

The Advocate

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Memories of 25 years of community support

Art Bennett makes niche in St. Marys

Art Bennett has become something of an institution in St. Marys.

The Thomas Street resident is a familiar figure to local motorists as he walks along area roads, collecting discarded beer and pop bottles to finance a jigsaw puzzle hobby.

And he's almost a fixture at the local arena during the hockey season. Since 1966 Art's been involved in a variety of capacities with no contact, town and rural league hockey teams, as well as the Jr. B Lincolns.

His contributions as a goal judge and time keeper have earned him a lifetime pass to Jr. B games.

When hockey gives way to baseball in the spring, Art is on the diamond with the Lumberkings, looking after the tools of the sport for his favorite team.

And this year, as the St. Marys and District Association for Community Development celebrates its silver anniversary, Art marks 23 years as an employee in its workshop.

Art's mother, Rachel, recalls efforts to organize the workshop back in the early '60s.

"Dr. (Joe) Hackney, he came out and talked to me, and then one night we had a meeting out at his place."

"I told them I'd see what Arthur would do--if he likes it he'll stay and if he doesn't he won't. That's all there is to it."

Art was 32, and he'd been working on the family farm since leaving the stone school at Rannoch as a 16-year-old.

Under the direction of Stan Crinklaw, the first workshop manager, Art and four other people took part in a number of programs designed for occupational training.

They gathered first in the basement of the public library, moving later to

the building which today houses the Friendship Centre, and then to quarters at the back of the old post office, now Sir Joe Restaurant.

When the workshop settled into its own building on Ingersoll Street in 1968, DeLong Scovill, a local manufacturer of sewing notions, had become a major source of packaging contract jobs.

Art and his fellow workers, by this time totalling eight, also made burlap bags for Allied Farm Equipment and pocket handkerchiefs for Cascade Cleaners. They started producing wooden lawn furniture as well.

But their days at the James Purdue Centre were by no means all work and no play. Different managers employed a variety of techniques to encourage the development of recreation and life skills.

People at the workshop formed a

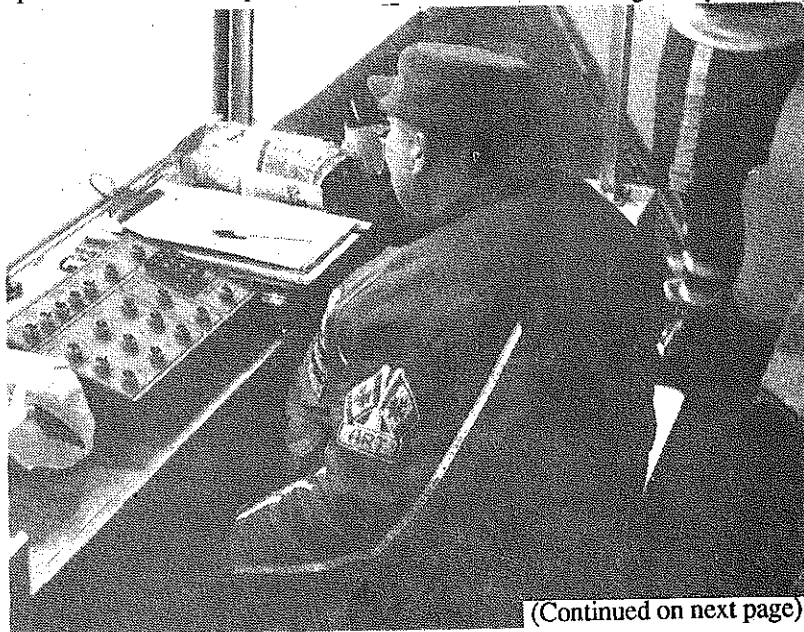
singing group, learned crafts, and produced a cookbook. They played floor hockey, went swimming and held dances.

In 1973 they took part in Sporteree, organized by workshop manager Bob Gregory and former manager Dorothy Neilson. The games were attended in St. Marys by over 100 people from Goderich, Dashwood, Exeter, Stratford and Kitchener.

It was then that Art picked up a gold medal for his bowling expertise. "I haven't bowled now in ages," he says.

Later that year, a decade of vocational training was deemed enough. Mr. Gregory found an industry in Stratford--New Method Advertising--that was willing to hire Art and his fellow "trainees" under a government program.

"They wanted to put us out to work to see how it would go," says Art.



(Continued on next page)

Art Bennett, continued from previous page

The workshop doors were closed, the new employees mastered their roles in the manufacture of telephone book covers, Mr. Gregory found another job, and New Method Advertising went broke.

Somewhere along the line someone "didn't come through with the money", says Art.

For a few months Art and associates went to the Stratford workshop, until Al Bennett was hired to manage the James Purdue Centre early in 1974.

The advent of federal government grants allowed the new manager to hire

additional staff, and greater emphasis was given in areas such as shopping, banking and grooming.

The workshop also expanded its product line to include ceramics and baked goods, and the woodworking business grew as well, says Art. "I used to do all the painting," he recalls.

By the late '70s the association had outgrown its Ingersoll workshop, and a new building was erected at Elgin and James Streets in 1978. Three years later the wood shop moved to TayMac Industrial Mall, and Art moved with it.

Desk cleats and trim for Stratford

furniture manufacturers, wood dowelling and mink pelting boards are that factory's main products.

Art is responsible for operating the dowelling machine, which produces up to 60 feet of stock a minute for manufacturers of ladders, brooms, playground equipment and the like. If called upon, he can run any machine in the wood shop.

It's been 23 years since Rachel Bennett said Art would have the final say about his future with the workshop. It seems he's decided.

A parent recalls

Information and support lacking before formation of association

The "heart break" of having a child with profound physical and developmental handicaps in the 1950s was compounded by the fact that there was no information available locally, says Betty Bell.

While the support of family members helped Mrs. Bell, then Betty Hanly, and her late husband William through trying times, community support was sadly lacking.

"There was nothing here," Mrs. Bell says, "not a thing . . . We didn't even know anybody who had a handicapped child"

"A lot of people hid them," she points out, "a lot of people didn't want to recognize them."

Until the late Jessie McKillop began working to form what is now the St. Marys and District Association for Community Development in the early '60s, Mrs. Bell recalls that parents of developmentally handicapped children were "floundering".

The Hanlys drove to London every other week to attend meetings at Princess Pat School. And for three years in the early 1950s Mrs. Bell took their son, Brian, to the Children's Psychiatric Research Institute in London every Monday to learn how to help him walk and talk.

"It was a lucky day the day Jessie McKillop came to St. Marys--it was a lucky day for St. Marys," says Mrs. Bell, a charter member of the association.

Mrs. McKillop, also the parent of a handicapped child, had been involved

in a Hamilton organization for developmentally handicapped people before moving to St. Marys. And when she arrived here and found no services Mrs. McKillop wasted no time changing the situation.

