

County to introduce family life program

A family life or sex education program will be introduced into schools across Simcoe County this week and will be open to students from grades seven and eight.

Trustees of the Simcoe County Board of Education held a special meeting last week to discuss and study course guidelines in detail.

The program entitled "Human Relations" will eventually be integrated into all grades.

The course will concentrate on four basic elements: developing positive self concepts, human growth and development, human sexuality, and family life.

The grade seven students will take part in a course entitled "Learning to be Human" which will concentrate on the individual, his view of himself and his ability to get along with others.

In grade eight the course will continue to look at developing self-awareness, growing up with others, and friendship.

The students will then move onto sexual maturity, dating, puberty, maturation and the birth process.

The course should last 20 days and at the conclusion the students will look finally at the nuclear family, the family today, family conflicts and aging.

Jean Mockford of Banting Memorial High School in Alliston said teachers will first establish a sense of trust with the students so they will feel at ease in discussions.

They will then discuss values and value judging.

Director of Education Jack Ramsay said the course is not designed to stress or teach one set of values but to show the children different people hold different values. There will be no right and wrong.

Abortion is a good example, he said. The concept of abortion presents extremely

different outlooks he said. However, abortion would not likely be brought up in the early grades.

Ramsay explained all teachers will use discretion in conducting the course.

The board proposes the course be optional and parents may withdraw their children from the course if they find the subject matter objectionable.

A system will be set up whereby students and teachers may say "pass" if they are not comfortable in answering a certain question. Students will not have to accept handout material if they do not want it.

The board decided last year that a program such as this was necessary in the schools.

A special professional development day will be held at Portage Public School on Friday in order to explain the course to teachers. No teacher will be given the program

until he has attended this professional day.

One representative from each school is expected to attend. Each school is also expected to inform the parents of the program.

In addition to course outlines, the Simcoe County program supplies teachers with a variety of back up material, including books, audio-visual presentations, and activities.

There is a new monopoly-type game which reviews the birth process.

Teachers will be working in cooperation with parents, said elementary school teacher Terry Olaskey. He said overall aim of the program is to promote family life education in the county.

Trustees supported the program at the end of the session and the program will be further discussed at tonight's board meeting.

Simcoe Georgian Task Force strength tested

Developers and builders are testing the strength of the Simcoe Georgian Area Task Force report.

Simcoe County is asking for support from the province in combatting growth pressures.

Two council members, John Forbes of Mara Township and John Fennell of West Gwillimbury told council last week their areas are facing growth pressures.

Council was discussing implementation of the task force recommendations with Eric Flemming and the provincial members of the task force.

Flemming, who is chairman of the mini-task force, told council controls have to come from the local municipality.

He said the provincial government has never reversed a decision made

at the local level to stop a subdivision.

"The prime control is with the local municipalities themselves," he said.

Flemming said representatives of the task force will sit down and discuss implementations with local councils.

But, he added, the group is not in a position to make any policy changes to the report prepared by the Simcoe Georgian Area Task Force.

If county council is not happy with the allocation of population it should take its problem to the provincial government.

He said the group, which consists of nine members from different ministries will act as a liaison between the local governments and the provincial government.

County to take part in computer project

Simcoe County will be taking part in a province wide pilot project designed to test the feasibility of a computer system in the county's social services department.

Simcoe County was chosen by the government as one of four test areas for the project.

An on-line computer system will be installed in the county building in the social services department which will be tied in to a computer system at Queen's Park in Toronto. Eventually the computer would be tied in with all major social services units in Ontario.

The purpose of setting up such a system would be to determine the level of social services required in the province.

Social services administrator Gordon Tucker is in favor of the project and tried to eliminate any queries the councillors had concerning the installation of a computer in Simcoe County.

"This is something we are going to get eventually whether we like it or not. Being part of the pilot project will give me the opportunity to put feedback into the project. I'd be proud to know Simcoe County pioneered this project," said Tucker.

The province and the county will share the costs.

"I think it would be a cost saver to the county," said Tucker.

"The maximum cost is \$5,000 and then the rental on it. The purpose of the project is to help administrators help those who need help and to get rid of those people who come to us for help just because they won't help themselves," said chairman of the social services committee

Harry Cross.

