

# SEVEN NEWS

APRIL 4, 1984

TORONTO'S OLDEST COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER CIRCULATION 16,000 FREE

## Inside

Speaking Out .....	3
Close Up .....	5
City Arts .....	6
Calendar .....	7
Classified .....	8



An April fool entertains a youngster at an April 1st festival at Harbourfront last Sunday.

## Group homes pose no threat

by LAURETTA FORSYTHE

Armed with pamphlets, press kits and enough favourable statistics on group homes to put an insomniac to sleep, three representatives of the Group Homes Community Outreach Program (GHCOP) rolled into Ward 7 on March 20.

While the two-hour meeting at Queen Alexandra School provided plenty of information on group homes and dispelled any myths of a downfallen neighbourhood, it lacked a wholesome look at the day-to-day activities inside. In short, the meeting was a yawn.

However, a week later, a group home on Derrydown Road is surrounded. Bearing nasty signs, angry protesters relay the message — not in our community.

GHCOP is a "joint effort" involving the City of Toronto Planning and Development Department and the Ontario Secretariat for Social Development. Its task? To open lines of communication between Toronto residents, group home operators and government officials.

Government officials were plentiful at the GHCOP meeting, but where were the group home operators themselves? Do

residents of group homes indeed integrate with society? Do these troubled people achieve goals and acquire life skills while inside? After this meeting we still do not know.

What we do learn, however, are the facts. Numerous surveys conducted during the past five years conclude that group homes are harmless to communities. Then why would neighbours of Derrydown Road take up arms? One concerned resident told Citypulse News "It would have been a lot better if we had known about it first."

Do we point an accusing finger at GHCOP for not reaching the neighbourhood before the home opens, or do we blame residents themselves for not attending vitally important meetings before they yell stop! For the record, a scant 15 came to the Ward 7 meeting.

Once at a GHCOP meeting you learn that no, group homes won't devalue property. Of murder and mayhem there is no trace. Concerns of extra traffic on the street are unfounded. As a matter of fact, a March survey conducted by City TV found 73 per cent in favour of group homes and 37 per cent thumbs down.

cont'd on pg. 2

## Marguerite has come a long way

ULLI DIEMER  
by ANNA THOMPSON

"I didn't know what a school room looked like."

The words are Marguerite Godbout's. A few short years ago, Marguerite was one of several million functionally illiterate adults in Canada. Two weeks ago, a hundred or more people were squeezing into the Ward 7 offices of the East End Literacy program to be present while she autographed copies of her newly published book, appropriately titled *I've Come a Long Way*.

The book is her life story, beginning with her childhood in rural New Brunswick, already afflicted with a life-long handicap that made walking the long distance to school impossible. She tells of moving to Toronto, of working in a "sheltered workshop" for the physically handicapped. Significantly, she left the workshop behind after four years. "I felt they were using us," she says, noting that the pay she received was perhaps \$1.20 a week. She also didn't like the idea of being segregated. "I feel we should be with all kinds of people, not shut away by ourselves."

Her determination to seek the rewards and take the risks of living a full life gave her the experiences — happy, funny, sad — that became the material for this book. Talking about her life to her literacy tutor one day, Marguerite exclaimed, jokingly,

"I could write a book on what we've just talked about" "Why don't we?" was the reply of Olive Day, the tutor, and suddenly things were under way.

The book is a testimonial to the determination of the author, a woman who undertook a regular 20-minute struggle up a flight of stairs to even get to her adult literacy class. It is also a reflection of help and encouragement given by friends and teachers; Jenny Nice, Olive Day and Martha.



Marguerite Godbout at the launching of her new book.

At the same time, the process by which the book came to be written is also a good example of East End Literacy's approach to teaching adults how to read. EEL sees the lack of suitable reading materials as one major barrier to successful literacy work with adults. Some classes for adults actually use Grade One readers; others use "adult" texts so babyish in tone and content that enlightened teachers

wouldn't use them with six-year-olds. (A typical "story" from one text reads: "I am a man. I am a happy man. My wife is a good, happy woman.")

cont'd on pg. 2

## Picking cotton in Nicaragua

On Monday night at Trinity-St. Paul's an information meeting, along with a slide show, was held on the Canadian work brigades who returned from Nicaragua just last month. David Sobel, a Ward 7 resident and freelance researcher was one of those on the trip. Here are some excerpts from his Nicaraguan diary.

In February of this year I joined a work brigade organized by Canadian Action for Nicaragua, a Toronto based solidarity organization.

We journeyed to Nicaragua to help the country's economy through volunteer cotton-picking. Cotton is a major cash crop crucial to an economy strained by a war with the U.S. backed counter-revolutionary forces.

### February 8

We arrive in Managua where we merge with a second Canadian brigade from British Columbia. The next day all 66 Canadians travel north to a small village formerly named Dos Montes. This is to be our home for the next month.

Each day we wake up before sunrise to a breakfast of rice, beans and a corn tortilla. We head out around six o'clock to the cotton fields, where we are joined most days by another brigade. This is a group of high-school students from Leon, the provincial capital. These students are just part of the many who spend their yearly holidays working on the cotton and coffee harvests or on the literacy and medical campaigns.

By 11 a.m. the temperature is over 100 degrees fahrenheit and we leave the cotton fields for a break until three in the afternoon, when we go back out to work for a couple of hours. Like most brigadistas, I head to a small irrigation pool on the edge of town to wash, when our work is done. Referred to as the "La Bomba," its cool waters soothe my aching back.

### February 20

The day before the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Augusto Geasar Sandino, father of the Nicaraguan revolution, we pile on a bus and travel to the

capital city, Managua. At the commemorative celebrations we listen to a speech by government leader Daniel Ortega.

More than 100,000 people from all over Nicaragua march into the Plaza of the Revolution. Colourful banners, Sandino posters and flags carried by unions and popular organizations wave over the heads of the crowd. I speak to some old farmers who had travelled by boat and truck for three days so they could be in the Plaza.

