

You can't beat Bryony House

by Susan Edgett

Wife beating. This image is painful, sick, unbelievable and incomprehensible. But no matter how far we shove this offensive image to the back of our mind, it happens and in this city. Thanks to a group of concerned individuals on the Halifax Transition House Board, a refuge for battered women opened here in September 1978.

Just look under Personals in the local rag, you'll see it, "Help for battered women and their children at Bryony House. Phone 422-7650."

When I called, Cathy Sullivan, one of the six full time staff answered. She said women who call definitely have marriage problems. The problems may be emotional as well as physical.

"Emotional abuse can take longer to heal than bruises," said Sullivan. For the woman whose self esteem has been reduced to a degrading level, the uphill climb is a slow and difficult one.

Some women want to just talk about their problems while others phone after the first hit. They are shocked. The majority, however, are victims of many years of abuse and are at nerves end. They are seriously considering leaving their spouses but have no place to go.

The women are advised to come to the house for a pre-screening interview. There they discuss all options and consequences of leaving home. Some women are referrals from Help Line. And the hospital contacts Bryony house if a battered woman is

committed.

Once she decides to leave, the woman becomes a resident of the large six bedroom house. It can accommodate 24 women and children (usually 8 women with two children each). Due to limited space, the battered women with children have priority over emotionally abused women with children and battered women without children.

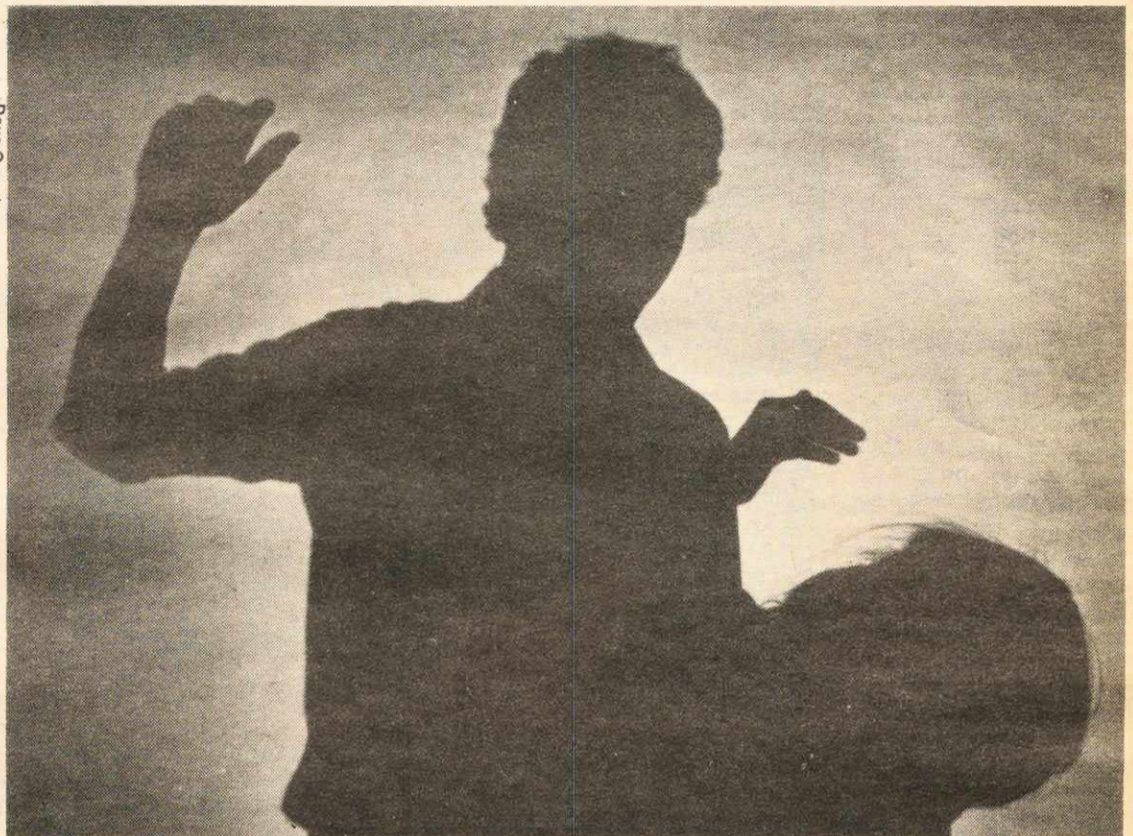
"Life at the house runs on a co-operative system," said Sullivan. The residents meet once a week to divide up the chores for the next week and decide on the menu.