The association in St. Marys didn't come into being until seven years after the Hanlys' son moved to an institution in Orillia, but both parents were both active in the organization's early years.

And in the quarter century since the association received its charter, Mrs. Bell says the outlook for developmentally handicapped children, adults and their parents has improved considerably.

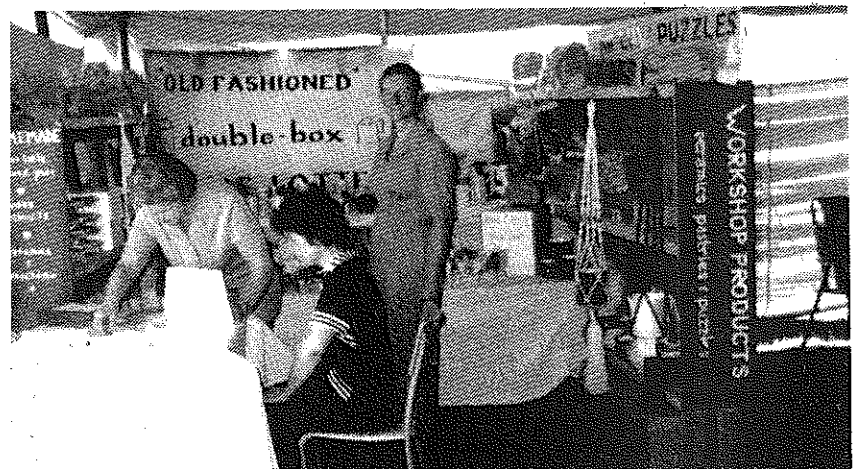
"We've come a long way when you think there was no school, there was nothing available," she says. "We've

gone from the school, to the workshop, to where some of the clients are working outside the workshop, to where some of them are able to live outside in apartments under supervision."

"We had a lot of trials and tribulations I'll tell you, getting it going," Mrs. Bell points out, "it wasn't easy."

And it isn't finished either, she adds. Mrs. Bell says public education is the most pressing task of the St. Marys association and organizations like it.

"The public is maybe more aware, but there's still a lot of work to be done . . . there'll always be people who are cruel."



From left Jessie McKillop, Shelley Palmer and Barb Cooper man the workshop booth at the 1978 St. Marys fair.

Philosophy evolves

Community essential for sense of belonging

And the next 25 years

"I always felt sort of responsible," says Joan Lang. "Instead of being a friend I got accused of mothering people."

"Maybe I just grew now to realize I don't have to mother everybody."

Mrs. Lang is a long-time employee at the James Purdue Centre, and the change in her approach to other people reflects a major shift in the philosophy at the centre.

When she started working for the St. Marys and District Association for the Mentally Retarded in 1975 there was a clear distinction between staff and clients.

"We felt more like caregivers," she says, "now you work with people as co-workers--now they do their job and you do yours."

It may seem like splitting hairs; but Mrs. Lang clarifies the point: "I think we have to recognize people as fellow community members before they can take their rightful place--before they can make a contribution to the community."

In practice, she says the association's move away from programs and toward actual experience exemplifies the new philosophy.

"It makes more sense that someone is going to learn--shopping, for example--in day to day situations rather than in a simulated program."

And the same applies to employment skills, Mrs. Lang adds. The association now offers support for people who wish to pursue jobs at local businesses instead of, or in addition to, the sheltered workshop.

That support begins with finding and learning a new job, and continues as long as it's needed.

Barb Taylor, past president of the association, echoes Mrs. Lang's explanations. "When I began in this field (in 1974) everybody was talking

about programs . . . and today we're talking about people living in the community as individuals," she points out.

It's working and living in the community that will give people the opportunity to develop contacts, and thus a support network, that will eventually see the association reduced to what Mrs. Taylor describes as a "quality assurance board".

"Most of the people they (handicapped people) associate with are paid people," she says, "and that leaves big gaps."

"It would be nice if the people who were closest to them were not paid people . . . and that's the direction we're looking at."

Employment support is a good example of how the association hopes to achieve that goal, because the support of a paid social worker may be necessary for a person to become established in the workplace.

But once a niche is developed, fellow workers can start providing at least some of that support the way they do for each other--like sharing rides to work.

Most people take the process of getting to work for granted, but for a handicapped person it can be a major obstacle to employment.

The goal of the association is that the support systems they hope fellow workers will provide in the workplace will be duplicated in other aspects of living--with neighbours, for example.

"The association would be a board to make sure that people are getting their needs met through community groups," Mrs. Lang says. It would be "like an ombudsman . . . ensuring that everyone's got their own little networks out there and that money is coming through to meet their needs."

Given time and the kind of

community that St. Marys is, that's not an unreal ideal, she says.

But neither is it going to happen overnight, cautions Mrs. Taylor.

The association found itself reacting without a great deal of warning to the province's plan in the early 1980s to close institutions, she points out, and set up a residential program without ample planning.

Provincial requirements to fund the program's first apartment building restrict the type of tenants allowed in the building to people who receive housing subsidies--single parents, psychiatric outpatients, the elderly and so on.

Consequently, many of the people brought back to St. Marys from institutions are living today in "segregated" housing instead of being dispersed throughout the community.

The association managed to avoid establishing group homes, Mrs. Taylor notes, and was fortunate in that regard. But the logic of segregating the returning people eludes her.

"Why not give money for individuals (to find regular apartments) instead of to buy an apartment building?" she asks. "Why make a ghetto out of it?"

The province's continuing commitment to close institutions still provides a challenge, says Mrs. Taylor, since services that were traditionally provided in the institutions--speech therapy, for example--are still necessary.

Institutional workers, reluctant to see their jobs disappear, are suggesting that the buildings be turned into resource centres to provide those services, she says.

But Mrs. Taylor believes those services should be available in the community.

"That's going to be our next big battle."

25 years - a chronological history

1962

The St. Marys and District Association for Retarded Children receives its charter from the Ontario Association for the Mentally Retarded. The provincial executive director tells local members that a child has "the right to develop to the maximum of his potential no matter what his abilities".

The St. Marys association is one of 82 in Ontario. Charter members are Jessie McKillop, Helen Crosby, Elizabeth Hanly, Frances Blackmore, Shirely Hackney, Vera Courtnage, Carl Schaefer, Cliff Waters, Charles Hall.

Five children begin classes in the St. Marys Public Library with teacher Beth Brown. Later, the United Church offers space, and then four teachers work with the developmentally handicapped students at St. Marys Central public school.

1964

A vocational workshop is organized for developmentally handicapped adults and opens in the public library, moving later to what is now the Friendship Centre, and then to the old post office (Sir Joe Restaurant).

1966

Plans get underway to build a permanent workshop.

1967

The Ontario Department of Education moves developmentally handicapped children from St. Marys Central to its new Portia school in Stratford.

1968

The association opens the James Purdue Adult Workshop and Training Centre on Ingersoll Street, St. Marys. The centre is named for a member of its planning committee, also a Kinsman, who died before the project was finished.