Ortega announces the date of the first truly free Nicaraguan elections. November 4 has been chosen, just two days before the U.S. Presidential elections. Included in the speech is a recommendation that the voting age be lowered to sixteen. When this is announced the young people in the crowd dance with joy and build human pyramids from which they wave Sandinista flags.

It is a highly spirited day, as the Nicaraguans celebrate the memory of their legendary hero Sandino, something that was impossible under the dictator Som-

cont'd with pictures on pg. 4

The tragedy of glue sniffing p. 5

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### BOOK LAUNCHING cont'd from pg. 1

East End Literacy sees such material as not only supremely boring, but as insulting and humiliating to people who very often have to struggle against feelings of shame and social stigma in even admitting they can't read and in looking for help in learning. EEL's approach is to start with the students' own experiences, to take them seriously, and to use those experiences as the basis for designing a curriculum that is truly relevant.

This is how Marguerite Godbout came to produce her own "textbook": initially, she dictated her stories to tutor Olive Day, who wrote them down; the written material then became

the "reader" from which Marguerite learned to read. The book is now being used as a text by other students, who find the content, describing the life story of a person who like them has struggled against illiteracy, infinitely more relevant than any standard reader could be. At the same time, the book - and the author - are an inspiration to them, helping them to believe that they too can be successful in the challenge they have undertaken.

East End Literacy has published three other books written by students. According to staff member Sally McBeth, EEL's aim is to work toward a series of books of this type which would be available to literacy classes across Canada.

### GROUP HOMES cont'd from pg. 1

A follow-up interview with Maria Bertoni-Leakey, Assistant Director of the Toronto Boys' Home takes a look inside. "There's not much available space," she confirms.

Are the neighbours at odds? No. "The community feels we are trustworthy. We are sensitive to community values. We get along well. We do well with our neighbours. You can't distinguish this from other homes," Leakey confirms. "The kids do any damage, the kids pay or else we have maintenance people look after it. We deal up front," she assures.

Leakey goes on to explain that group homes do help residents

"... integrate with the community." Does it work? You bet!

Take Michael, who wishes to remain anonymous. A Regent Park rebel, Michael joined what he lovingly refers to as the "family" at the Toronto Boys' Home in the late '60s. Today, Michael's an active member of society who helps others in need of positive direction. Did his two-year stay in a group home help? "Yes! Definitely," he says, head held high. Thanks to the therapy, meetings with parents and kids, plain old chores and most of all, groups homes, Michael is achieving goals he can certainly be proud of.


In closing, should Ward 7 roll out the red carpet for group homes? If not, do you know why not?

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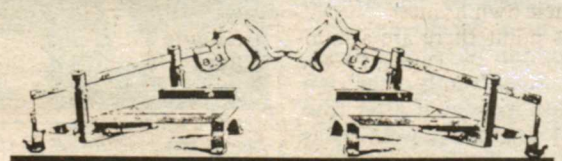
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# SPEAKING OUT

## VIEWPOINT

by ALDERMAN  
JOANNE CAMPBELL

Does aging lead to personal decline, ill health and an unproductive life in our later years? Thousands of seniors say no! and I agree with them. This is why I am excited by some very positive changes to the current social and health support system suggested by a recent review of Metro Toronto Policy on Homes for the Aged.

In February 1983, the Community Services and Housing Committee of Metro Council of which I am a member, requested that such a review be undertaken. The review examined the total long term care system by seniors in Metro Toronto. As you may be aware, it is a complex system operated by a number of private and public agencies and funded by both Metro Toronto and the Province of Ontario.

I was particularly pleased to see that the policy review restated and supported the goal of the Metropolitan Homes for the Aged which is "to provide care and services to its elderly residents to help them maintain their maximum level of functioning and well being and to provide services to help seniors continue to live in the community." The Review strongly supported the growth of alternatives in the community such as seniors housing, Adult Day Care day centres, Vacation Care and Emergency Care for the Elderly and Home Support Services such as meals on wheels, home care and nursing services. All of these programs ensure that fewer elderly need leave their homes and communities to enter an institution in order to receive the minimum care they need to lead productive, independent lives.

But there is another side to this very positive growth in community care facilities for the elderly. In 1973, the average age at which seniors made application to a home for the aged was 73 years. In 1983 it was 84 years old. It is clear that while community support programs have functioned well there is a time when illness or frailty is such that community programs are insufficient or too expensive to allow the elderly to continue to live in their own homes.

At this point there are a number of options. In Ontario every



The Community Services and housing Committee of Metro Council has made suggestions for changes in the social and health support system for senior citizens in Metro.

municipality is required to establish and maintain a home for the aged. In Metro there are seven such homes with a total of 2,563 approved beds. In addition, a senior can apply for the facilities provided by private Nursing Homes and Chronic Care Hospitals.

Historically, the Province has distinguished between two levels of care in homes for the aged. "Extended care" is considered to entail skilled nursing and personal care for a minimum of one and a half hours a day. "Residential care" is considered to be that level of care and maintenance which is not "extended care." This means less than one and a half hours of daily nursing care. In actual practice there is no distinction made in Metro between "extended" and "residential" care. In Metro homes the resident receives that amount of daily nursing care sufficient to meet his or her needs. In most cases, this involves more than 1.5 hours daily.

But here is the problem. Be-

cause people are living in the community longer, they enter a Metro home when they are most often in need of a fairly high level of care. The Report estimates that 88 per cent of residents need more than 1.5 hours of nursing care daily. The Province, however, has determined that an "extended care subsidy" shall only be available for 76 per cent of the beds in Metro or no more than 1,960 of the 2,563 approved beds in Metro homes for the aged. This means that in reality Metro Toronto property taxes are funding 30 per cent of the cost of providing necessary nursing care to the estimated 12 per cent of the seniors in Metro homes receiving extended care but classed by the Province as residential care recipients.

