

Speech pathology

Speaking with a clear voice

You're thirty years old and you stutter.

There's help available. And it won't cost you anymore than going to the doctor for a checkup.

May is Speech and Hearing month. Cheryl Setchell and Bonnie Breadner are

speech pathologists at the Huronia District Hospital and the Penetanguishene General Hospital respectively.

Trevor Pinn is five years old. He walks into the physiotherapy room at the HDH for his weekly ses-

sion with Setchell. He tells her that his family is going to move this weekend.

When Trevor started treatments last August, his words would not be so easily understood.

"Trevor has gone from unintelligible to where he

is now," says his mother, Karen Pinn. "Now he can play with children his own age...he has more confidence."

Part of the reason for the boy's progress is the dedication of the parents. They both work with him

for 15 minutes a day.

As Setchell says, "They have really made a difference."

Then there is Kristie, a four-year-old girl. To improve her speech, Kristie plays a game called "The Sleeping Giant." The object of the fun is to successfully pronounce "th" and "f" sounds.

The child has trouble channeling her breath, a necessary thing to pronounce words like "thought." So a straw is put into her mouth, forcing Kristie to focus all the air in one direction.

Speech problems affect many people in our society. But help is available.

Breadner and Setchell want people to know what services are available and how you can get access to them.

Speech pathology used to be known as "speech therapy." But because the practice is diagnostic as well as therapeutic, the branch of medicine is increasingly being called speech language pathology.

It's not commonly known that speech pathology is part of the general medical establishment. So both Setchell and Breadner want to inform the public and to "increase the doctor's awareness. Speech pathology is pretty new here," says Breadner.

Cheryl Setchell works at

the HDH but Huronia itself is her real place of employment. She transits to and from the Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie and frequently goes to Alliston and Collingwood.

Bonnie Breadner spends most of her time at the PGH, though she does work at the Adult Rehabilitation Centre as well.

Both of them are dedicated to solving speech problems. These can be as varied and as intricate as the people who come for help. It might be poor articulation, stuttering, slushy speech, a lisp, improper diction - it's anything which makes someone's voice sound "different" in some way and delineates a person from others by a voice pattern.

"People judge us by our voice just as they judge us by our looks," says Breadner, "it's a very personal thing."

Often speech problems are very personal matters too. As Setchell says, "Every stutterer is an individual." The emotional baggage which the person carries with him is relative to the amount of time he has suffered from the speech pattern.

"The years of teasing have their effect. The child usually becomes either a smart-alec or withdrawn. So many emotions are wrapped up in that single problem," says the HDH

