censorship group," she explained.

An immediate challenge facing CCAWE is an attempt at counter advertising. Members would like to see a warning about the violent content of programs appear ahead of the credits. According to Mrs. Caldwell the message would be similar to the one found on tobacco products, only this would concern mental health.

An American organization, National Coalition on Television Violence includes volunteers who monitor programs and record the number of violent acts portrayed in an hour.

"Some have as many as 108 violent acts per hour and that's really high. Even Walt Disney is criticized," Mrs. Caldwell said.

Television has "bothered" her for a number of years, but until recently she was not aware of its effects which have been documented in several books and American studies.

"Children are living through television fantasy characters. They are not their own fantasies and they are generally aggressive," she explained.

Parents of children enrolled in the Waldorf School are advised to deter television viewing as it hampers creativity, according to Mrs. Caldwell.

"It's important for them to have their own space without television interfering," she said.

Studies quoted by Mrs. Caldwell indicate the impact of television viewing on children can affect reading ability, attention span and has been related to hyperactivity. She is also concerned about those who appear to commit acts of violence patterned after those depicted on television.

Before Mrs. Caldwell kicked the television

habit she would feel dissatisfied with herself after an evening of watching. She realized she had too many more interesting things to do.

"Every family has to come to its own solution. Some use time restrictions or put the television in an inconvenient place in the house and some get rid of it. It doesn't take long for them to find other things to do," she suggested.

There is a book available which advises how to break the T.V. habit in 30 days. A blackened television set could make room for families to play non-competitive games, according to Mrs. Caldwell.

There are some television programs containing little or no violent acts. Their names are available through CCAWE. More information about the organization and its cause can be supplied by Mrs. Caldwell who is available for speaking engagements in this area.

CCAWE has recently completed a 15 minute slide/tape presentation which according to Mrs. Caldwell will be "a good jumping off point" for people interested in CCAWE concerns.

The Hamilton-based group is sponsoring a workshop in that city aimed at sharpening critical viewing skills. Speakers at the event Sat. Nov. 17 will include representatives from the Association for Media Literacy, Media Watch, Ontario Board of Censors and Children's Broadcast Institute.

Those interested in CCAWE should contact Esther Caldwell at 878-9762 for membership information or speaking engagements.

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DR. DAVID PHILLIPS

Phillips elected Baha'i delegate

Dr. David L. Phillips, D.C. of Milton was recently elected as a delegate to the Baha'i National Convention to be held in Mississauga in late April of 1985.

As one of 171 delegates, he will share responsibility for electing the National Spiritual Assembly, the Administrative body of the Baha'is of Canada.

Dr. Phillips is one of three delegated from the area bounded by Mississauga, Puslinch, Oakville and Orangeville elected at the Regional Convention on Sun. Oct. 28 in Oakville.

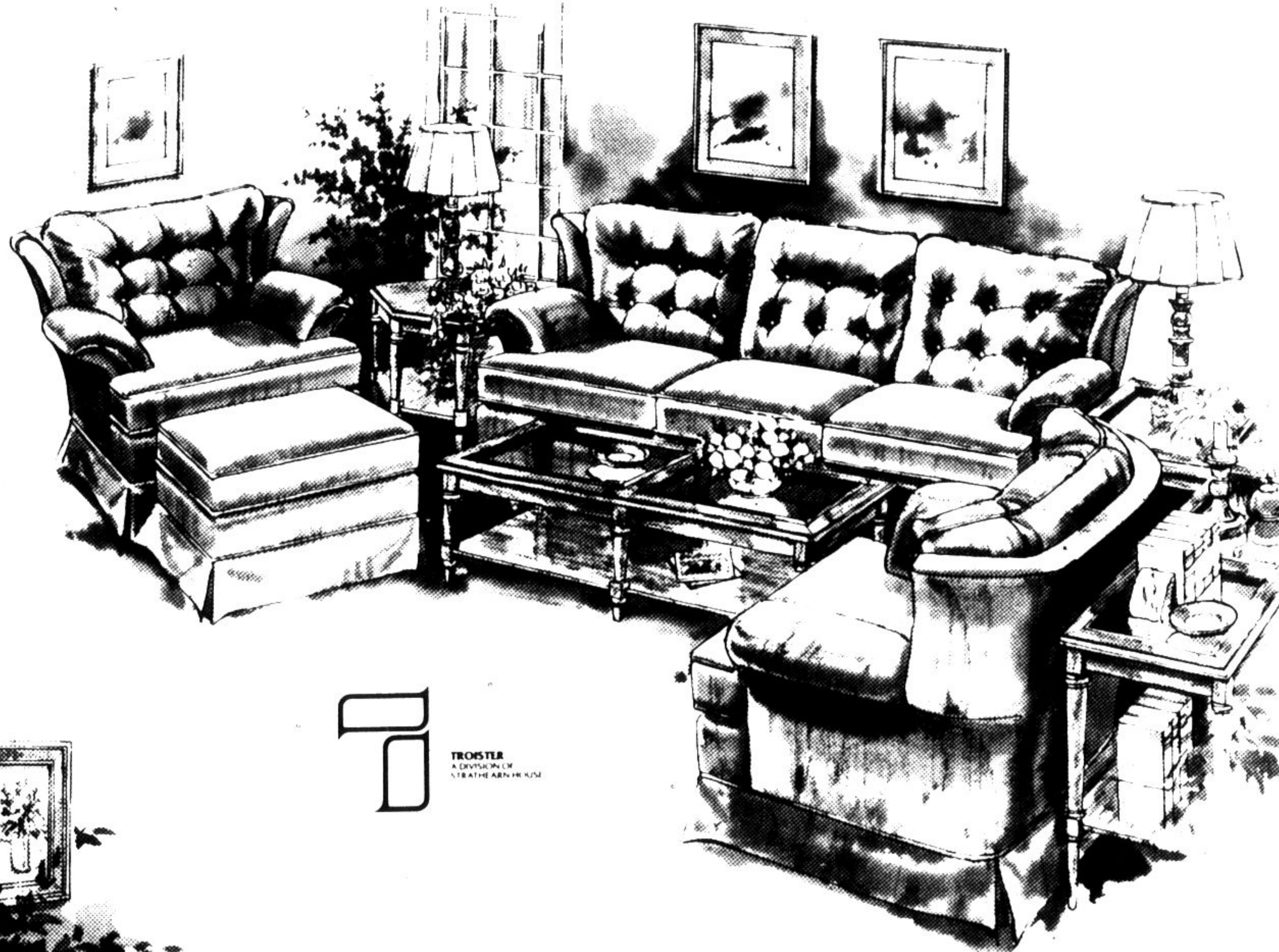
As well as being elected a delegate, Dr. Phillips also served as chief teller at the Regional Convention.

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