The Kinsmen were instrumental in the successful completion of the building, erected on land donated by Tom Watt of St. Marys.

The association receives a new name and new letters patent from

the Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations. It is now known as the St. Marys Association for the Mentally Retarded.

1973

Sportree '73 is held in St. Marys at the high school, a local ball park and the arena. The games draw over 100 people from Goderich, Dashwood, Exeter, Stratford and Kitchener.

On the Sunday morning of the event, the Lions Club serves breakfast.

The James Purdue Centre closes its doors when a Stratford industry hires all its workers. Within a few months, however, the company folds, and St. Marys residents find themselves attending the Stratford workshop.

1974

The James Purdue Centre reopens and prospers. Federal government grants allow for the development of new programs and additional staff are hired.

Local television viewers play bingo with the association on Cable 3.

1978

St. Marys Kinsmen are selling bricks to help finance a new workshop on land donated by the town at the corner of Elgin and James Streets.

When the James Purdue Centre moves, 30 adults are employed in industrial contract work, woodworking and home cleaning.

1980

The apartment support program begins, and training and support is offered to nine adults living throughout the community.

1981

The association changes its name to the St. Marys and District Association for the Mentally Retarded.

The James Purdue Centre's woodworking shop moves to the TayMac Industrial Mall, where it's hoped that a regular factory environment can be developed.

The woodshop is known as J. P. Wood Specialities.

Four spaces are created for handicapped children at the St. Marys Day Care Centre.

1982

The association buys a building on Queen Street West, where eight adults live and take part in an apartment training program.

1983

The provincial government is working on a five-year plan to move people out of institutions, and the association purchases an apartment building on Park Street for people returning to St. Marys as a result of that change.

Plans are also made for an adult development centre on Church Street to help meet the "more challenging needs" of those people.

J. P. Wood Specialties lands a contract to manufacture 10,000 feet of dowelling for MacMillan Bloedel.

1984

The Ontario Legislative Assembly passes Bill 82, requiring school boards to provide an education to all children. Hopes are high that handicapped children will be integrated into regular schools in their own neighbourhoods.

The James Purdue Centre starts an employment support program, which promises to stress the pursuit of employment in the community as an alternative to the traditional sheltered workshop.

People taking part in the program work in a variety of paid and unpaid part-time positions with the assistance of association staff. The goal for some is full-time employment.

1985

The adult development centre closes its doors to make way for more individualized day programs for adults.

1986

A two-day planning retreat in Stratford is attended by approximately 35 people, including

(See next page)

(Cont'd From Previous Page)

volunteers, people served by the association, community members and association staff.

The philosophy and goals of the organization are examined, and future directions are explored.

At the annual meeting, members approve board recommendations to change the association's name and

goal. The new name chosen is the St. Marys and District Association for Community Development.

And the goal is: "That all people live in a state of dignity and have the opportunity to participate in all elements of living in our community."

The association opens a reference

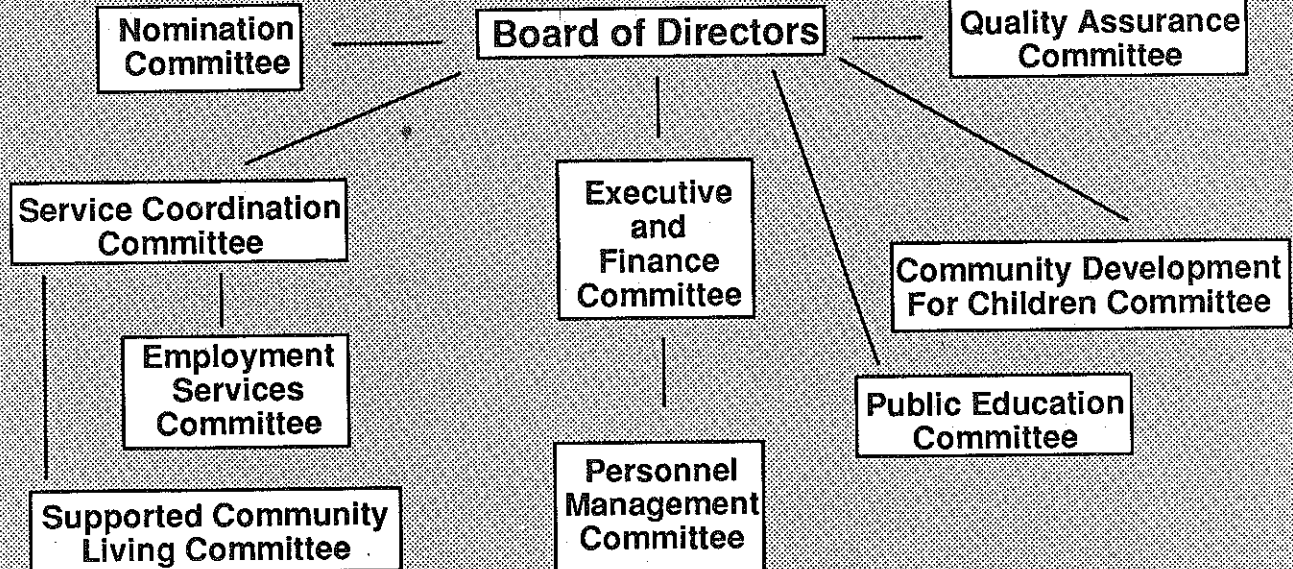
library at its Church Street building.

1987

The Ministry of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has not yet granted approval for the association name change.

Community Members

Association Membership



St. Marys and District Association for Community Development Organizational Chart

Volunteers keep association going and work to improve quality of life

There are 35 paid support workers with the St. Marys and District Association for Community Development. But without the contributed efforts of individuals and groups in the community, the organization would grind to a halt, volunteer coordinator Marg McLean says.

Volunteers have always played a significant role in the association, responsible both for its formation 25 years ago, and for its continued operation at the direction of a 10-member board.

And the opening of the association's first sheltered workshop in 1968, like its successor a decade later, would not have been possible without volunteers, Ms. McLean points out.

St. Marys Kinsmen spearheaded fundraising drives for both buildings, and solicited and provided labour for the first workshop.

Ensuring that adequate facilities and equipment are available, like serving on the association's board, helps meet the physical needs of the 40 or so people served by the

association.

But equally important, says Ms. McLean, are the efforts volunteers like Michael Hearn have made to improve the quality of life for these people.

Mr. Hearn is an advisor with People First, which, as a self-help or advocacy group for people with handicaps, is itself an organization of volunteers.

And there's a youth group chaired by Jonathan Jenkinson of the Prospect Hill area.

That organization's seven members involve themselves in group social activities, as well as assisting individuals.

Lately they've been learning about "peer tutoring", which pairs handicapped and non-handicapped students, who then attend classes together.

It's not a program that's available in this area, but "it's something they'd like to see happen," Ms. McLean says.

