

Fight against pollution goes on

a v.i.p. and me

(very interesting person)

By KATHLEEN A. HICKS



"We find that people are very very favorable about participating in a recycling program, and yet it is hard to actually get them to do it. When you talk to them personally, they get very enthusiastic about it, but if they read a newspaper article, they hesitate to help. It is hard to get a new idea across. It is also hard for people to realize the impact that pollution will have on the environment eventually."



FRANCINE CROSS:
Chairman — S.A.V.E.

ME: S.A.V.E. stands for Streetsville Against a Vanishing Environment. You were instrumental in founding this group of concerned women in Oct. 1972. Tell me how you went about this?

MRS. CROSS: First of all, it was a concern of my own from reading in the papers that there was a pollution problem, and that they were starting to institute new recycling methods and there was a place where people could take papers and glass for recycling. So I telephoned the town of Streetsville to ask if they had glass recycling. I knew the Scouts picked up the papers; that has been going on ever since I came here five years ago. I was referred to a gentleman Fred Shortt, who was also looking into the pollution situation. We talked, off and on, for three months. He was sympathetic towards me and I was sympathetic towards him. We both agreed, yes there should be recycling, but there wasn't anything done about it. Then the Zonta Club of Mississauga decided to have a glass drive. They were given my name by the town; they knew I was interested in recycling and they asked me if I would organize the glass drive, which I did. There were also a number of ladies from different churches who were interested. We held a meeting with Zonta, and then the girls who were at the meeting decided we should carry on with this. The Anglican Women's Institute was having a meeting and they were showing a film, so we were all invited out to see it. We all agreed, yes something should be done, but no one wanted to head up the committee, so this is how I ended up being chairman of S.A.V.E.

ME: How was the name S.A.V.E. originated?

MRS. CROSS: At one time, the Dolphin Junior High School did a bottle drive for a couple of years and they used the name S.A.V.E., and we asked permission to use it. It's a good title, but now that Streetsville has joined Mississauga, I hope it doesn't deter people from the surrounding area from coming out and using our glass depot.

ME: Do you have an executive and hold regular meetings now that you are more organized?

MRS. CROSS: We don't have an executive. The committee only consists of 13 members. We don't hold regular meetings. I just call a meeting when I feel it is necessary. We generally have a meeting once a month,

but it's not set for any particular time. I make up a newsletter to keep the members informed on what is going on. We feel we are working for a very worthwhile cause, and we would like to see our membership grow so that we can do more.

ME: How have you progressed this past two years?

MRS. CROSS: We formed in October, 1972 and did our first glass drive with Zonta, then our first poster contest was held at the March winter break. It has become an annual contest. One of our main projects has been trying to do something about non-returnable bottles. Our glass depot has been in operation for a year now; it is located at the Streetsville Dominion Store Plaza, and it is going along quite smoothly. We have it open on the last Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. We are hoping that as the Meadowvale area grows more people from there will start to participate in our glass project.

ME: Where do your operational funds come from, or do you require any?

MRS. CROSS: We don't really require any, because the City of Mississauga is paying for the glass operation. The City trucks and maintenance workers pick up the glass and the depot itself is run by S.A.V.E. members and the Interact Club members, who are sponsored by the Streetsville Rotary Club. There are a few volunteers, who for some reason or another don't want to join S.A.V.E., but they help out at the depot and every little bit helps.

ME: How do you go about informing the public about the need to recycle?

MRS. CROSS: This is done through the articles that various committee members write. I have somebody who organizes this so it is taken care of each month. We publish articles in all the local papers, and we try to get as much publicity as possible. They are mostly articles on how the housewife can help either stop pollution or prevent pollution in her own home, things like: buying white toilet tissue instead of coloured, not to pour grease or anything else down the drain, things that should go into the garbage, who to contact in the government for various problems, or telephone us and we will help where we can. We want to make it known there is a problem and we want to do something about it.

ME: What is the biggest problem you have come up against and have you found a solution for it?

MRS. CROSS: The non-returnable bottles has been our biggest problem and concern. We feel that non-returnable bottles are a waste of money, they are a cause of pollution and it has gotten to the point where there is only one store now in Streetsville where you can buy non-returnable bottles. Even in this time of inflation, believe it or not, some people bring returnable bottles to the glass depot, because they are too lazy to turn them in. We get about \$5.00 worth of bottles each month from people who are too lazy to take them back to the store, and yet they complain about the prices. If they check the prices they would find out pop is cheaper in returnable bottles. We carried on quite a campaign when we first started out and talked to the managers of the stores and we wanted to know why they didn't have returnable bottles. Their first excuse was that the consumers didn't want them, and then their second excuse was the pop companies didn't want to bring them. We talked to the pop companies and they said the stores didn't want them because it is extra work for them. We did a survey with the consumers and about 80 per cent of them said, yes, they wanted returnable bottles in the stores. We got the run around on this, the consumer said it was the retailer and the retailer said it was the wholesaler. So this is what happens — it's a long drawn out process. It has to go through legislation from the government; this is the only way there is ever going to be anything done about non-refillable containers.

ME: Have you always been interested in nature and its function?

MRS. CROSS: I've always enjoyed getting out into the country and doing things out of doors. I believe to be healthy is one of our greatest assets; if you haven't got your health, it is hard to enjoy anything else.

I think, too, when you have a family, you wonder what it is going to be like for your children when they become adults. You have to think about your future and not just what is taking place at the present time. That probably was one of the biggest forces behind my getting involved. I heard about all the things we were going to run out of and I thought, "My goodness, my son is only going to be 20 then. What is the world coming to?" I don't like to be pessimistic or a prophet of doom, but that is certainly the forecast you are getting from a lot of top scientists that the world could very possibly come to an end if we don't do something about it now. It is very scary to think about, and very sad to see what the human race has done to our beautiful country.

ME: Do you feel there is hope for solving the pollution problem?

MRS. CROSS: Yes, I am very optimistic about this. I feel that people's human nature is going to make them realize that they have to do it themselves. It is going to take a lot of work, and a lot of awakening by a lot of people. And the government has to wake up and start listening to people. We are going to have to have more consideration on the part of the corporations. They are going to have to smarten up and stop so much polluting; they are one of the worst offenders. It is not necessarily the best to be the biggest, nor is it necessarily the best to have the most products. Some of the products being put out are making us unhealthier, and this should be looked into at more depth; and they are not really making us any happier. We are going to have to have a new way of thinking; it is going to take a whole new way of thinking to change people. And it is not going to happen overnight, it is going to take time. But I am very certain, it is going to work out for the betterment of mankind and our survival if we all work together and make it happen.