

## kaleidoscope

**Mentally retarded — Striving for acceptance in society**

If you don't have time to read this article - call 894 - 8856.

But, if you do - I'd like to try to interest you in a group of people that are presently striving to gain respect and acceptance in society - the mentally retarded.

You probably have had very little contact with this group of people, but, hopefully, in the very near future, this will change. But if they are going to become active and involved in society rather than segregated from it, they are going to need a lot of help and support. They are fighting against a long history of mistreatment and misunderstanding, of attitudes that told them not to expect anything of themselves because nobody expected anything of them.

Their history as a group begins in ancient Greece, where the philosophy of the survival of the fittest was predominant. The mentally retarded were considered unfit to live and so as infants they were exposed to the elements to die.

With the coming of the Christian era, attitudes started changing - very, very slowly. Up to the modern times, they have been treated as a menace to society, to normal people and to themselves; as an object of pity, therefore, not expected to grow and develop; as a burden of charity, where the recipient is given what is necessary to preserve life but no "luxuries" and is expected to be properly grateful; and as holy innocents, the opposite pole, where they are placed above mankind, therefore not expected to take part in society as an active member.

Their present situation is more hopeful. They have finally been recognized as developing persons, as individuals growing and learning. But, unfortunately, their history, although nothing they can change or control, still affects and limits their life. Changing society's attitude is a long, slow process. Meanwhile, time is limiting their chances to develop to their potential.

Sherwood Home plays a large part in the lives of approximately forty mentally retarded children. I work there; but I wouldn't want to live there, or be limited by the day-care program there. Not that we, the staff, aren't kind to the children. We work very hard and give as much as possible. But possible isn't enough. Although a small institution, Sherwood Home is still an institution and minimum staffing ensures that they will miss out on a lot of experiences - experiences like having time

to play in the bath tub with a toy before being rushed out; like watching their parent make a cake and get to spoon out the bowl afterwards; like taking a quiet walk through a shopping centre; like going for a ride in the country. Sure, they get out - some of them - usually in a large group where they can be sure not to be given any individual attention except by the people staring at the disorganized group of children. (It's hard to spare one staff member for only one child.)

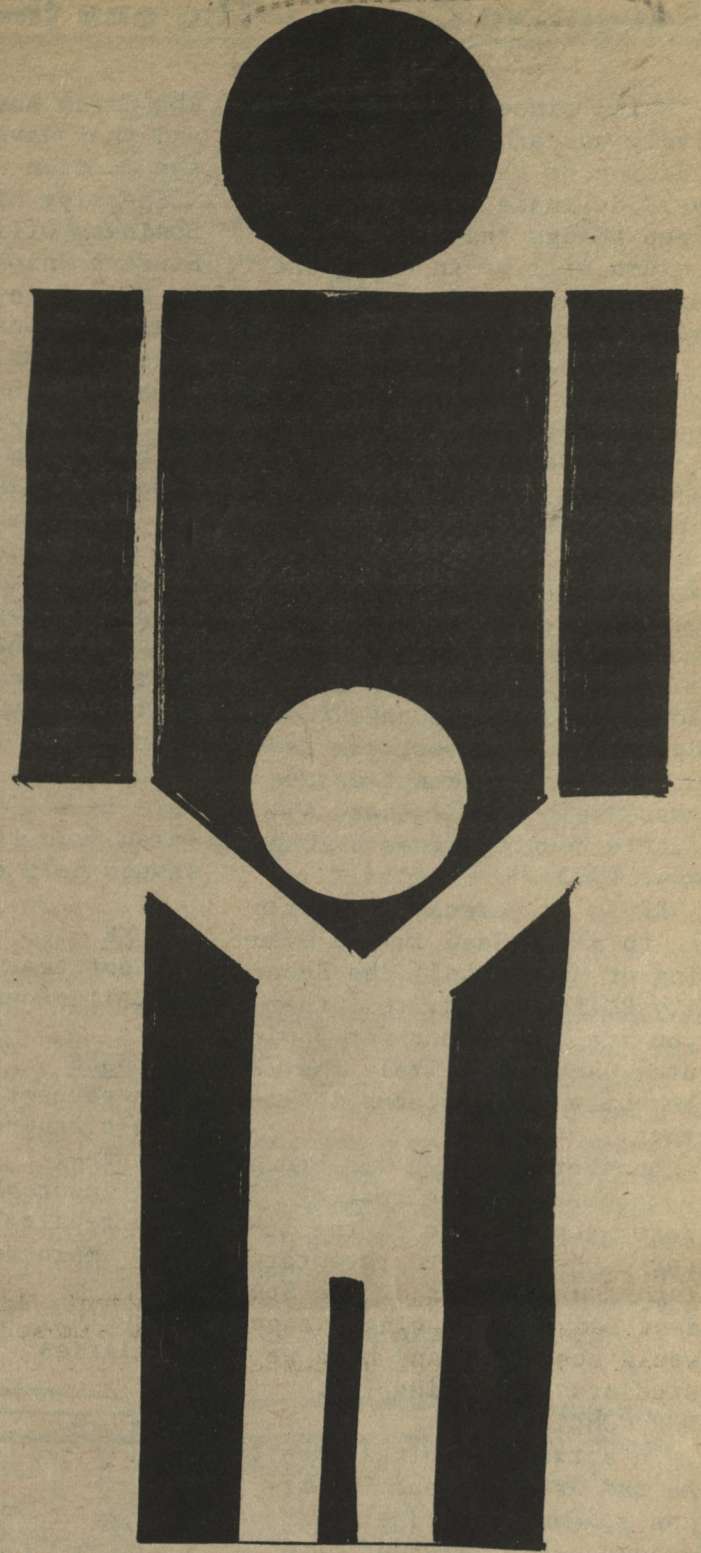
However, we're trying - and where there is effort, there is hope! We want Sherwood Home to become a developmental centre where the children will come, not to be baby-sat, but to learn and develop; where a child will learn his basic skills like dressing and eating and eventually move on up to social skills.