Currently 2,189 residents of Metro homes receive extended care services. Only 1,960 of these are eligible for the Provincial subsidy. To rectify this situation the Metro homes for the aged have proposed that the Province increase its extended care subsidy to 100 per cent of the beds currently approved in the Metro homes for the aged. I support this recommendation.

We cannot allow the government of Ontario to persist in its unstated but very real policy of transferring the costs of its social service responsibilities to the municipal property tax base.

I will be supporting Metro Community Services Department in their attempt to secure provincial funding adequate to meet the nursing care needs of seniors who reside in Metro homes for the aged. Further I will support the continuing provision of outreach services to the elderly so that they may remain active and important members of our community.

## New divorce act for Canada

by LYNN McDONALD  
MP Broadview-Greenwood

Canada is going to have, at long last, a new Divorce Act. It's the first reform to the law since 1968, and will go a long way toward humanizing our treatment of couples whose marriages have broken down.

Specifically, and this is the good news, the proposed law will make marriage breakdown the sole grounds for divorce. No one will have to sue the other party. And no one will have to accept the blame. Any couple living apart for one year (rather than three as under the current law) will be able to apply.

So-called "no-fault" divorce has been recommended by lawyers and women's groups for a long time. They are the people who deal with the aftermath of divorce. Obviously, when one party is suing the other, it's even harder to make amicable arrangements about custody, visiting rights, and support. For much the same reasons, the NDP have been proposing marriage breakdown as the only grounds for divorce since 1967.

The bad news about the proposed law is that it doesn't deal with the situation of non-payment of maintenance.

Seventy-five per cent of court-ordered maintenance payments are in arrears. That means that three-quarters of the wives and children the courts judge to be in need of financial support, aren't getting that support.

It's a major problem — one that has been researched and documented by committee after task force after working group. Thousands of Canadian women and children are living on welfare or otherwise in poverty, even though "on the books" they have been looked after. There is a huge gap between the law, and the reality of non-support.

What is the reason for this situation? The Minister of Justice blames the provinces, and certainly the provinces do have a great deal of responsibility in this area. Yet some of the reforms needed are entirely under federal jurisdiction. Still others require joint federal-provincial action.

For example, a person ordered by a provincial court to pay maintenance simply moves to another province and another jurisdiction. In these cases, there is no recourse under the law. Yet the federal government could easily locate the new address, through income tax or unemployment insurance records. (This is not to suggest that confidential information be released, but only that the address be made available to the court.)

In another situation, where the person ordered to pay support refused to comply, the federal government could ensure that money under its control, such as unemployment insurance funds, income tax and pension funds, be paid directly to the wife and children. A working person can have his wages garnished to fulfill an unpaid debt. Why wouldn't the same principle apply to the unpaid debt of support? Non-payment of maintenance puts thousands of families on the poverty line. Surely, a wife and children have as much right to bread on the table as the husband when a marriage fails.

Another serious drawback in the proposed Divorce Act is that it encourages short-term maintenance awards. Maintenance is intended to help the dependent spouse train or retrain for the labour force. The philosophy here is that after a divorce, the two former spouses become just like singles. The former homemaker, like the husband, is now on her own and must become economically self-sufficient.

As NDP Justice Critic, I will be opposing the Divorce Bill, precisely because it fails to ensure adequate support to wives and families after marriage breakdown. Specifically, I'll be asking for concrete measures to allow courts to collect unpaid maintenance orders. And I'll be asking for the removal of time limits on support payments.

Many other people will also be pushing for these improvements in the law. I'm hopeful that with public pressure we'll be able to get the amendments we need.

I'd be interested in hearing your views. So I'm sure would the Minister of Justice. You can write to him at the House of Commons, Ottawa, K1A 0X6. (No postage necessary.)

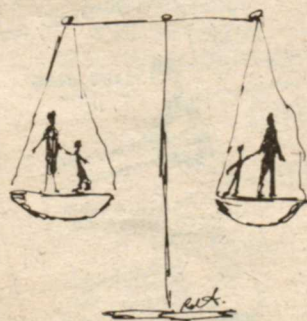
## LETTERS

The Grade 11 Urban Studies students of Eastdale Collegiate are involved in a course which is researching the history of the schools which have been located at the 701 Gerrard Street site. If you, or someone you know, has been a student, or teacher, at one of these schools, we would appreciate hearing from you. We are looking for interviews, pictures or other memorabilia for inclusion in the book we are preparing.

We hope to be able to answer such questions as: what subjects did dad or mom take?; what did granny wear to the prom?; where did people go on their first date?; and what was "spooning"?

We need this and more. Perhaps you have some suggestions? There are several schools involved in the book and we know that you can make a fascinating contribution to the proposed publication.

If you can help us, please contact John Brown at Eastdale Collegiate 461-0835.



