

New Beginnings

by
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For Mary it was like starting life all over again. Here she was 34 years of age with two young teenagers and on her own. Six months ago she had finally come to the decision, after 14 years of marriage, that she couldn't live with her husband John anymore. It was just impossible. He was drinking every weekend, frequently absent week-nights, had lost two jobs, and was recently becoming physically abusive. She had strong suspicions that there was someone else involved.

It wasn't for lack of trying. She had repeatedly urged John to go to AA or to go with her for counselling. She had tried talking to him about their marriage, but each time she had become increasingly frustrated by his avoidance. And God, how she had prayed. When her kids were caught shoplifting, after failing their grades, she knew that they were being affected too. She had just had enough. It takes two to make a marriage and to raise two growing teenagers. She had lost 15 pounds and hadn't slept well in years. She was so afraid.

She was at least lucky. She did have a part time job. When a friend of hers offered her two basement rooms, after a particularly gruesome fight, she decided to take it. Good thing her few friends and family were somewhat supportive.

But now there were other problems. It was extremely difficult to make ends meet, even with the welfare cheques. John was continually harassing her on the phone and on the street; he was having his difficulties understanding what happened and coping with the single life without his children. The kids, too, were unsettled, living out of their cramped quarters.

Most of all, she felt herself to be a failure. With only Grade 12 education and no career she often worried about her future. Her married friends somehow considered her to be a threat and a "third wheel". The loneliness was sometimes too much to bear. She found herself unexplainably crying at times during her depressive moods. Would it ever end?

Mary is a fictional person but her situation is not. With one in three marriages ending in separation and divorce, her condition is fairly common. Those who have lost a partner through death often experience the same symptoms: difficulty coping with their new situation, anger and tears, depression. In fact, there are seven

widows for every widower.

In 1976 a self-help group, for those experiencing bereavement through separation or death, was established at the Christian Life Centre in Toronto. Based on Elizabeth Kuebler Ross' theory and Alcoholics Anonymous, the New Beginnings team of experienced lay people and a priest help each individual cope with the emotional issues of loss. Using the Christian principles of God's love and forgiveness, they enhance the person's ability to face life more positively. They give no magical answers because they realize that it takes about three years to work through the termination of a

marriage, but they are supportive, realistic, and compassionate.

On Jan. 19 and 20, a New Beginnings team will, for the first time, conduct a weekend at St. Margaret's parish hall at 587 Hugel Avenue in Midland. Several dozen participants from the Midland-Penetanguishene area, as well as hundreds from across Ontario, have already benefited from this programme. They now feel more confident about themselves after coping with the hurt and anger of their loss. They have achieved a sense of peace with society and their God.

The cost is a \$10 registration fee and a \$15 contribution to defray the cost of the meals, refreshments and transportation.

However, no person will be turned away if they cannot afford it. The sessions begin at 9 a.m. each day, ending at 9 p.m. on Saturday and 5 p.m. on Sunday. Information and forms are available at the Family Life Centre (526-9397).

Thinking about a separation? Having problems coping with single parent life? Are you upset by your partner's death five years ago? New Beginnings may provide you with some answers and support. The weekend is designed to take a step into accepting life realistically and compassionately. If you know of a friend who needs help in this area, make them aware of this practical programme.

Port McNicoll

by CLARA POWER

I am going to catch up on some news that was received too late to go in previous columns ...

On Tuesday, Dec. 11, Port McNicoll Brownies went shopping at the Mountainview Mall for children's gifts that were presented to Lt. Braddock during their Christmas Party on Dec. 17.

The "Leprechauns" and "Sprites" purchased gifts for girls. The "Elves" and "Fairies" bought for boys.

The Willing Workers of Bonar Presbyterian Church held their regular meeting in the Church Hall, Jan. 3.

