

# Guardian Angel speaks at Bethune

DAVID SPIRO

While participants involved in a Bethune College discussion about crime prevention agreed with Guardian Angel Jonathan Newman that "people are entitled to live safely", they could not agree on a method to ensure such protection.

The discussion, in which a wide spectrum of opinion concerning "community involvement in crime prevention" was represented, took place Tuesday night, and was sponsored jointly by the York-based LaMarsh Research Programme and Conflict Resolution. Lesley Harman of the Sociology Department chaired the discussion.

Among the members of the panel were Jonathon Newman, the elected Chapter Leader of the Toronto Guardian Angels, Richard Clee, Zone Co-ordinator of Neighbourhood Watch in Etobicoke, Roy Hobbs, Special Advisor for Preventative Policing at the Solicitor General's Office in Ottawa, and Professor Desmond Ellis, Director of the LaMarsh Programme.

## Visible deterrent

Newman, a native Torontonian, sees the Angels as being "a visible deterrent to violent street crime" and providing "a positive role model" for youngsters who are exposed to "so many negative role models" such as movies, rock stars and athletes. "It's not that the Angels are against rock 'n roll," he explained. But the young people who emulate these personalities often do not realize that the stars are, "just acting" and maintain a public image as free-spirited rebels only because their professions demand such behaviour. He is also convinced that "people are fed up with criminals whose rights are more important than the victims," and feels that his organization can help improve the fate of the victim who too often "ends up being a loser all around."

The Guardian Angels have been in Toronto since the Fall of 1982 and report that they've been given a warm reception by most citizens. Notwithstanding the attitude of the "upper echelons" of the police who may perceive the Angels as a threat, "most of the police on the street are fairly happy to see us," Newman said.

The Toronto Chapter of the Angels is comprised mainly of 20 to 25 year-olds, with only two members over 30. They patrol in groups of eight and then divide into 2 groups of four. To date they have only been called upon to break up a few fights and administer first aid on the streets. The Angel training programme is a rigorous test of determination, commitment and stamina and those who may have had ulterior motives for joining the group or who are simply "power tripping" as Newman calls it, are invariably weeded out. Of 197 who had signed up during the initial Toronto recruitment drive, only 22 have graduated to don the familiar white t-shirt and bright red beret of the Guardian Angels.

Richard Clee of the Community Watch Program informed the audience that "Community Watches are springing up all over the place" in response to vandalism, break and entry, and other crimes against private property in "quiet, easy-going neighbourhoods in Metro Toronto." Basically the programme aims to create a feeling of mutual responsibility among neighbours.

Clee speaks from experience when he talks of formerly peaceful areas turning into neighbourhoods of fear. He has seen his daughter kidnapped, his car vandalised and his house windows shot out. His passionately delivered message may be summarised in his own words - "When you see something wrong, stop ignoring it and start acting like a citizen."

Roy Hobbs, a 21-year veteran of the Durham Regional Police Force sees the role of law enforcement officials changing in response to new public needs. In the past, police had too often applied "the wrong kind of policing for the community," and were convinced that a single set of rules and assumptions could deal with a variety of situations. In recent years the burden has shifted to the community and the police are no longer "the star of the show but just one of the cast."

## White collar crime

Professor Desmond Ellis, Director of the LaMarsh Research Program on Violence and Conflict Resolution raised a number of questions about the efficacy of the solutions proposed by the other three panelists. "Crime is not all bad," he told the temporarily shocked audience, since "it has given rise to all this volunteering" and has "made the community more cohesive."

He expressed fears about "the possibility of vigilantism" and reminded everyone of the rule that "You may not take the law into your own hands." There are "necessary constraints and restraints" which must be applied to the plethora of "self-help" movements exemplified by the Guardian Angels and Neighbourhood Watch. Ellis questioned the panelists' approach to community crime prevention wondering whether their solutions consider anything beyond law enforcement options. Social factors such as inequality and poor housing conditions are often the intangibles which resist quantification through traditional crime prevention planning techniques.

Ellis pointed out that "there is no Neighbourhood Watch on the Stock Exchange" and that the prevention of white collar crime has largely been neglected in favour of the what he sees as the dubious need to expend precious resources fighting "kid crime" and other less socially disruptive behaviour. He estimates that more money has been stolen in three recent Oakville bank swindles than in all conventional crime in Canada during the last ten years.

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Is it a Muscle Beach Party with members of the York University Swim Team? See story page 15.

Photo: Mario Scattoloni

## Father kidnapped sons

# Student mother fights for children

PAULETTE PEIROL International Women's Week is celebrating the achievements of women in North America; but so far, York PhD student, Usha Ahlawat has nothing to celebrate.

In 1958, her marriage to Kapur Ahlawat was pre-arranged in their homeland of India. Her husband is now living in Irbid, Jordan, and has illegal possession of their two sons, Rishi and Muni, 11 and 8-years-old. The Jordan government has confiscated the boy's Canadian passports, preventing Mrs. Ahlawat from bringing them to Canada to live with her. This action was taken by the Jordanian government when Kapur claimed to have converted from Hindu to Islam, thereby obtaining a custody order from the Muslim court. When the Muslim court realized that Usha was Hindu they withdrew the order, but the Jordanian authorities had already seized the boy's passports.

Mrs. Ahlawat, a Canadian citizen, has obtained divorce papers from the Jordanian Embassy in Ottawa, and has been issued an *ex parte* order

from the family court here, assuring her custody of the children. However, the Canadian government has failed to serve the divorce papers to her husband. Usha says that letters to King Hussein of Jordan and to Kapur's superiors at Yarmouk University (where he is an assistant professor of psychology), have not been answered. She describes her husband as having sexual relationships with children, and of beating her. This has not been officially verified.

## Petition circulated

External Affairs in Ottawa and Liberal MP Jim Peterson have advised Usha Ahlawat to obtain legal aid in Jordan; however, Ahlawat claims that she does not possess sufficient funds to do so. Ahlawat is now trying to gain public support to force the Canadian government to take action. She called the *Toronto Star*, and on February 20th, Michele Landsberg wrote about Ahlawat's predicament. Ahlawat then spoke to Dr. Virginia Rock, head of the English department at York, and a petition to be

sent to Allan MacEachren (Minister of External Affairs) was discussed.

Dr. Rock drew up the petition, which has Landsberg's article attached to it. The petition is presently being circulated within the Sociology department, Atkinson College, and the Women's Centre. As well, Judith Santos Director of the

Women's Commission at York) has agreed to post it in the CYSF and to distribute copies of the petition to all of the College Councils. Ahlawat attended the Women's Rally in Toronto on March 7, and an announcement was made concerning her case. She obtained "about a thousand" signatures on the petition.

## Directors say co-op won't be approved

IAN BAILEY

The two directors of the Sentinel Housing Co-op, a project to build 400 co-op housing units on campus, believe that York's Property and Building Committee will recommend that the Board of Governors cancel the project, bringing a two year old debate to an abrupt halt.

In an interview on Wednesday, Professor Michael Goldrick, said he and the other co-op director, Professor Eli Comay, attended a meeting of the Building Property and Building Committee on

Monday. A member of the committee, Dr. Phillip A. Lapp, told the directors that committee could not authorise the project.

Bill Small, the Vice-President of University Services and the Chairman of the Physical Resources Committee, was present at the meeting but denied that a final decision had been made. He said that there had been "a frank exchange of views." He said a letter from the chairperson of the committee is being mailed to Comay. The letter outlines

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