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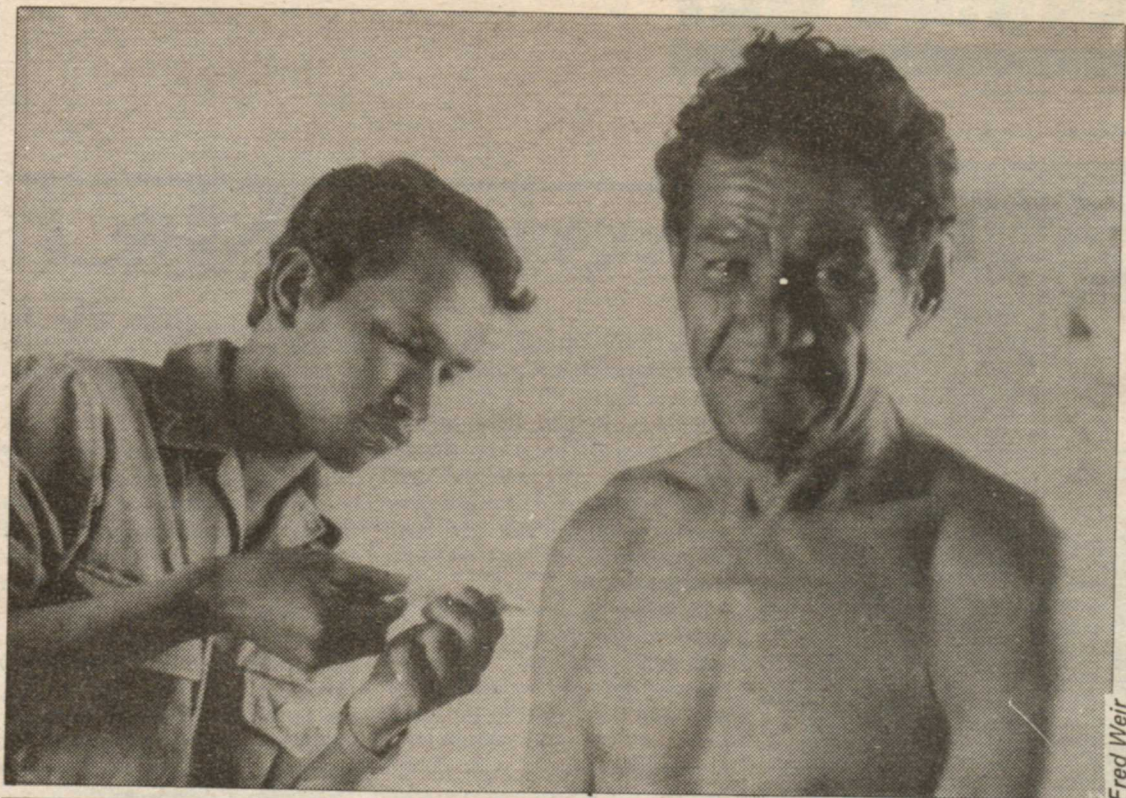
Next Board Meeting  
April 16, 8:30 p.m.

Next Editorial Meeting  
April 18, 8 p.m.

*This issue would not have been possible without the help of over 150 volunteers.*

Office Hours  
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Seven News is a non-profit newspaper published every second Wednesday by Seven News Inc.



A Nicaraguan student gives a tetanus shot to a farm worker at the Hugo Paiz cotton farm.

**NICARAGUAN DIARY**  
cont'd from pg. 1

oza just five years ago. At 10:30 that night, the exact moment Sandino was killed, instead of a moment of silence, thousands of Nicaraguans make 10 minutes of joyful noise with pots, stones, chanting and gunshots.

**February 23**

We return to the village of Hugh Paiz, where we receive a warm welcome. Aside from picking in the cotton fields, the Brigade is building four water drainage systems that will vastly improve the sanitary conditions in the village. The two Canadian

doctors in the brigade are coordinating the relocation of the village medical clinic. For two afternoons I help haul stones from the old driveway of Spencer's house. These are placed in six foot pits we have been digging for water drainage purposes. We all work especially hard the last week to ensure that the projects are completed.

As the end of our stay at Hugo Paiz draws near, it is becoming clear how attached we have become to the place and its people. On our final night at Hugo Paiz the villagers and the brigadistas celebrate at a huge fiesta together. Music is provided by an

ancient stereo system and scratchy disco and salsa records. The final week we spend in Managua meeting with various government and popular officials, learning the details of the Nicaraguan revolution and Sandinista programs.

**March 8**

I return from Nicaragua inspired by the ambitions of this small country. For the brigadistas the level of political commitment within the Nicaraguan people is striking. The lack of a movement for social change in Canada has been made all the more evident after the experience.



Canadian brigadistas bring in the cotton from the fields.



A young woman and her baby wait in line for a polio vaccination at the new medical clinic Canadian doctors helped set up.

**News Canada: advertising disguised**

by ANNA THOMPSON

Picture this scene: it is two hours before copy deadline the newsroom of a small community paper. Amidst the usual last-minute rush, the editor realizes he still needs to fill two empty columns before the paper can go to press. Perhaps a couple of reporters didn't come through with their stories, or maybe he just got sloppy and didn't keep track of story assignments.

But just then he recalls a glossy package that arrived in yesterday's mail. The package is from News Canada Inc., and the introductory letter announces a dream come true: "Behind the Headlines: Big Name Columnists for your Newspaper!" "This is great," thinks Joe Editor, as he reads on. "These top level columns are camera-ready, and yours to use free as you see fit in order to keep your readers completely up to date on current political issues."

Joe Editor may stop to wonder at the coincidence that the latest big name columnist is Brian Mulroney talking about the budget. But chances are that he'll simply use the opposition leader's columns, complete with photo inset. Besides, he might actually be planning to vote Conservative in the next election. At least this is what News Canada Inc. is gambling on.

You won't find News Canada Inc. in the phone book or yellow pages yet. You will find Power Communications of Canada Limited and Power Newspaper Syndicate. (The company became News Canada last November.) Power Newspaper Syndi-

cate is listed under Public Relations Counsellors and Publicity Service in the yellow pages.

This connection seems to support an interesting fact about the columns News Canada distributes — they're all written by people who work for, or belong to large corporations or organizations. The Progressive Conservative and Liberal parties, GM of Canada Limited, Esso Petroleum Canada, Petro-Canada, Wood Gundy Limited, The Permanent Real Estate Limited, the Bank of Montreal, and Wendy Henry (she tells you about Maple Leaf luncheon meats on TV commercials) are a few of the writers who so helpfully provide the reader (read "consumer") with their observations.

Wood Gundy's publicity office says, "We wrote a series for them (News Canada). If anyone wanted to make enquiries about the series, I'd just refer them to the appropriate duty salesman. It's done for advertising."