A number of volunteers also offer help on an informal basis--going shopping or to a movie with

someone, helping somebody join a club, and "just being a friendly neighbour".

It's in these day to day situations where the need for volunteers is great, she points out.

"If all of the people who are closest to you are paid people then it doesn't leave you with a very good feeling of self worth, because the person at the movie is paid to be there, the person shopping with you is being paid to do it," Ms. McLean says.

There'll always be a need for some paid workers, to provide attendant care, for example, she points out. But people volunteering to be friends are the best equipped to offer relationships, Ms. McLean says.

And several U.S. studies indicate that of all the things people value, relationships top the list.

From relationships spring respect, choices, developing abilities and contact with other people. "They all kind of go hand in hand," Ms. McLean says.

"And they make for a high quality of life".



Volunteers stage Kids on the Block puppet shows for area children.

Planning retreat
.... people thinking about the future together

***January
1986***



Retarded children ass'n has its official installation

J.A. EDITION, JUNE 13/62

The regular meeting of the St. Marys and District Association for Retarded Children was held Tuesday evening, June 4th, in the St. James Parish Hall. Installing Officer Mr. Harvey McQuarrie from Kitchener performed a short Installation Service for the following officers: President, Mrs. J. McKillop; vice-presidents, Mr. C. Waters and Mrs. R. Crosby; treasurer, Mr. W. Hall, and secretary Mrs. W. Hanly.

The business session was held and some of the main items to develop were that the organization was now ready to accept admissions for a class for

exceptional pupils, and hoped to be in operation this fall. Also anyone interested in this work could become a member for the fee of \$1.00. The Treasurer reported that a donation of \$50. had already been received from that Students Council of the St. Marys Collegiate to help with the Association's work.

Mr. McQuarrie, who is chairman of the Education Committee for O.A.R.C. gave a very interesting and informative talk on the highlights of the work being done by organizations on Retardation. A delightful lunch was served by the hostesses, Miss Louise Robertson and Mrs. Gerry Bull.



Ab Kittmer

St. Marys Association is 82nd in Ontario to receive charter

J.A. EDITION OCTOBER 17/62

Thursday, October 11th, was an important day for many parents in the St. Marys District. This past year a new organization "The St. Marys and District Association for Retarded Children" has been formed and on this particular evening last week the group received its charter.

Mr. W. R. Kirk, Executive Director of the Ontario Association for Retarded Children, was in St. Marys to present the charter and as well to do this he gave a group of members and other interested citizens a fine idea of what the organization is endeavoring to do in Canada as well as what it should strive to do in St. Marys and District in future years.

Mrs. Jack McKillop, who is the president of the St. Marys Association, was the very gracious chairman of the meeting which was held in the St. James Parish Hall. Mrs. McKillop, who has been associated with the work of the Association for some years, particularly in the Hamilton area, welcomed Mr. Kirk and also conducted the business of the meeting. It was

revealed that the Library Board has consented to let the local Association use the basement room of the Public Library for a classroom. Application for the teaching position are being accepted by Mrs. Reg Green, and parents who have a child who could benefit from this special training are asked to get in touch with Mrs. Green.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read by the Secretary, Mrs. Bill Hanly, and a full account of activities was thereby related.

In addressing the group on Thursday evening Mr. Kirk outlined in an interesting fashion much of the brief history of the Association in Canada. He mentioned too the attitude changes which had occurred regarding retarded children over the past several decades. He said the first stage of thinking had been to "put them in institutions, you can't do anything for them anyway". The second stage of thinking had seen much sympathy for the parents, but it was still thought that nothing could be done for the child. The third stage had brought the determination to do something about it with the contention

agreed upon that a child "had the right to develop his maximum of his potential no matter what his abilities".

82nd Local Group

Mr. Kirk said further that the Ontario Association was formed in 1953 and St. Marys was the 82nd local association to be formed in the province.

In 1953 there were only nine local groups.

The local Association will hold its November meeting on November 22nd, with Dr. S. Koehler as speaker. He is Medical Superintendent of the Psychiatric Research Clinic for children in London.

The St. Marys and District Association is hoping to further acquaint local people with the aims and plans of their organization over the next few months. It is expected that letters will be sent to many St. Marys and District organizations telling of this.

The executive and several guests were treated to dinner at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Bull on Widder Street prior to Thursday's meeting and were given an opportunity to meet and chat with Mr. Bill Kirk.

Happy atmosphere is found at new training centre in public library basement

J.A. EDITION OCTOBER 14/64

Seven St. Marys and district people who have never before known the privilege of carrying a lunch bucket and putting in a full days work, have a new sense of accomplishment there days with the recent opening of the St. Marys and District Occupational Training Centre in the basement of the public library.

Director of the centre is Stanley Crinklaw with numerous volunteer assistants helping out on a rotation basis.

The atmosphere of the training centre is distinctly a happy one. The workers were pleased to greet the Journal-Argus representative and show him the result of their endeavours. To date, the work consists of assembling various sizes of safety pins on wire clips, ready for sale. This work has been made available to the centre by a local industry, the De Long Hook and Eye Co. The workers are not liable to run short of production material for some time to come. Work to date is necessarily slow because these people are not as fortunate as you or I, figuring out the pin assembly process is slow in most cases. One must remember that most of these people have never attempted, or been given the chance to attempt a job such as this before. Counting out and placing seven safety pins on a wire clip may not sound hard to us, but it is quite an accomplishment for the handicapped.

Two Purposes

The Training Centre is designed to accomplish two purposes. First, it will provide useful employment for those who, through an oversight of nature, are not as well equipped as average people. Secondly, it will train some of these people to the point where they will be able to go out into the world and earn their own living. This is a privilege that you and I tend to take for granted but, in the rather lonely lives of most of these individuals, is a thought precious to behold. Simply carrying a lunch-bucket to the centre and putting in a day's work with other people is a wonderful thing for most of them. It is incomparably more fun than sitting at home and looking out the window.

Smallest Centre

St. Marys is the smallest centre

among some thirty such in Ontario. The entire idea is relatively new, but considerable success has been reported from many of the centres established within the past few years. Assembly work, collating and mailing various items for service clubs and industry, plus some craft work is the mainstay of most of the centres. Being considered for the local centre is a project which could make use of your old Christmas cards, also birthday and what have you?

The simple chore of tearing the back of the cards from the front is a good starting point for many of the handicapped. It stimulates muscular co-ordination and introduces them to the routine of work in a way that is encouraging by proving that, after all, they can do something useful. The general public could also help by tearing off stamps from their letters and sending them into the centre. Once again, the relatively simple process of floating the stamps from the paper and later mounting them on sheets for sale, would be a boon to the workers at the centre. It is hoped that eventually thank-you notes and mounted stamps, plus

other craft work, may be assembled in saleable form.

Citizens Help

Local citizens have been generous to date with their assistance to the centre. A carpenter built cupboards at no cost, a lumber dealer provided material at a favorable price: desk tables and scales have been donated. The centre is still in need of a typewriter and possibly an AM-FM radio.