But, this is more in these children's futures than in their present. Meanwhile, we are trying to get organized - and we can use all the help we can get!

Have you got some extra time? An hour or two every week, or even every second week? Some of your volunteered time can help balance out some of the time that they have already lost.

I'll be glad to show you around.

Connie Duchene

**ED. NOTE**

We apologize for putting in this article unsigned, but it was specifically requested by the author.

**Don't let your mouth write a cheque that your body can't cash!**

From all the complaining and bitching that has been going on around campus, one would think that the Student Union executive and all the committee heads have been giving the entire student body the run-around!! Just where do all of you get off with all your complaints of no communication and "difficulties" in attaining information from your representatives??? Where were you when nominations and elections took place?? Didn't want to get involved? Playing the pin-ball machines in the barn? or at the Pig & Whistle? Perhaps at G. J.'s getting loaded? Although you didn't seem to be too interested in the elections last spring, or in any Council Meetings, you seem to be coming out of the woodwork with your complaints.

Maybe you are justified in some of your complaints.

perhaps mistakes have been made...Are you free of all mistakes?? Are you the "perfect" human that you can dump on someone who is at least trying to make your university life a little more enjoyable? Try sitting in the president of the U.P.E.I.S.U.'s seat for a while!! Try getting people to co-operate while you are attempting to get October Fest off the ground!! Try heading the Social Committee for a while. Perhaps you haven't got the time to put in, maybe your studies just won't let you get involved. But then, didn't I see you at the Pig last Thursday night AND Saturday night? Wasn't that you at the Barn all Tuesday afternoon, or was it Thursday???

Then of course we must realize that all the executive, council, and committee head positions are

filled by the "elite few". Did it ever occur to you that these people would give up their positions without a wink of the eye to be rid of all the complaining and absolute nit-picking tactics of the majority of the "non-involved" students?? Just ask any one of them and see what kind of response you get!!! Then I forgot, you don't want to get involved!!! Sorry....

Just what would you do if the entire student council, executive, committee heads, and all the people that are busting their backs trying to get things rolling on this campus decided to resign!! Just think... NO Pig & Whistles, NO movies, NO organization in the Barn, NO C.S.U.R., NO CADRE.....

Like the saying goes....  
S--T or GET OFF THE POT!!!!!!