There were seven members present. The President, Mrs. Coughlin, presided. Secretary, Mrs. Splane took the minutes. The reading was given by Mrs. S. Kelly entitled "A Recipe for a Happy New Year". Scripture was read by Mrs. F. Zumach. Prayer was led by Mrs. Margaret Miller.

A short business meeting followed, with plans for the Annual Meeting to be held on the 27th. The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer. Lunch was provided by Mrs. E. Zumach and Mrs. S. Kelly.

The Senior Citizens held their first meeting of the New Year on Wednesday, Jan. 9.

They get together on

the first Wednesday of every month at 1:30 at the Legion in Port for luncheon, bingo and euchre. The fee is \$5 per year. Come on out and join in.

The monthly meeting of Port McNicoll Council was held on Wednesday, Jan. 9.

This year our interim tax bills will go out at the beginning of March, and they will be due at the end of March. This means that there will be a cut down on borrowing costs - hence a minimal increase in our taxes.

Your reporter overslept Monday morning and missed the Pancake Breakfast that was held at the Community Centre to start off "Local Government Week".

Clerk-Treasurer Ted Walker tells me there

was a good turnout, with over 100 people in attendance. After they consumed their fill of sausages, pancakes and bacon, the people continued on a tour of the Municipal Office, Library and Fire Hall.

Reeve John Moreau, dressed in his Warden's robe, addressed the students at Port McNicoll Public School. He then showed a film entitled "Local Government".

Councillor Leo Copeland was the person responsible for putting together the activities of "Local Government Week".

Be sure to attend the "Get Acquainted Night", sponsored by Reeve John Moreau, at the Community Centre tonight, Jan. 16, at 7:30 p.m.

Cottage fire

Tay Township smoke-eaters snuffed out a cottage fire on Triple Bay Road, Sunday.

The blaze was confined to the dwelling's attic and kitchen, Midland OPP report.

The cottage was recently purchased by a Metro couple who were in the area over the weekend to take snow off the building's roof.

It's been reported the pair had lit a wood stove and a few hours later saw smoke coming from the ceiling near stove pipes.

MVA's number nearly 6,000: OPP

Last year, Midland OPP investigated a total of 528 reportable and 172 non-reportable motor-vehicle accidents.

As well, the detachment conducted nearly 6,000 general occurrences during 1984.

The force, with offices on Highway 93 just west of Midland, is comprised of one staff-sergeant, five corporals and 39 constables.



Grease fire

A grease fire at 818 Dominion Avenue, Midland, last Thursday afternoon caused an estimated \$3,000 damage in an Ontario Housing

Authority house. Damage from smoke, fire, and heat was reportedly confined to the kitchen.

Alderman withdraws remark, prompted with own advice

Midland Alderman Dan Herbert withdrew a remark he made during this week's council meeting, a remark which he made after forgetting advice which he gave to the mayor.

At the start of Monday's meeting of the town council, Alan Light, the Public Utilities Commissioner who organized a petition asking for an investigation of the affairs of Midland council, asked the council to deal in issues, not personalities.

During argument before a vote on a list of appointments of members of council to the council's standing committees, Alderman Herbert referred to Light's message. The alderman advised the mayor, who was opposing the appointments, and who was ruled out of order by the acting mayor, to either vote yes or no.

"I don't see why you bring your own personal vindictiveness, or whatever

you want to call it, to the issue," the alderman said.

The mayor just previously had spoken of vindictiveness he perceived on the proposed finance committee.

During later discussion of a bylaw passed to allow Meatland to erect a sign, Reeve Bev Day said the council should mend its ways, and that the business had waited too long for permission to put up the sign. The reeve apologized for the long wait by Meatland's owners.

Alderman Herbert immediately asked the reeve, who was criticising the council for its attitude towards downtown business, why, at an earlier meeting, he had called downtown business people carpet baggers.

Mayor Roach used his gavel to stop the talk and reminded the alderman of his own advice. Alderman Herbert withdrew his remark.

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