It is apparent that the new centre will perform a much needed function by filling a great gap in the lives of handicapped persons. There is little doubt but what the support of the community will be forthcoming in generous measure. It is understood that the centre may handle up to twelve trainees so that a few openings still exist. For persons out of town, Harry Dobson provides the transportation for trainees on the regular school bus run. The centre operates some six hours per day. No pressure is placed on the trainees; they work at their own speed and capability. The centre is indeed a bright spot in the fight to rehabilitate those less fortunate and a credit to those responsible for its organization and operation.



Trainees at the new occupation training centre, with quarters in the basement of the public library, take a break for photographers. Seated and second from the left is Art Bennett.(1964)

Scores of helpers had part in building adult workshop

J.A. EDITION, JUNE 12/68

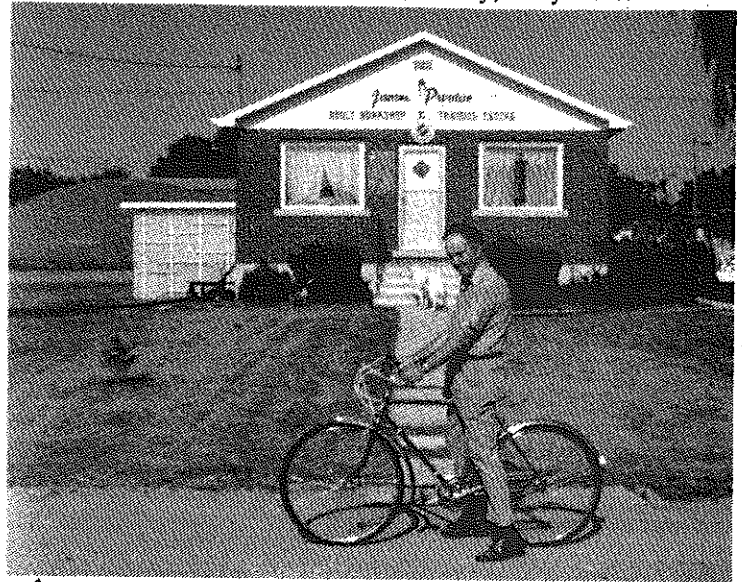
A brief ceremony Saturday afternoon will mark the completion of one of the finest examples of community effort ever to take place in St. Marys. For the members of the St. Marys Kinsmen Club, best described over the years as "that mighty dozen", the cutting of the ribbon at the James Purdue Adult Workshop and Training Centre will bring to a triumphant conclusion two years of effort beginning with the announcement by the late James Purdue, originator of the project, to the effect the club would take on the new building.

Back in the days when the original excavation was filled with three feet of water and Kin members were digging in that infamous West Ward blue clay in desperate effort to get on with the job, the official opening must have appeared on about the same level as a trip to Mars to Kinsmen. With the determination that has given this

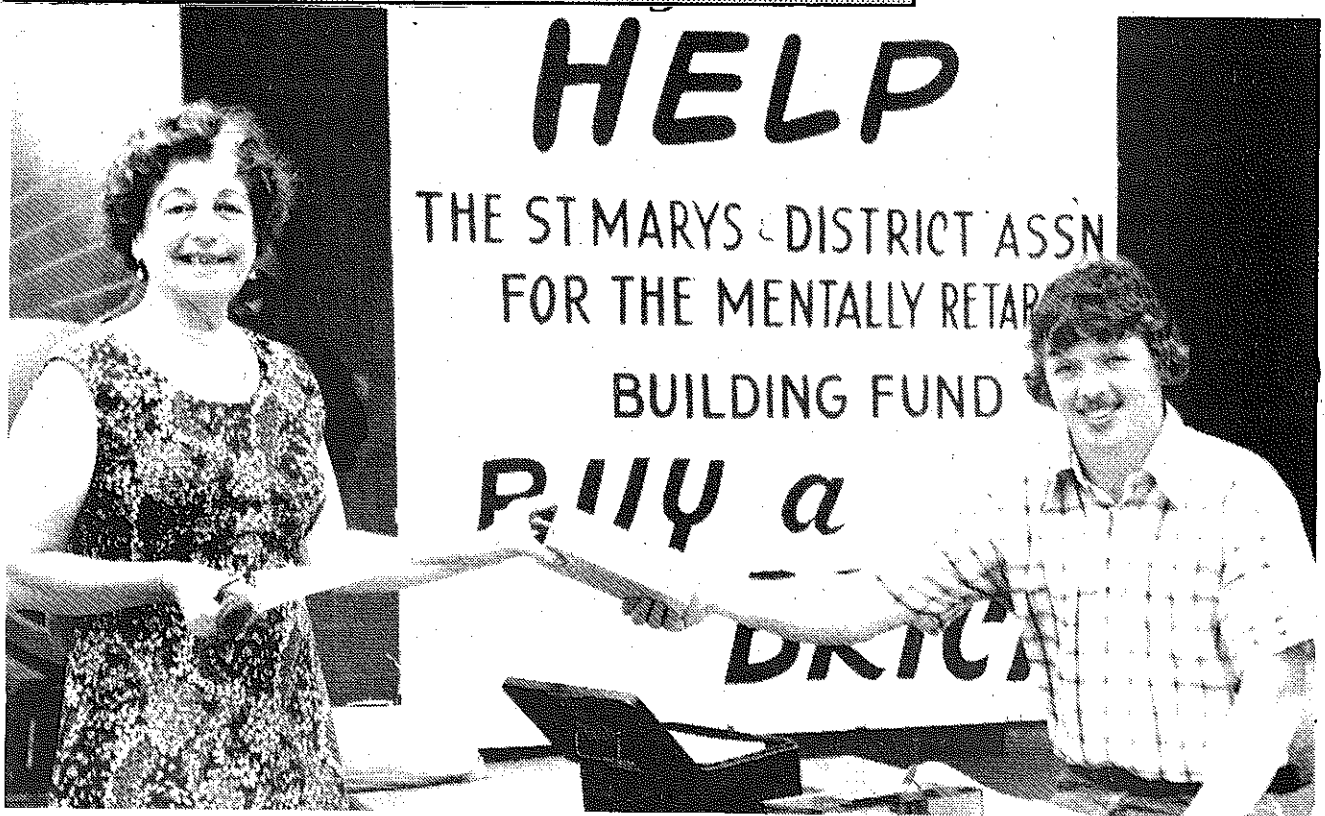
digging, hammering, cadjoling and generally persevering toward a final conclusion.

just part of an article*****

Other Helpers - Beech Baker, Glen Millson, Tom Watt, Don Finnie, Jim Craigmile, Chum Hammond, Neil Nutt, Frank Ball, Lond's Club, Bob Baird, and many, many more.



Concrete support from Kinsmen, 1978



Chrissie Owen buys a brick from Kinsmen Steve Grose. In the top photo, Ken Harris poses in front of the new building.

