

Women at PGH working wonders

The Penetanguishene General Hospital is trying to cope with more than just physical and psychological problems. It wants to understand emotional sickness as well. Through a new program introduced at the PGH, two concerned hospital workers say they can do just that.

Sister Mary Anne Bondy and Mrs. Jean Wagg have started something which has the potential to grow into something which they never imagined; to surpass their initial intentions and affect the whole community.

The program is called Road Less Travelled, a title taken from a book by M. Scott Peck, a psychiatrist with a few ideas about life.

If there is any technique or method to Road Less Travelled it is exceedingly simple. There are no books to buy, conventions to attend or tests to pass but as Wagg says there are usually no unsatisfied participants either.

Those participants meet in small groups of preferably 8 to 12. They spend the next 2 and one half hours together and repeat the procedure for 20 sessions in total.

A meeting is all about talking about your problems and learning how to cope with those problems.

Wagg says a variety of professional men and women are doing just that. "Often around midlife we get to appreciate more of life. This is when the crises occur - a death in the family, a prolonged illness, the general concerns about mortality which didn't seem so important when we were young - and when we go through a crisis can accept one of two choices: give in to the crisis or become stronger than the crisis," Wagg says.

She insists that successfully coming through a

crisis situation ensures personal growth. "Sometimes we can't grow unless we are forced to do so."

Everything discussed at a meeting is done so in confidence. "We don't talk about people," Sister Bondy says "we talk about problems. Program participants share their experiences and various ways in which they've responded to their experiences.

"There is some teaching in the course but it is almost completely experiential. We learn more from doing it ourselves instead of having it forced upon us."

Road Less Travelled claims that a person's character is formulated by his parents. He will generally inherit - indeed emulate - the same traits that characterised his mother and father, both good and bad.

"We learn from our parents, we learn how to act from our parents, we learn how to respond to our environment. If we don't change we'll turn out just like our parents; we'll repeat the same mistakes, make the same poor decisions: we'll fail where they have failed."

Wagg calls the program a perfect blend of psychology and theology. It combines love with self-evaluation.

That self-evaluation is achieved through a process called "guided fantasy." Somewhat meditative in conception, a guided fantasy is an internalised trip into your own past. You go back to previous events which dominate your life in the present; you ferret out resentment which is reducing your happiness today.

From there, Bondy says you can "repair some of the damage."

Wagg says that words

never equal actions. "You might talk about something or someone for your entire life: all you're doing is destroying yourself and preventing yourself from solving the problem. Only action is worth anything in this life."

The results have been phenomenal. Bondy says that after six weeks "people have begun to change; they begin to realise that they don't have to stay the same."

The two women certainly didn't have mammoth ambitions for the course when they initiated the idea in September. But they both admit that it will be pretty difficult to restrain the momentum of the response. It's a popular meeting to attend.

One course is being run concomitant with another. So that means 35 hospital workers and volunteers are currently being affected. Bondy reports a tremendous response from these.

"Feelings of worthlessness and frustration are being left at the meeting. Lives are really being changed," she says.

Because of the overwhelming response, Bondy and Wagg want to move the program out of the hospital and into the community.

"We're training leaders for tomorrow's courses. If this benefits a few people at the hospital it can certainly benefit a lot of people in the community," Wagg says.

Bondy suggests that 12 is the optimum number of people in one session. Too small a group allows for less interrelating; too many creates fewer direct participants.

"But people are hurting out there and there is a demand for a course like this. It respects no religion above another. I belong to

the United Church and Sister Mary Ann here

belongs to the Roman Catholic Church, so that

should say a lot about the character of our group."

"We practise Christian love," Bondy says.



Just can't keep the enthusiasm bottled up

Sister Mary Anne Bondy and Mrs. Jean Wagg have a lot to smile about. Through their Road Less Travelled program, over 30 people have had their lives changed at Penetang's General Hospital. The course lasts

for 20 weeks and involves intensive self-analysis combined with Christian love. Although it's only open to hospital workers and volunteers right now, we might see it expand in the next few months.

Maple syrup is sweet for hospital

The Queen of the Elmvale Maple Syrup Festival was in town the other day to redistribute some of that royal wealth. Linda Fleming, a grade 12 student from Elmvale District High School was crowned last April at the annual festival which glories in maple syrup

appreciation.

Fleming and her maple syrup princesses, Terry Clark and Heather Stone, came to the Penetanguishene General Hospital to present the intensive care unit with a cheque for \$1000.

Head nurse Edna Todd

was extremely pleased to see the money. It will be used to renovate the intensive care unit in the hospital. Central monitoring devices have been installed in the hospital and this has greatly increased the speed the hospital can respond to a patient's need with.

Central monitoring is achieved through a computer which reads a patient's vital signs, such as heart beat and blood pressure. Body activity is constantly charted and if the wrong signs are reported, the nurses can know about it right away.



Winterama on the move

Winterama is back and it's bigger than ever. Winterama is that dynamic little group that makes this community of Penetanguishene such an exciting place to live. It sponsors events, has a gargantuan social conscience and generally promotes the people, places and power of Penetanguishene.

It had its first meeting last week and has named

its executive.

The Chairman is that versatile councillor Bob Sullivan; The Vice-Chairperson is Frances St. Laurent; the Treasurer is Jake Reimer; the Public Relations man is Bill Stevens; and the Secretary is Joyce Sauve.

They've only just gotten organised again but to no one's surprise they've already planned their first event. And what a time it's

going to be.

Are you ready for this? It's going to be a charity hockey game and they're going to bring the CJOH "No Stars" in from Ottawa to make it interesting.

That's going to happen on Nov. 22 so let's anxiously await the return of the Winterama stars, people who make this town a special place to live.



The Queen and her princesses

The Queen of the Elmvale Maple Syrup Festival was in Penetanguishene last week to come to the aid of the intensive care unit of Penetang's General Hospital. She brought a cheque for \$1000 to enable the hospital to buy more monitoring units. From left to right that's

Heather Stone, Terry Clarke and Queen Linda Fleming presenting the good news to Head Nurse Edna Todd. In the background one of the monitoring units posed for the picture as well.