It looks like News Canada Inc. isn't supplying newspapers with

news: its trying to provide publicity for its corporate clients by filling more than the advertising section. NewsCanada publisher Paul Auger responds to the charge that his company is distributing publicity disguised as news by saying, "It all depends on your perspective. We just take the risk that a paper may need some material. The columns provide information, they are written by well-known associations and they talk about positive things, like improving your health. Mr. Mulroney's column is just a timely response to the budget. And the writer for the Permanent never mentions anything specific about the company itself." The fact that the column ends by inviting the reader to write to Jamie Johnston at The Permanent doesn't strike Auger as a publicity play. When asked why the "Auto Facts" column makes a one-sided pitch for GM products Auger replies, "Nothing's perfect."

**SPOTLIGHT ON SESQUI**

by HOWARD HUGGET

The name of the Second Mile Club is well known in this city, particularly to senior citizens, but how many are familiar with how and when it began?

In the depression year of 1935, when many people worked for as little as 25 cents per hour, old age pensioners were trying to exist on \$20 a month. They had been allowed that meager sum in 1927, provided they had reached 70 years of age and could pass a means test — that was really mean. Those were harsh times for millions of people, but many seniors were enduring not only poverty but also loneliness and neglect. There were no full-time organizations to help, although certain groups were then looking for ways to brighten the lives of the elderly.

Fortunately there was at that time a person particularly well qualified to organize such an undertaking. Eunice Dyke had been the head of this city's public health nurses and had established an international reputation in this field.

During Dyke's years on the job the city has established a fine program of visiting the sick in their homes and at hospitals. Realizing the importance of this work she began a similar program for the elderly, including outings organized to help overcome the isolation of pensioners.

This activity on their behalf encouraged seniors to form their own organization, the first successful one of its kind. Membership grew rapidly, and finding room to meet was a constant problem. Finally in 1947, the city of Toronto helped out by leasing 192 Carlton Street and renting it to the Second Mile Club for \$1 a year. They are still there and now there are six clubs throughout the city with about 1,000 members in all.

When I first knocked on the magnificent old oaken front door the sound of band music greeted me. There were about 23 seniors practising in the big downstairs room.

In the sunny front room a few people were sitting around chatting or reading books or magazines from the club's library. There were bulletin boards around with notices of future outings, announcements of the next foot-care clinic, spaces to register for an appointment with the income tax clinic, and other indications of the many ongoing activities. Things are always happening at the Second Mile Club.

Just to see the inside of this beautiful old mansion with its panelled walls, gracious rooms and fine wooden staircase is a delight. It is an added pleasure to realize that the building that once belonged to affluent Toronto society is now a second home for many of our senior citizens and helping to brighten their last years.



For the rest of 1984, Toronto's Sesquicentennial year, "Spotlight on Sesqui" will be a regular Seven News feature. It will provide news on Sesqui activities in the ward and background on the people and places that have been a part of Ward Seven's history over the past 150 years. If you have any suggestions, or would like to contribute an article for this feature, write: Spotlight on Sesqui, Seven News, 249 Sherbourne Street, Toronto M5A 2R9.



Doron Reschkeff

Years of inhaling glue takes its toll. It can lead to damage of the brain and nervous system to such an extent as to cause epilepsy.

## Teaching adults to read

by ULLI DIEMER

We don't think of it as a Canadian problem. Illiteracy is something we associate with distant Third World countries too desperately poor to provide schools for their populations. Not Canada.

But the reality is that in Ontario alone there are over one million adults who are "functionally illiterate" — adults whose lack of reading skills create serious problems for them, people who have trouble reading a newspaper.

Many of them are older, people who perhaps missed out on schooling because of the Depression. Many come from the poorer, especially rural, parts of Canada. Some are immigrants who can speak and understand English but can't read and write. And many are simply products of our educational system who pass out of the system each year, after 10 or more years of schooling, still illiterate.

In Ward 7 alone, the 1976 census found 12,225 functionally illiterate adults. East End Literacy, a local group that works with adults to help them become literate, estimates that half of the students taking part in its program begin at such a basic level that they cannot read a street sign.

The problems they face are daunting and never-ending. Job applications, their children's report cards, directions on bottles of medication, ballots in the voting booth — all are indecipherable. It becomes impossible to obtain a driver's license, to buy a birthday card, to read one's child a bedtime story, to buy grocery products such as "No Frills" items that don't feature a picture of the contents on the package.

The ways of coping are often ingenious, ranging from "I'm sorry, I forgot my glasses" ploys to phenomenal feats of memory whereby everything from prices to shapes of containers to colours of subway stations are memorized. Sometimes illiteracy is successfully hidden from employers, friends, and the world at large.

But much more frequently the result is poverty, unemployment, and the inability to participate in or enjoy many of society's most basic activities. And there is often a feeling of shame and

failure, a debilitating loss of self-respect, a lack of belief in one's own abilities and potential. One is acutely aware of being dependent on the help of others in coping with a print-oriented society, and therefore of continually having to admit that one can't read or write.

It is with these realities in

mind that East End Literacy approaches the problem of helping adults to learn to read. A cornerstone of East End Literacy's philosophy is the belief that becoming literate is an important way for people to gain more control and power over their lives.

Coupled with this is a stress on encouraging students to believe that they are capable, that they can learn, that they can win more control over their own lives. This also often involves understanding that it may well have been schools and other institutions which failed them, rather than it being they who are failures.

Workers at East End Literacy say that they often encounter students who were effectively victimized in some way: working class students who were glibly labelled as having a reading disability by a system that geared its curriculum and approach to middle-class culture; students with reading problems who received no individual attention and were allowed to slip further and further behind and were then shunted into dead-end programs where no real attempt at teaching was made.