Ribbon cut at James Purdue Centre

J.A. EDITION, NOVEMBER 8/78

When officials of the James Purdue Centre cut a ribbon ... they indeed, cut a ribbon!

On the count of three last Wednesday afternoon, a half dozen pairs of scissors sliced the twelve foot long gold ribbon into neat two feet long section, signalling the official opening of the new \$200,000 James Purdue Centre located at the corner of James and Elgin Streets.

Involved in the official opening and ribbon cutting ceremonies were - Mrs. Vera Purdue, mother of the late James Purdue; Barbara Osborne, president of the St. Marys and District Association for the Mentally Retarded; Mayor Clifton Brown; Leo Van Dyk, president of the St. Marys Kinsmen Club; Hugh Edighoffer, Perth MPP; Murray Hamilton of the Ontario Ministry of Social and Community Services; and Mrs. Nonie Hemingway of the Ontario Association of the Mentally Retarded.

Acting as master of ceremonies was Dr. Ross Crosby of St. Marys, who stated that "it's a wonderful town to live in" He also commended the local association for the mentally retarded saying "...it's just great to have such a live organization."

Gathered under sunny skies with warm temperatures the crowd of about 100 listened as members of the official party congratulated the Kinsmen Club,

the St. Marys and District Association for the Mentally Retarded, and the town of St. Marys for their efforts in building such a structure.

Murray Hamilton stated he was impressed by the spirit of the staff and clients of the centre. He said "The great spirit of volunteerism gives "great encouragement for the future".

Hugh Edighoffer congratulated the community for advances being provided for the mentally handicapped, and recalled attending the official opening of the other James Purdue Workshop located on Ingersoll Street near the hospital. That building was abandoned after it became evident that the centre was too small and another structure was needed. This new building has more than twice the floor space of the original building.

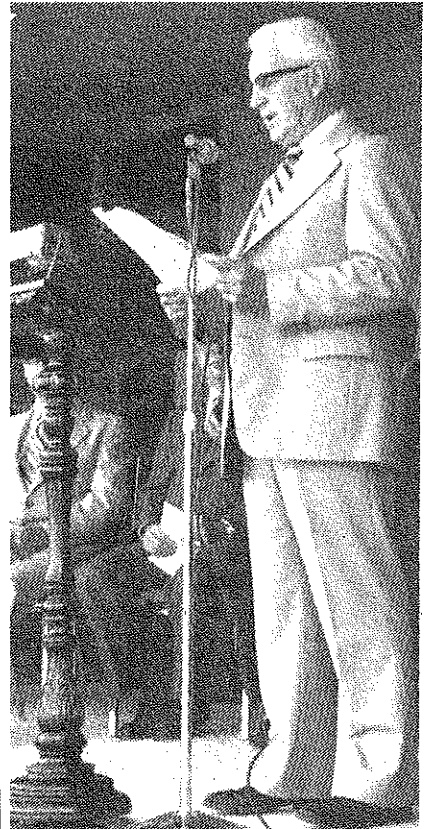
Mayor Brown recalled when the lot, where the centre is now situated, was a cold storage plant. He said the town thought the lot may be worth something some day and purchased the land for \$13,000.

However, he stated at the ceremony, council had agreed that they sell the property if anyone could come up with their asking price of \$1. Association treasurer John Blake did not hesitate, bursting forth with the \$1 in exchange for the deed officially closing the sale.

Following the official opening, everyone present, along with the

official party was invited inside for a tour of the new facility and enjoy refreshments made by the clients of the centre.

An estimated \$23,000 is presently being sought in canvassing efforts by the fund raising committee of the association.



Rev. Dr. Ross Crosby



1978 ribbon cutting at James Purdue Centre. From left are Kinsmen president Leo Van Dyk; St. Marys Mayor Clifton Brown; Hugh Edighoffer, Perth MPP; association president Barb Osborne; Vera Purdue, mother of the late James Purdue; Murray Hamilton of the Ontario Ministry of Social and Community Services; and Nonie Hemingway of the Ontario Association of the Mentally Retarded.

Association buys apartment block

J.A. EDITION, 1982

The St. Marys and District Association for the Mentally Retarded will take possession of the Little Falls Apartments Dec. 21, thus concluding a property transaction between the association and the building's present owner, Halifax resident Dr. John Collins.

The two-storey brick building which overlooks the Thames River from the river's west bank, currently houses seven tenants who will have to move out by the end of February 1982.

There are six units in the building.

John Sheeler, president of the St. Marys and District Association for the Mentally Retarded, said Tuesday in a statement to the Journal-Argus that the apartment building will be converted to a residence for mentally and physically handicapped persons from St. Marys and district.

"We will be providing living quarters and care for local people who require it and for other local people who, because of their handicaps, have been obliged to live away from their families and friends in provincial institutions.

"We will be very selective in our admissions program and any persons chosen will be expected to live responsible, social lives under reasonable supervision", he stated.

"After almost two years of study, eight people will come in this program, which is sponsored jointly by the local association and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. There will be staff on duty 24 hours a day to look after the needs of the residents.

"The project will be known as "The William Hanly Apartments Incorporated" to honour the memory of Bill Hanly who was president of the association at the time of his tragic death last June.

"Mr. Hanly was deeply involved in the planning for the apartment program and it seems most fitting in view of his

long years of service to the mentally retarded in this area, that we name the building after him," Mr. Sheeler said.

"We realize that there will be some disruption in the lives of the present tenants of the building, but we must have vacant possession of the apartment unit by Mar. 1, 1982, in order to carry out modification to the building for its new use.

"We will exercise every consideration to make the move of the present occupants as smooth as possible," Mr. Sheeler said.

The residents of the historic Ingersoll House which is located on the property will not be required to vacate.

"For the next several years, the apartment unit will be adequate for our needs", the president stated.

"Residential projects for physical handicaps have been in operation in other Ontario centres for several years and we know that all citizens of this community will support the decision of the Board of the St. Marys and District Association for the Mentally Retarded in this new endeavour, as they have done so conscientiously in the past."

Mr. Sheeler declined to say how much the property is costing the

association.

The seven tenants currently residing at The Little Falls Apartments have been given notice of the impending termination of their occupancy in a letter from Dr. Collins dated Oct. 31.

Ever since rumour of the purchase emerged several weeks ago, the building's tenants, nearly all of whom are senior citizens, have been expressing anxiety about the deal.

"Every one of us without exception is upset," said 87-year-old Walter Ollen-Bittle, who has been resident in one of the units with his wife for the past 11 years.

Mr. Ollen-Bittle and his wife have been looking around for other accommodation in town but "there's not a place in town that's suitable."

"We don't want to leave town," he said.

Another resident in the building, Valery Bishop, said she felt "very anxious" about the sale of the building.

"The last thing I want to do is to move," she said.

"We're all shocked. We never thought that this sort of thing could happen."