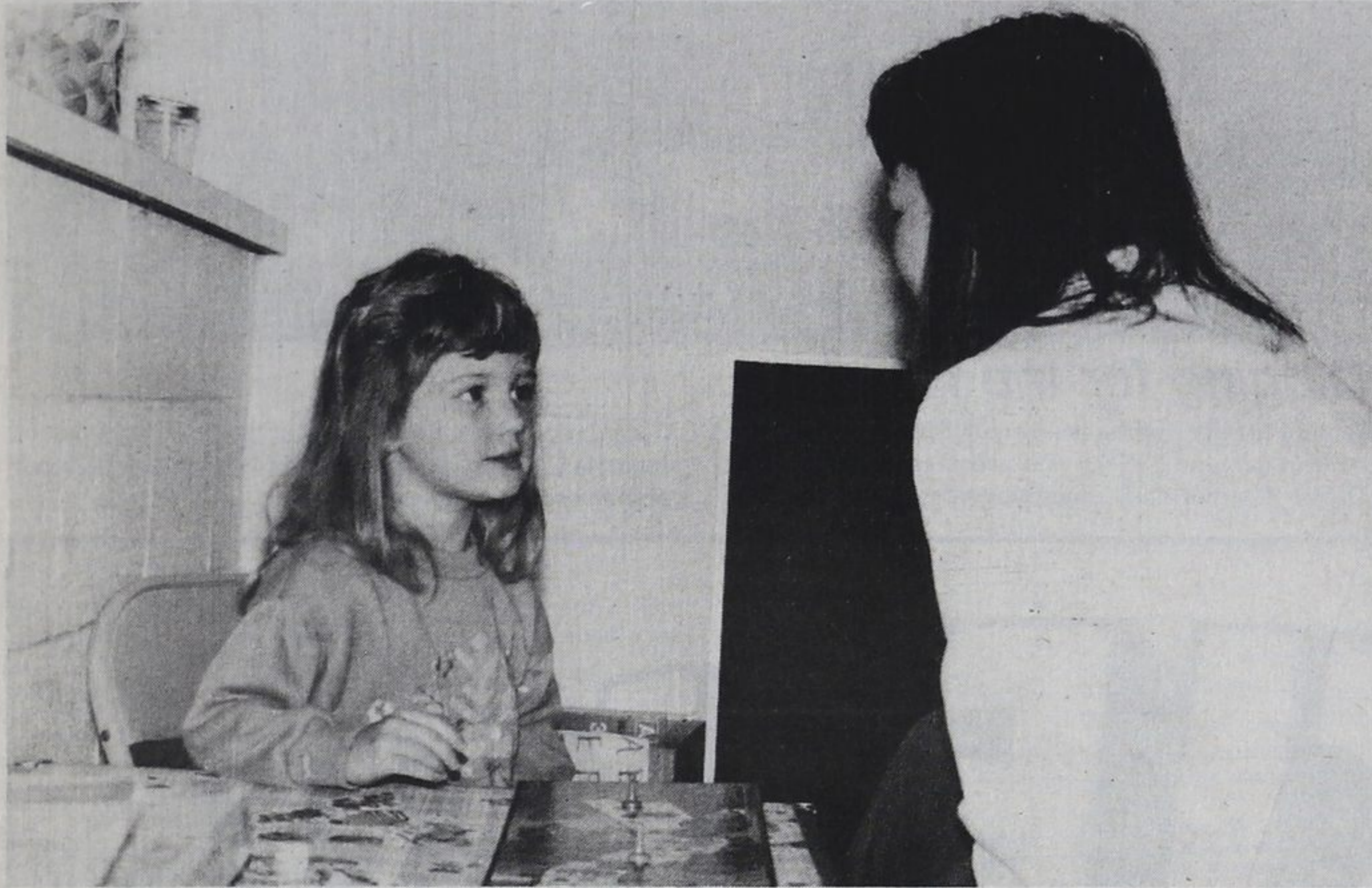
speech pathologist.

Many children between the ages of 2-5 are afflicted by some degree of stuttering. Breadner believes the reason for this is that "they have so much to say and the vocabulary is not there for them to fully express themselves."

Treatment for stutters has changed over the past two decades. It's no longer something that children are screamed at for doing. The speech pathologists both use videotapes to rectify the speech problem. This allows the patient to see how his body looks when he stutters - how his necks muscles are overtensed and how he looks away when he speaks.

Some speech problems are directly related to hearing problems. If a child can't hear properly, he probably won't speak properly either. Breadner remembers one child that came to her that had suffered from constant ear infections. "He had gone through ear problems for 80 per cent of his life."

Although there is a waiting list at both the HDH and PGH to see a speech pathologist, all you need do is wait. Access is otherwise uninhibited. At the HDH, you can call directly and arrange for an appointment with Setchell. At the PGH, you only need to be referred to Breadner through your family physician.



Ready to work

Kristie waits for her instructions from Cheryl Setchell, the speech pathologist at the Huronia District Hospital. The child is learning how to better pronounce her "f"

and "th" sounds. Sometimes a straw is used to focus air in one direction.

Port McNicoll bus dispute could be resolved

Fearing a lengthy and costly challenge they could not afford to lose, councillors in Port McNicoll last week trashed a parking bylaw they had designed in order to clamp down on large, commercial vehicles and school buses.