East End Literacy's approach to teaching (done by 60 volunteer tutors each working with one student) emphasizes using the lives of the students as the centre of the curriculum. This can mean that a student who wants to get a driver's license will use the reading skills required for the driver's examination as the focus, while a student who wants to be able to write letters home to her family in Jamaica will learn by talking about what she wants to say in a letter, having the tutor write it down, and then using that as a "text."

In addition to one-on-one tutoring, East End Literacy also encourages students to get involved in group learning. One group meets to put out a quarterly magazine called *The Writer's Voice*, which consists of writings by students. Students choose the topics for a particular issue — for example, being unemployed, or housing — discuss it, and write about it.

The process strengthens reading and writing skills through focusing on something the students have decided is important, and also helps to build a feeling of being able to be creative. At the same time, students develop a sense that the experiences they have gone through, and what they have to say about them, are important.

When that happens, a sense of increased power and responsibility go hand in hand. One student, who knew she had gotten far less than a fair shake in school, expressed impatience mainly with herself, not with the system that had held her back. Her reason: "I'm the one that has to do something about it."

## Glue is cheap high that costs lives

by SHIELA HERBERT and LARRY MORRIS

Community Relations officer Dan Forsythe puts it on a scale of one to ten. Glue is a one, alcohol is a five, and drugs are a ten.

"Look at it this way," explains Officer Forsythe, "put \$10, \$5 and \$1 in front of people, tell them to choose one, and they'll choose the \$10. It's the same with drugs, alcohol and glue. Most will take the drugs and alcohol over the glue. But if glue is all that's available, that's what they take."

According to Allan (not his real name), his two-year stint as a glue sniffer began when he was 14 because the "body high" was cheap and easy to get.

"You're trying to stay alive, you know, and you're standing around with a bunch of guys," he says. "None of you can get into the hotels or anything. But you've got enough to buy a couple of tubes. So, one of you goes to the store for it."

Recently, Catherine Lang, coordinator, Neighbourhood Information Post witnessed such a transaction.

"It was incredible," she recalls. "This girl who couldn't have been any more than ten walked up to the storeowner, said 'Seven please,' and he pulled seven tubes of glue from underneath the counter. He didn't bat an eye when she helped herself to seven plastic bags from a fruit display on her way out."

Catherine told the store owner about the harm he was doing by selling glue to children. She also announced she would no longer be shopping there. The glue sale

was not an isolated incident in Ward 7 and Catherine's boycott is not a one-person effort to pressure retailers.

Manufacturers put warnings about the dangers of inhaling on containers as required by law. LePage's took toluene, the intoxicant, out of its contact cement cleaner for a time. After receiving complaints from buyers, the toluene went right back in. Some retailers were only selling glue already sealed in model kits. They went back to selling it loose when too many hobbyists were asking to buy the glue separately and when kids began breaking into the model kits.

Attempts to restrict sale of glue or reformulate it came out of an epidemic that occurred in Toronto about six years ago. At the same time, community relations officers began making presentations in the schools. This focus on the kids and lack of emphasis on manufacturers and retailers is just about where things stand today.

Officers Dan Forsythe and Gerrard Jones, give a "low-key" presentation on the effects of sniffing solvents. "We tell them about the suicides, the kids found with bags over their heads," explains Forsythe.

Neither Forsythe nor Jones have visited storeowners in the past 12 months. "Blues, thinners, gas, naphtha, correction fluid are not regulated substances," Forsythe says. "Uniformed officers may go around to various stores advising owners that kids are having problems. All they can do is suggest that the stores watch the number of tubes the kids are buying."

They both feel that the education program is having a positive effect. "Kids are getting a lot

smarter about how they want to live their lives," Jones said. "At least, it's not the epidemic it was six years ago."

Ward 3 Alderman Richard Gilbert wrote in a recent article in the *Addiction Research Foundation's Journal* that solvent sniffing is cyclical, and that the cycle is down from a high in 1978.

But can police, politicians, retailers and manufacturers afford to breathe easy and assume that time is on their side? If Ward 7 school children follow the typical patterns, ten per cent of them will become recreational sniffers. One in 1,000 will develop into chronic users.

Two professionals involved in the treatment of chronic solvent abusers estimated that users don't emerge for treatment until five to eight years after they began sniffing. By this time, they're being arrested for shoplifting, break and enter, assault, car theft or trespassing.

Years of inhaling have taken their toll. Glue sniffers have damaged their brains and nervous systems to the extent that they may suffer epilepsy. As well, their livers, kidneys, cardiac and respiratory systems may have been damaged. Their vision, hearing and sense of smell may have deteriorated.

The chronic abuser is often emotionally unstable, cannot concentrate or remember and often has difficulty understanding the seriousness of his or her condition. Typically chronic abusers don't remain in treatment for very long.

Ward 7 has the potential of producing 450 recreational users in any one year. Given the long, debilitating process and the poor prospect of recovery, one is too many.

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# Cabbagetown Breakdancers

by LAURETTA FORSYTHE

A threadbare curtain covers the picture window at 435 Parliament Street. Inside, it's barren. But the signs of creativity are as obvious as the JVC ghetto blaster is loud.

The Cabbagetown Community Arts Centre, which caters to the needs of the community, opened its doors in January. Already it has a hit on the way. It's called breakdancing, although it looks more like an exercise in breaking necks if you're over 20.

It is, as the students say, a night to "get down," as they prepare for class.

Currently, for a minimal fee of \$2 (members \$1), the centre offers lessons in breakdancing. Sunday, the centre's staff, Ric Cameron, Jim Heineman and The Toronto Jazz Connection performs at Ben Wicks from 6:30 p.m. through 10 p.m. The jam session featuring many well known Toronto jazz musicians runs a close second in popularity with karate classes. Enrolment is now open for music (vocals, instrumental, theory), dance (ballet, jazz, ballroom) and art (painting, drawing, crafts).

