

Jail should be a positive experience

The time a person spends awaiting trial or serving a jail sentence should be a positive experience — not a period of boredom and depression during which feelings of anger and bitterness are bound to mushroom.

This is the philosophy of newly appointed Milton Jail superintendent Derek Hinks, and those confined within the walls of the local lockup can expect increased program activities and responsibilities as a result.

Since assuming his administrative position at Milton Jail June 6, Mr. Hinks has been reviewing the reform programs initiated by his predecessor Carl DeGrandis.

Mr. DeGrandis worked hard to open communication lines between prison staff, inmates and the local populace and tried to bring more variation into the humdrum routine of life behind bars when he took over as superintendent of the antiquated Brown St. Jail last October.

After talking with Mr. DeGrandis and taking a close look at the programs he started, Mr. Hinks has decided to expand on a number of his predecessor's ideas as well as trying to make a few of his own materialize.

One of the first things Mr. Hinks wants to do is get an art program going at Milton Jail.

"I've found art to be a good outlet for a lot of inmates and have discovered many of them have a great deal of skill when it comes to drawing and painting," he said. "Eventually, I'd like to arrange art shows so the inmates could compete with prisoners at other jails," he added.

Mr. Hinks noted that when he was superintendent at Lindsay Jail (28 miles from Peterborough), the local art guild often sponsored the shows between the inmates of two or more jails.

Likewise, Mr. Hinks said, if an inmate

happens to have a knack for writing, he would be happy to work something out so this talent could be developed during the individual's stay in jail.

Mr. Hinks also hopes to encourage "creative reading" at the local jail — that is, he hopes to supply the inmates with more educational literature rather than westerns and comics.

"If someone has a problem with reading or writing, he'd be willing to arrange help for them on a one-to-one basis as well.

The inmates recently got a punching bag in the "common room" which he said is a great outlet for many of their frustrations, and Mr. Hinks is optimistic that space may be made available for other physical activities such as weight lifting and paddle tennis when the remainder of the Brown St. courts move out to their new facilities on Steeles Ave. later this year.

"Our biggest handicap right now is space," Mr. Hinks said. "We're trying to carry out the correctional concepts of 1977 in a building that's 100 years old."

"This jail and many others like it across the province were built for the sole purpose of locking criminals up," he noted. "No thought was given to reform programs back then."

He said the Ministry of Correctional Services has been working hard since they took over the county jails in 1968 to upgrade both the antiquated buildings and their staffs.

In fact, Mr. Hinks was one of the first in Ontario to complete a correctional officers' course at university.

The year was 1960 and Mr. Hinks had just been laid off from his job as a machinist at Canadian General Electric in Peterborough.

With a wife and two children to support, he decided to "give our reform institutes a chance" and promptly landed a job as a correctional officer at Millbrook Correctional Centre.

Shortly after starting the job, he agreed to take a course at Queen's University designed to provide correctional staff with some experience and understanding of psychology and social work so they would have a better relationship with the inmates and the people around them.

Mr. Hinks was one of only a handful who graduated from the three-year course in correctional work at Queen's in 1963, but his extra effort was soon rewarded with a promotion to corporal at Millbrook in 1964.

In 1968 he was transferred to Lindsay Jail as corporal, and within months of that move, he was promoted to the position of Assistant Superintendent.

Mr. Hinks was superintendent at Lindsay from 1972 until his recent appointment at Milton Jail.

He describes his new job as "challenging, but difficult" noting he's on call "24 hours a day, seven days a week."

But, he was quick to point out, his vast responsibilities are facilitated by the "very good, very competent" staff at the Brown St. Jail.

"There seems to be a trend now towards a younger, more educated correctional staff in this province today," Mr. Hinks said, "and I think they can set a good example for the inmates."

He said in many cases, the inmates are behind bars because they lack self-discipline.

"I would hope this is a quality they would pick up during their period of detention," he said.

Mr. Hinks said he really believes jails can serve as the starting grounds for rehabilitation. He noted that even a short stay in jail can be a deterrent from committing other acts of crime.

"I hope when an individual leaves Milton Jail, he'll be able to say 'It was a positive learning experience, but I don't ever want to go back,'" Mr. Hinks explained.

Georgetown GO bus riders should ignore the signs on buses announcing bus schedule changes effective June 22. GO spokesman Tom Henry said only two minor changes are made in the Georgetown schedule.

As of last Wednesday the 6 a.m. bus from York Mills subway station to Georgetown has been cancelled. Henry said this affects few people since the average number of people riding the

Few changes in GO bus schedule

bus was only three. In the afternoon a bus leaving downtown Toronto at 5:10 p.m. will no longer stop in Brampton and then return to Toronto. Instead of terminating in Brampton the bus will now continue on to Guelph, arriving in Georgetown at 6:40 p.m. Henry said the notices in the buses apply mainly to passengers in the Newmarket and Richmond area.

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DEREK HINKS has been superintendent at Milton Jail since June 6 and describes his job as "challenging, but difficult." "We're trying to carry out the correctional concepts of 1977 in a building that's 100 years old," he says. "That's not easy."



EVEN JAIL SUPERINTENDENT Derek Hinks must ring a bell and wait for a security officer to turn the key before the heavy iron door leading into Milton Jail's interior swings open. "All of the old county jails were built for maximum security," he explained. "They didn't change with the times."

Increase water rates

Water rates in all urban areas in Halton with the exception of Oakville will go up in the first billing after July 1. Acton gets the stiffest increase of 60 per cent while Burlington and Georgetown rates go up by 30 per cent and in Milton the increase will be 10 per cent. Oakville already pays one of the highest rates and regional treasurer Don Farmer indicated the rates there wouldn't have to be increased. While the rate increases are large in terms of percent-

ages the rates people pay for water are relatively small amounts of money and the increases aren't expected to have serious impact on homeowners.

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