"It's a very communal atmosphere," she said.

Most of the women have never worked or are unemployed. "We will accompany them to Manpower and make recommendations for them to the Board of Trade Youth Project for training," said Sullivan.

Funding Problems

"When we first opened in 1978 we recommended that women could stay for a 6-8 week adjustment period. However, insufficient funding won't permit such a prolonged stay," said Sullivan. For every woman municipal social assistance pays a set rate per day, which is cost-shared at 75 per cent by the provincial government. "In order to break even the house must be full all the time," said Sullivan. "This is difficult with our high turnover rate." Available funds presently allow a woman to stay at the house for only 10 days.



"We realize now that in order to make the house work, we're going to have to devote more energy to fund raising," said Sullivan.

"We get a lot of support from the community." A Woman's Place provides meeting space for the many information sessions they sponsor. The YWCA reserves vacancies in their nurseries for the children at Bryony House. Many church groups have what they call "kitchen

showers". The staff from Bryony House arrange a public speaking session on battered women and those who participate bring kitchen items for donation.

"People have been very helpful since we opened but we need more funds," said Sullivan.

The people who devote their time to this cause come from a wide range of backgrounds and ages. "Some of us have had formal training in social work and other areas while others are not officially qualified," she said. "But there is one thing we all have in common—a real commitment to women."

U Vic new champs

continued from p. 1

Their defence also was strong and kept Dalhousie away from the basket and as Dal's outside shooting was poor, this hurt the Tigers. Toward the end of the third quarter Jill Tasker made a brilliant move in staying in the Victoria backcourt instead of going to protect the Dal basket. After the pass into the backcourt Tasker stole the ball and scored while most of the players were at the other end of the court.

Both Anne Lindsay and Carol Rosenthal were plagued by foul trouble and neither played their usual amount of time. With ten minutes left in the game the lead switched back and forth and the outcome was not decided until the final minute of play, when a three-point play by Luanne Hebb of Victoria and two free throws made by Victoria with 29 seconds left secured the game for the Vikettes.

When the final buzzer sounded the elated Victoria substitutes ran out to congratulate their teammates and the dejected and tearful Tigers

went to the sidelines to await the presentation of the Bronze Baby trophy to the winners and the All-Star awards. Although they naturally would have liked to have won, the Dalhousie squad had made an incredible showing in the final and deeply impressed the Metro Centre fans, who gave them a standing ovation at the end of the game.

Kathy Shields, the Victoria coach, said after the game "At the start our problem was that Dalhousie was executing well, our defence was poor and we weren't concentrating. Dalhousie came out smoking . . . I thought we were very tight—we wanted to win so badly." Shields played four years of college ball under Norm Vickery of Laurentian and was a member of the national team. Her husband is Ken Shields, who coaches the men's team at the University of Victoria; and she gives him much of the credit for helping her improve her coaching.

Of her team she said, "When they settle down and play their game—patience and poise on offence and con-

centration on defence, they are unbeatable. I think our problem was that for three-quarters of the game we played Dalhousie's game. Once we got back into our own style of play things started going our way."

Carolyn Savoy, the coach of the Tigers and a former player at UNB, was disappointed after the game but said she was proud of her team, that they did the best they possibly could. They were loose and not intimidated by the Victoria team. "The Dal Tigers gave 150% and you can't ask for more than that. The Dalhousie fans were worth 10 points to us. I'd like to thank the fans for those points—I think that is what they were worth.

Everyone did everything they could. Victoria are a very good ball club. They got rattled in the first half but came back—that's a sign of a good basketball team. Everything went according to plan, we couldn't have changed anything—Victoria came in ranked No. 1 and they really were."

HALIFAX'S NEW COFFEE-HOUSE

THE SPACE

1579 Grafton Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2C3

902 423 0607

Upcoming Artistes:

THURS., FRI., SAT.—MAR. 13, 14, 15

CLEAR FLIGHT

(Mike Coatsworth, Dave Wardthorpe . . .
Jazz/Blues duo)

SUN. MAR. 16

JARVIS BENOIT QUARTET

TUES., WED.—MAR. 18, 19

MICKY QUASE

THURS., FRI.—MAR. 20, 21

THE ESSENTIALS

(Blues)

SATURDAY, MAR. 22

PAUL & LAUTIA LAUZON

(Recording Artistes)

SUN. MAR. 23

SANDY GREENBERG & MARC LULHAM

THE SPACE

1579 Grafton Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2C3

902 423 0607