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Port Credit's first woman councillor follows father's footsteps in politics

By SUSAN LINDELL

PORT CREDIT — Encouraged by her husband and supported by her 15-year-old daughter, Barbara, the first woman member on Port Credit council was elected to office last December.

Mrs. Clara McLaughlin of Hiawatha Parkway, is currently serving on council as chairman of the Community Services committee, as well as being involved with the finance committee, library board and the advisory board of Day Glow, a project geared towards curbing the drug scene in the area. Community Services takes into consideration aspects of the community such as senior citizens welfare, recreation and youth activities.

"If you've never been active in an election campaign, it's hard to realize all that's involved. It's certainly a strenuous affair," recounts Mrs. McLaughlin. The initial impetus that impelled her to run for office came from an interested husband and a family predisposition for politics.

Stemming from a United Empire Loyalist family who has had one member active in community politics in every generation, Mrs. McLaughlin was influenced by her father's political career as a member on council and a reeve in Norwich, Ont. Politics was always in the home atmosphere for her as a young girl. "It was in our blood," she said.

An active woman herself, Mrs. McLaughlin believes that women today should do as much as they can to aid their husbands in times of economic necessity. Some mothers make better career women than housewives and mothers, and should pursue this end, she feels. Her philosophy simply put, is each person must act according to their individual potential. She totally discounts the wives-tale belief that young children become psychologically depraved without constant maternal care. The bra-burning syndrome, however, is not her style. "If a woman is not liberated, she has only herself to blame."

When asked about the provincial government's reaction to the Port Credit council suggestion to inculcate

the area south of the QEW into Port Credit in the event of regional government, Mrs. McLaughlin replied that there had been no feedback yet. "Our intention is not to divide Mississauga, but the people who live in the area in question tend to associate themselves more with the town of Port Credit than with Mississauga. The provincial government called for suggestions and that was one of ours. And it's only a suggestion," she staunchly replied.

The name of Port Credit is an old one with accompanying traditions which Mrs. McLaughlin would dislike losing. This, many feel, would be the ultimate fate if Port Credit were to amalgamate with Mississauga.

DAY GLOW

As a member of the Day Glow board of advisers, Clara McLaughlin has talked to many of the youths seeking help for their drug problems. From her experiences with the project she has noted a wide cross-section of young people are 'hooked' on drugs; they do not stem from any one class or walk of life. "Although I'm not an authority, I would say kids don't go on drugs just for something to do. The ones that are taking drugs have serious emotional problems. 'Emotional insecurity' is sighted as a prime reason for the drug craze. If there

is any way to solve the insecurity problem then there is a way to solve the drug problem as well, she feels. "The kids who go to Day Glow want to be helped, and that's a start. They shouldn't be punished by laws for an emotional disorder."

Immediately preceding her successful election last December, Mrs. McLaughlin was offered a job as office manager for Applewood Medical Associates by one of the senior partners in the firm. As she said, "It was perfect for me. One of the appealing aspects of the job was the fact that I could take time off for my duties on council, if I thought it necessary." She finds there are few conflicts between her political and business career as far as vying for her time is concerned.

The Senior Citizens party, held recently at the Flame Steak House, was one of the many events that Mrs. McLaughlin has organized as part of her position as Community Services chairman.

Enjoying her work, her term on council and her family, Mrs. McLaughlin can occasionally be seen sitting by her bay window, fondly patting Jenny, the family miniature Dachshund. Possibly she's thinking of next year's election — she, of course will be running again. 'Politics,' she says is her real forte.