But, despite generous contributions from the community, the centre's budget needs a boost. That's why David Blackmore, executive director of the

program, initiated a membership drive. At the same time he's scouting for instruments that may be collecting dust in the attic. "We need just about everything," says Blackmore. "To run this program efficiently and provide the best — I want only the best for these kids — we need the community to jump in there."

The membership fee is quite affordable — children \$3, adults \$5 and families \$7. Once enrolled, members can vote on the centre's activities and will receive a newsletter and flyers on upcoming events, not to mention a discount on future shows. Classes are half price and you become a card carrying member.

Money and instruments aside, any spare time people can donate is worth a lot. "We need volunteers to answer phones, sell memberships and help with upcoming shows. We want community support to keep the centre going," says Blackmore.

Not that it isn't on its feet. With an enrolment of 100 students ranging in age from six to 19, the centre is standing tall, considering its frugal start in 1979. That's when Blackmore teamed up with Tom Oki, a local percussionist/artist, who opened his home and gave up the basement for classes in music, the arts and dance.

The program's co-founders saw a need — to keep kids off the streets and out of the back alleys. At the same time, opportunities and creative experiences snowballed while the concept grew.



"We did the program as an experiment," Blackmore explains. "You have to stick your neck out for anything that's worthwhile and good. When you're talking about helping the community, your energy should be extended on the kids," he says.

When Oki and Blackmore pooled their resources they produced more than ideas, they came up with assistance too. Jim Heineman and family, John T. Davis, Kimio Oki and others came to Blackmore's aid in 1979. As composers, musicians and artists they had plenty of knowledge to share.

The program, of course, flourished. Kids loved it. The community was, needless to say, supportive. "At the time, it was a learning experience for all of us because it was a new creative adventure," says Blackmore, busy preparing for the breakdancers.

Today, in its new home on Parliament Street, the Cabbagetown Community Arts Centre is "a project that changes with the community's needs, such as the breakdancing. The kids are all hanging around the halls of Regent Park. We'd rather have them at the centre. It's better that they are doing this (breakdancing and karate) than anything else," he says. "That's the program's concept." Oki agrees. "The arts centre allows kids to improvise through classes that interest them," he says. "It keeps them off the streets, gives them positive direction and a creative outlet for pent up tension," Oki says, speaking particularly of those who are financially depressed or unemployed.

Unlike other youth centres, The Cabbagetown Community Arts Centre stresses improvisation. "We teach the basic," says Oki. "But it's important to be able to improvise too."

Not a drop-in, the classes are at set times and people either participate or watch. "There are other places to hang out. The difference is that we are trying to keep them busy and involved," Blackmore emphasizes.

Classes are not the only thing kids have to look forward to. There's an intriguing list of upcoming events too. There's the Cabbagetown Gold-diggers Benefit in April, a series of concerts and dance performances in the schools, a Chinese Banquet fund raiser and a raffle. The kids will be helping with everything from selling the tickets to performing in the shows.

Right now students are preparing for competition. "Okay, we're going to work on The Swipe and The Windmill," teacher Gary Skeete hollers over a tune called Chicken Scratch. Breakers (breakdancers) snap to attention as Skeete hits the floor to show a new spin. "It (the centre) is excellent," says Alithea Cameron, a 10-year-old breaker working up a sweat. "It's a good place. There's lots of space, a good floor and it's something fun to do," she beams rosy cheeked from dancing.

"People find their place . . . they're involved. Parents bring their kids over and they watch them take classes. It sets up a relationship and an understanding of the community," Blackmore comments, as breakers prepare for the journey home.



## Black Perspectives

by CHARLES SMITH

On Wednesday and Thursday of last week, a number of Black residents from Regent Park started off the first music and creative writing workshops in the Black Perspectives program at Regent Park. Excited and extremely keen about the opportunity to understand their own culture more fully, each person came prepared for what is proving to be a truly unique experience.

Black Perspectives is community-based and initiated, sponsored by the Regent Park Resident's Association and Dixon Hall, and it offers workshops in music, drama and creative writing.

To provide resources to these cultural aspects, we have enlisted the co-operation of professional actors, writers and musicians as well as having put together an advisory committee composed of Regent Park Residents and Black people involved in the art scene in Toronto.

It took some time to put all of this into place but, finally, it has happened. And the first buds have come to show one week after the start of spring.

On Wednesday, musician-composer John T. Davis stood before an anxious group of budding musicians — some of whom have no experience playing in a band, others who have years be-

hind them but no unit to play in now. A guitarist, bass player, a couple of percussionists, singers, songwriters and horn players, each have joined Black Perspectives with the drive and determination to form a solid unit capable of enhancing the music scene in Toronto.

As for possibilities? We hope to see the group lining engagements at clubs and playing at special events in and around Regent Park. Also, there is the possibility of cutting a record.

As for the creative writing, Lillian Allen started things off last Thursday. In her workshop sat prospective writers, each eager to find out more about this thing called creativity and the Black Aesthetic. Lillian, of course, did not disappoint them. Nor, do we anticipate, will the other poets — Clifton Joseph, Dionne Brand, myself and Daniel Caudieron.

All together, there are 30 weeks to the creative writing workshops and each resource person will conduct a six week session. At the end of each session, there will be a representative sampling of the workshop's best efforts. This will be in booklet form and launched at a public reading wherein workshop participants will be featured.

The workshops for drama will be getting underway at the end of April or the beginning of May and as of this date there are a dozen people registered. Registra-

tion however, is still underway and anyone can still join in the music or creative writing workshops. All you need to do is to call me and I'll be glad to put you down in the workshop of your choice.

A final note: Black Perspectives will have its formal launching on Saturday evening, April 28. This will take place at Dixon Hall and will feature John T. Davis and The Phoenix Band, De Dub Poets Lillian Allen and Clifton Joseph, as well as the poetry of Dionne Brand. A surprise event is also slated for this date and a dance will follow the performance.