A last-minute decision on what to do with the controversial issue had been reached just hours before the Wednesday-night council meeting, said Reeve John Moreau.

Instead of passing the parking law and risking a court challenge or an Ontario Municipal Board hearing, the village will try another avenue: its property standards law.

By "putting some teeth" into the law, councillors hope to rid the village of what they see as a nagging problem: parking of large commercial vehicles and large school buses in residential areas. Councillors have repeatedly stated they receive many complaints from villagers

about the problem.

"We don't want to make the wrong decision tonight," Moreau told the crowd. If the council had passed the law, he said, bus drivers could argue - perhaps successfully, in front of a court - that they have "legal non-conforming" status. That would mean all bus (or commercial vehicle) drivers who had parked vehicles in residential areas before the passing of the law would be allowed to continue their practice. No newly-employed drivers would be allowed that luxury.

Several months ago the village council tried to use the property standards law to take care of the school bus problem. At the time, there was concern that enforcement would be difficult or impossible.

But amending the law, Moreau said, "is the best route at the time."

"We don't have to have a hearing - we don't have

to have anything," he said. "We can just make amendments."

Councillor Reg Quesnelle added: "And we'll be doing it as fast as we can."

A public meeting held in April regarding the now-dead parking bylaw revealed the deep-rooted opposition. That type of meeting will not be held on the property standards amendments, the reeve said. But the public will still be able to voice its opinion during the "delegations" portion of regular council meetings.

Several residents in the audience at last Wednesday's council meeting spoke in favor of the

original parking law. "I don't feel Port McNicoll should serve as a parking lot" for school buses, she said.

Another remarked: "I pay taxes. I don't want to see a bright yellow school bus - they are ugly, they are visible and they have no place in a residential section."

Bus driver John Wadge said he and the owner of Penetang-Midland Coach Lines (which owns the school buses serving Port McNicoll) had estimated that parking the vehicles in one of the company's Midland yards overnight would add 300,000 kilometres to the annual distance the buses travel.

Accessible office

In an attempt to ensure each and every municipal building is accessible to the physically disabled, the Port McNicoll council will look into making its main office easier to get into by wheelchair.

Councillors agreed that the last - and possibly most important - office to be a problem, should be altered. As it stands, there is a heavy door and two steps to cross before reaching the main desk.

"It likely wouldn't take that much" to reconstruct the main entrance, Deputy-Reeve Ross Cameron said. "Maybe we should take a look at it."

Reeve John Moreau noted that other municipal buildings, such as the community centre and fire hall, are easily accessible. As well, the main council chamber has a ramp leading into it and no steps to cross.

Fantastic car

The steel rails of the railroad line between Midland and Orillia were given a "checkup" last week.

A Sperry Rail Service rail testing car, one of seven such cars in Canada, on contract to CP Rail and CN Rail, made a slow trip between the town and the city.

As the rail testing car travels at a speed of between seven to 13 miles per hour, ultrasonic sound-waves probe the interior of the rails to find internal defects. Simultaneously an electric current indicates if rails are the correct shape.

Chief operator Dave Covey said that 32 rails in

the 33 miles of track between Midland and Orillia were tagged for replacement the last time that the length of railroad line was tested.

On average the rail testing car will test 40 to 50 miles of track in a working day.

A smaller version of the testing equipment is mounted outside on one end of the testing car. When equipment inside the car suggests an anomaly, the car is stopped and the outside equipment is used to check directly the suspect rail.

Sperry Rail Service is a division of Penn Central.



Playing a serious game

Trevor Pinn's speech has improved dramatically since he has worked with speech pathologist Cheryl Setchell. Bonnie Breadner also helps out. Breadner is

Setchell's counterpart at the Penetanguishene General Hospital and the president of the local branch of the Simcoe County Cleft Lip and Palate Family Association.