Some councillors said they felt the council should not approve this project without previous consideration of the finance committee.

"If this council passes it today it would be circumventing the finance committee. Anyway, this council cannot commit any incoming council to expenditures," said Penetanguishene reeve Lionel Dion.

"That is ridiculous," said Midland reeve Moreland Lynn. Lynn went on to say he did not feel the computer issue had any relationship with any of the other depart-

ments. "I think this is a social services issue."

Administrator Tucker said he felt the pilot project would begin early in the new year and the full scale implementation would be initiated by next September.

One councillor asked what the county would do if after the pilot project is complete and Simcoe County has a computer for social services, the province decides the project is not feasible.

"I don't believe this project is going to fall through. The government has sunk millions of dollars into this already," said Tucker.



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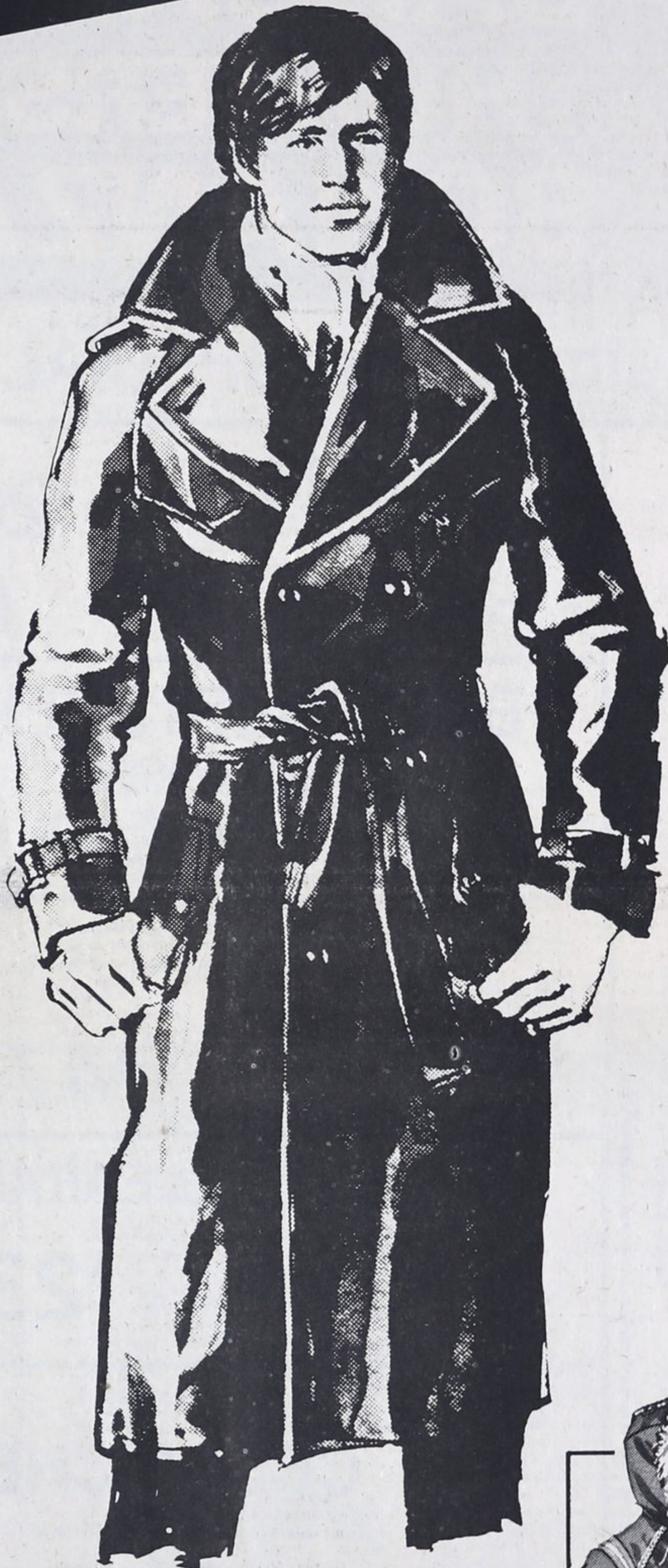
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