For further information call Charles Smith at 863-0498.

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If you want to volunteer to help us run this event phone 863-0498 and ask for Elizabeth Jeschkeit.



### Notice of Annual Meeting of Members

Notice is hereby given that the annual meeting of the members of Dixon Hall will be held at 58 Sumach Street, Toronto, Ontario, on Wednesday, the 25th day of April, 1984 at 6 p.m.



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(7 News paid employees and their relatives not eligible.)



The Seven News staff, shown above with their children, toil ceaselessly to bring you your community newspaper. Without recognition and often without pay, they labour day and night in a dimly-lit back room of an old church. They work so hard they forget to eat and wash, and that is why they look like this. They deeply appreciate your donations to Seven News, and humbly ask that those of you who haven't already done so become supporting members by filling out the coupon on page 3. Bread and water will be greatly appreciated, too.



If you have followed 7 News through the years, you will know that we regularly hit the panic button about our finances. Many of our readers help keep us publishing with their donations, but we are also greatly in need of help in organizing fundraising ventures. Seven News' Board of Directors works very hard at raising money (with this year being our most successful ever) but they can't do everything that needs to be done. We have some very good ideas, but we are short of the person-power required to carry them all out. With a bit more help, we could be doing a lot more.

If you would be willing to help out, or if you would like more information about what's involved, give us a call at 363-9650.

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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## Thursday

April 5

**Action Day Care General Meeting.** 345 Adelaide Street West, Suite 600, 7:30 p.m. For more information call Susan 977-6698.

## Friday

April 6

**Books for Babies.** This eight-week free session is designed for children three years and under. It's fun for the child and will introduce parents to some of the best books written for the very young. Includes fingerplays, songs and nursery rhymes. Some scientists feel that half of a person's intelligence is developed by age four. Reading stories to children is one of the most important things that a parent can do for a child's development in this regard. Registration is necessary for the program, Queen-Saulter Library, 765 Queen Street East. 465-2156.

**Stringband:** A rare appearance for this well known Canadian group. Traditional music, biting satire and beautiful songwriting with a fresh political flavour. At the Trojan Horse, 179 Danforth Avenue. \$4 cover.

**At the Fallout Shelter,** a peace coffeehouse by the Against Cruise Testing Coalition. 9 p.m. the new music of electronic composers Susan Fryckberg and Jim Montgomery. Admission is \$3. 370 Queen Street East.

## Saturday

April 7

**Equity Showcase Theatre** presents *Things That Go Bump in the Night*. A black comedy which looks at a family unable to face our world's problems. Free admission, reservations available at 869-8412, 8:30 p.m. at Harbourfront.

**Video Dancing:** Bop to the beat of your favorite bands on our huge screen. Admission is free. Harbourfront 235 Queens Quay West. 9 p.m.

## Sunday

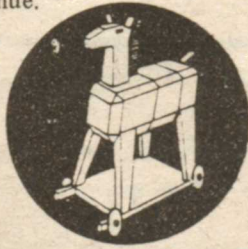
April 8

**El Nacimiento Del Juglar,** a play by Dario Fo presented by Solomon Chamorro. The play is in Spanish. Trojan Horse, 149 Danforth Avenue.

## Friday

April 13

**Fred Moyes.** This prolific songwriter and satirist from Hamilton is a favorite of listeners to CBC Radio's Metro Morning. At the Trojan Horse, 179 Danforth Avenue.



**Rummage Sale.** St. John's Presbyterian Church at Broadview and Simpson Avenue. 12 to 4 p.m.

**At the Fallout Shelter,** a special poetry evening organized by Martin Heavisides. Including Ward Maxwell, Mark Roberts, Libby Schier and Robert Priest. Admission is \$3, all proceeds go to further education and mobilization against the cruise. 370 Queen Street East.

## Saturday

April 14

**African National Congress** cordially invites you to a spring social dance. Studio 167, 167 Church Street. (Enter on Dalhousie.) Dinner at 8 p.m. \$10 per person.



Cash bar, dance. For tickets call 881-1195 or 461-4255.

**Benefit Dance for Canadian Action for Nicaragua.** Featuring the Cee Dees and slide show. 300 Bathurst Street (opposite Scadding Court). Daycare, \$5 donations. Tickets at DEC and SCM.

**Spring Sale,** Saint Luke's United Church. 353 Sherbourne St. at Carlton. 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. Accessories, books, home baking, housewares, jewellery, plants, white elephants and tea.

**Spring Sale & Tea.** The United Eastminister Church. 1 to 4 p.m. 463-2179.

**Special Easter Program.** Songwriter Tish McSorely hosts this evening of song and poetry linking a spiritual commitment and a commitment to social change. Performers are Brian Burch, David Campbell, Carty, Kriwoy, Graham and Tish McSorely at the Trojan Horse.

## Sunday

April 15

**NFB Film.** One of this year's National Film Board Oscar nominees, *The Profession of Arms*, today at noon, Royal Ontario Museum. Free with admission. For more information 978-3692.

## Tuesday

April 17

**Film at the NFB.** To mark Law Day, the National Film Board will present a number of films on various legal issues. 1 p.m., in the NFB Theatre, 1 Lombard Street. free. Call 369-4904.

## ONGOING

**519 Church Street Community Centre** has a few appointments left for the Income Tax Clinics on: Sunday from 2 to 4 p.m.; Thursday from 8 to 9 p.m. and Thursday from 7 to 9 p.m. The Clinic is free to seniors and low income people. Call 923-2778 soon to book your appointment.

## CLASSIFIED

People read *Seven News Classifieds* (don't believe us? ... what are you doing right now?)

**Seven News Classifieds** - reach Ward 7 for only \$5 for up to 30 words. Classifieds for the next issue must be received by April 14. Send them, with your payment to Classifieds, Seven News, 249 Sherbourne Street, Toronto M5A 2R9.

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