At right, a party for Joan Risdon, held at Lois McEwan's home, June 1972. From left are Murray Vanstone, Rose Mary Richardson, Rose Mary Childs, Ken Harris, Joan Risdon, Bill Duthie, Shelley Palmer, Richard Oliver, Arthur Bennett and Helen Christie.

J.P. Wood specialties is on the move

J.A. EDITION FEBRUARY 2/83

A new machine and new contracts have put J.P. Wood Specialties on the move.

Supervisor Steve Grant says the wood shop is set up to run as a highly productive factory.

Originally located in the James Purdue Centre, the wood shop was moved to TayMac Mall, across from the St. Marys golf course last October.

Mr. Grant said in a recent interview there were a couple of reasons for the move.

"We wanted everything to run like a regular factory. And the large volumes caused a need for more space because of the contracts acquired," he explained. The wood shop has contracts to make desk cleats for Krug Furniture in Stratford, to do trim work for Kroehler Furniture in Stratford and to

produce mink pelting boards for St. Marys Cold Storage.

At the beginning of the new year Mr. Grant acquired a contract for the shop with MacMillan Bloedel to produce dowelling for things like closet rods and broom handles. The first order was for 10,000 feet and Mr. Grant says the dowelling will be the shop's main specialty.

The new dowelling machine which arrived in November is set up to produce 60 feet per minute. There are only a few of these machines in Ontario, he said.

"There is a large market for dowelling. We are really excited about this because I can see the potential for us being a self-supporting industry. Our goal is to be self sufficient."

Mr. Grant says he has been working towards the manufacturing of the

dowelling since August of 1981.

Besides teaching the men to be machine operators, he does time studies, machine set up, negotiates contracts and purchases the machines.

Seven employees who all punch a time clock and assistant supervisor Steve Brown work in the shop. Mr. Brown is sponsored by the federal government through Canada Employment for a year.

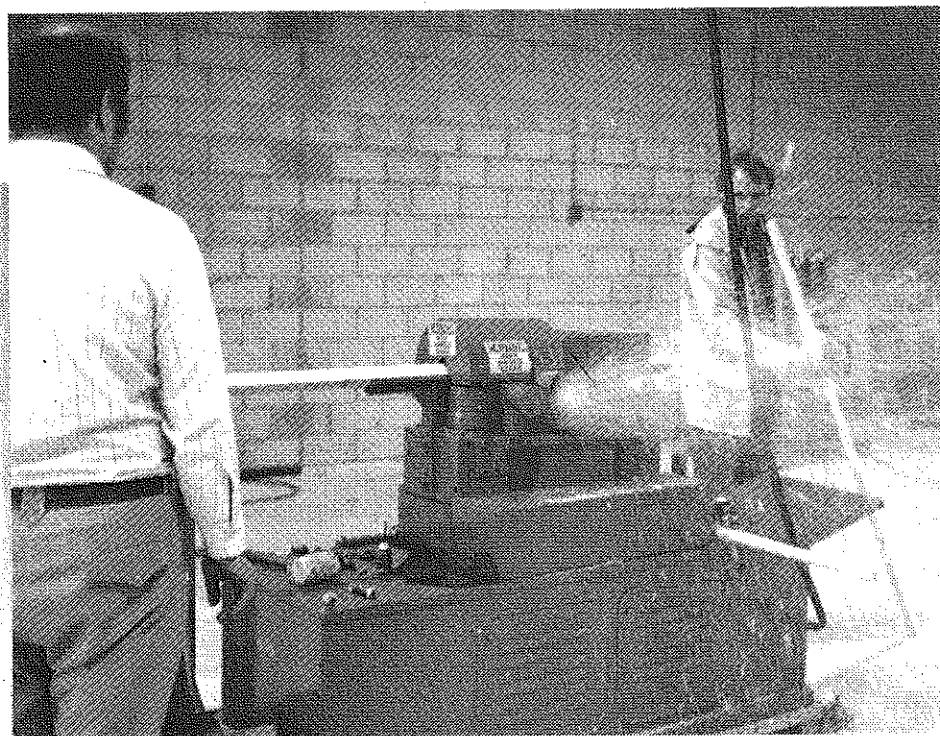
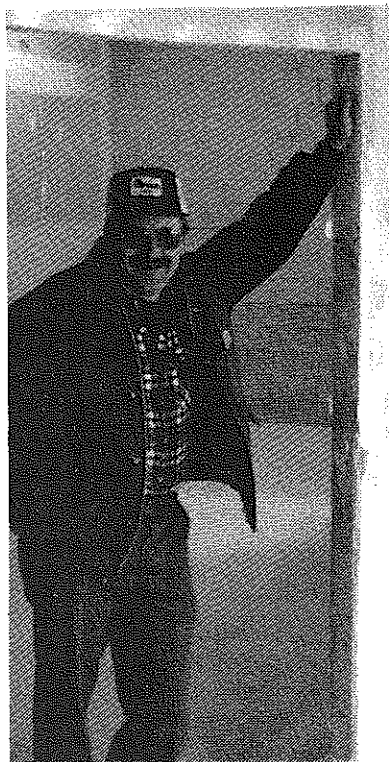
Safety is the number one priority in the shop says Mr. Grant.

"The same safety procedures are followed as in any other company he said.

"There has been a really good response by visitors and families of the employees towards the shop and it's goals."

An open house is planned for the spring.

Harold Levy
at J. P. Wood Specialties.



Trying out the new dowelling machine

Tenants move into Park street apartments

J.A. EDITION, OCTOBER 1984

A well-attended open house for the newly-renovated Park Street apartments was held last Wednesday and four tenants moved in on Saturday.

The former Mormon meeting house at the north-west corner of Church and Park streets was bought last year by the St. Marys and District Association for the Mentally Retarded. The building was purchased for \$35,000 and renovations cost \$110,000. Work by local contractors began last fall.

The four tenants who moved into the building were previously living at the association's adult development centre on Church Street.

Two of them work at the James Purdue Centre in the contract room and two attend the adult development program.

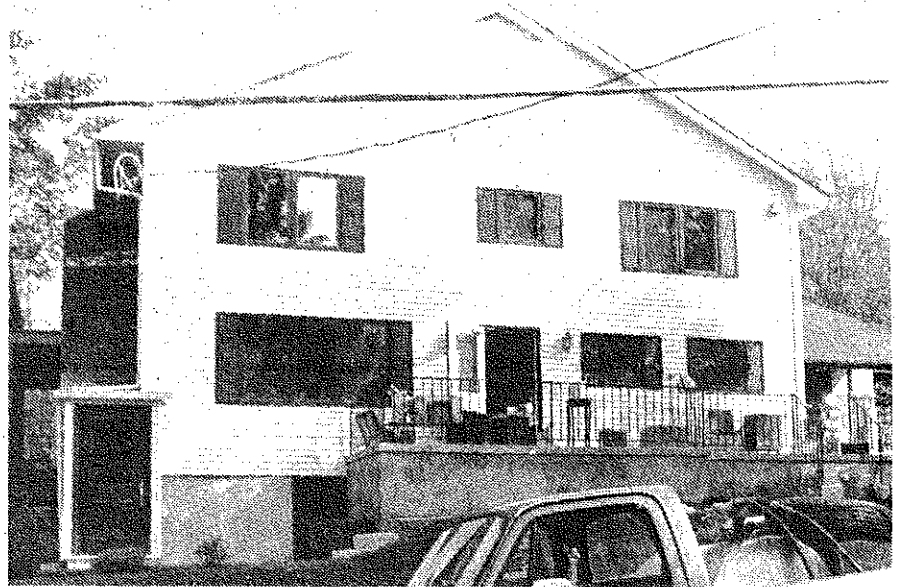
All four were transferred to St. Marys last November when the Bluewater Regional Centre in Goderich closed its doors. All are originally from the St. Marys area and have families in the local community. Their families favoured their return to the community from the Bluewater Centre.

At capacity, the Park Street apartments can accommodate seven persons. The building consists of three

two-bedroom units and a one-bedroom unit. All four apartments have private entrances.

As well, five full-time staff members will work various shifts at the apartments. There will also be a part-time and weekend "relief" staff.

In a related matter, volunteers are urgently needed to help the association carry out its programs, says Jane Jenkinson, volunteer co-ordinator at the James Purdue Centre. Anyone wishing to volunteer a small portion of their time each week can contact Mrs Jenkinson at 284-1400.



Moving day.

St. Marys Association implements employment program

J.A. EDITION MAY 1/85

In an attempt to provide more options for people with developmental handicaps, the St. Marys and District Association for the Mentally Retarded has implemented an employment support program.

Manager Bill Gow of the James Purdue Centre, the association's sheltered workshop, says that the program is a "change in emphasis" from providing the traditional sheltered environment to supporting the pursuit of employment within the community.

Mr. Gow says the program got "off the ground" last fall and that

five people from the James Purdue Centre and four from the Adult Development Centre are currently taking part.

All nine people are working on a part-time basis and with the support of association staff. Their placements range from agricultural to retail with ongoing wage negotiations based on productivity.

The initial objective of the program, says Mr. Gow, is to provide an alternative to working in a sheltered workshop. "People should have choices," he says.

Mr. Gow anticipates that of those people who wish to take part in the program, some may eventually find

permanent, full-time, paid employment and will receive minimal support from the association. Others, he says, might work without pay in temporary, parttime jobs with extensive staff support.

The association services a total of 38 adults with developmental handicaps.

Mr. Gow does not expect that the program will result in personnel changes at the workshop, although he says job descriptions may change.

One person has been hired on a temporary basis to help implement the program.

Association for Mentally Retarded changes name, goal

J.A. EDITION JUNE 18/86

A round of applause greeted approval of the new name and goal of the St. Marys and District Association for the Mentally Retarded at the association's annual meeting June 11.

The goal, "That all people live in a state of dignity and have the opportunity to participate in all elements of living in our community," replaces: "That people with mental retardation and their families live in a state of dignity and have the opportunity to participate in all elements of living in our community."

As part of a trend away from labelling people by their handicaps, and in reflection of the new goal, the association will now be known as the St. Marys and District Association for Community Development.

Although the changes may cloud identification of the function of the association, they signify recognition of a shift in philosophy that has been developing over the past several years.

Originally established to provide a framework within which people who are developmentally handicapped could work, the association now places more emphasis on instigating the integration of those people into the community, executive director Bud Carter says.

Ideally, people who have relied on the association for employment, recreation and, more recently, accommodation, should have the opportunity to live and work in a "normal" community setting.

The changes, which received the unanimous approval of the 20 voting members who attended the annual meeting, were proposed at a two-day planning retreat held in Stratford last winter.

That retreat was attended by approximately 35 people, including

association staff, volunteers, members of the community, and people who are served by the association. It was this last group that instigated the name and goal changes.

A third recommendation resulting from the planning session - that the residential and vocational services of the association be reduced will be studied by the association's board of directors.

Bev Slater, chairman of the adult services committee, said the suggestion was put forth primarily by members of the community, mostly parents who feel "it is time for people to start looking after their own seeds."

She outlined a proposal for a pilot project that would see two people, one who required a high level of support and one who required less support, receive a sum of money with which to purchase services for integration.

Mrs. Slater reported the

establishment of a seniors' committee. The new committee is being formed because some people working in the association's vocational program are ready to retire, she said.

The association's annual audit, also presented at the meeting, indicated a surplus of \$14,181 for the year ending March 31, 1986. Term deposits of \$220,000 were maintained during the year, treasurer Randy Nightingale said.

Although the association wrapped up the year in the black, Mr. Nightingale pointed out that the "primary measurer" of success is the "quality and scope of the services we are able to offer to our community."

The previous year of operation ended with a surplus of \$41,293.

The treasurer reported that during the past year Wm. Hanly Apartments Inc. renovated its two buildings on Church Street South, one of which now houses



1986 annual meeting--from left, Sandra Gregory, Ivan Thompson, Kermit Thompson, Dave Hasbury and Ken Harris.

offices and a resource centre.

The other building will be split into apartments.

Plans for the coming year include installation of a computer at the James Purdue Centre, which will require some remodelling at the centre, he said.

Notes

-Grants from the Ministry of

Community and Social Services, the association's main source of funding were down slightly last year, from \$704,474 to \$692,077. Total revenue was \$953,393.

-Committees of the association include: quality assurance, personnel management, public education, children's services, service co-

ordination (formerly admissions), adult services and seniors.

-Programs and services offered are: vocational, which includes a sheltered workshop and support for people employed outside the workshop (A combined total of 34 people are being served); supported community living, for people living in apartments with staff assistance; and volunteer services.

-The public education committee continues to advocate municipal financial support of the association. The committee began offering a \$500, two-year scholarship this year.

-A person from the children's services committee is a member of the special education advisory committee of the Perth County board of education.

-Directors of the St. Marys and District Association for Community Development, as elected at the June 11 annual meeting are: Cathy Allen, Jane Bayne, Marie Brookshaw, Lynne Eedy, Jean Grose, Harold Levy, Randy Nightingale, Bev Slater, Jim Swan and Jim Vessie.



New director Jim Vessie with Linda Edwards.

1962 - 1987

We welcome you to share in the celebration of the
25th Anniversary
of St. Marys and District Association for the Mentally Retarded on
Wednesday, June 10th, 1987.

6:30 p.m. - Potluck Dinner, please bring your favourite dish.

7:30 p.m. - Guest speaker is Mr. Gordon Fairweather, Chief Commissioner, Canadian Human Rights Commission, Ottawa.

8:15 p.m. - Annual General Meeting.

To be held at the St. Marys Community Centre,
James St. South, St. Marys, Ontario.

R.S.V.P. 519-284-1469