

Vandalism target of crime bureau

Former Acton detachment commander of Halton Regional Police and member of the Georgetown Detachment, Sergeant Dick Hilton is heading up a new crime prevention bureau in Halton. One of the main targets will be vandalism.

Vandalism is an ever increasing problem in Halton and Chief Ken Skerrett has said in the past it has become so bad across the region most of the time all police can do is make out reports.

At Thursday's Halton Police Commission meeting, members expressed concern about costly vandalism.

Mayor Harry Barrett said it is costing Oakville a lot of money to repair public property which is vandalized. He said there has been a rash of incidents in parks in which trees are destroyed, even in front of the town hall.

Acting Police Chief Jack Jeffries said other municipalities in the region and the Halton Board of Education have also expressed great concern about vandalism, as have residents.

He indicated to Barrett, who said his town is open to suggestions, that the municipalities might consider following the school board's lead and install alarms in their buildings.

He announced Sergeant Hilton is in charge of the regional police force's new crime prevention bureau and vandalism is one crime he will be looking at.

Jeffries said it is a very remote chance patrolling officers will spot vandals at work. The main weapon police have against people vandalising is public assistance.

Jeffries thought the police should be educating the public to contact police while vandalism is taking place so officers can respond.

In an interview this week Superintendent Floyd Schwartz said "public awareness and action" is the best weapon against vandalism.

He would like to see neighbourhood watches set up. "If neighbors got together and talked about neighborhood problems from time to time, the likely result would be everyone becoming alert to damage being done to anyone's property."

He noted vandalism is rare when people are at home. He suggested that when people go away, even for a short time to let neighbors know so they can keep an eye on things, Schwartz also suggested when people leave their home for an extended period of time they leave a key with friends or relatives so the house can be checked periodically.

Schwartz would like to see citizens who see anything suspicious obtain as much information as possible about the suspect and call police immediately. The information about a suspect is important so police can determine the person's identity.

"If a citizen sees a criminal act being committed he can make a citizen's arrest. If a person apprehends a vandal use only as much force as is absolutely necessary for the apprehension and call the police immediately."

He said while people can also legally make a citizen's arrest of a youngster between the ages of seven and 16, no force should be used, only their name and address obtained. Schwartz said the young person should be allowed to go home then and their name and address given to the police.

A key aspect to citizen participation in the battle against vandalism is willingness later to go into court and testify.

"Calling police won't cure it because the officer hasn't seen the act of vandalism. His evidence is hearsay in court."

He said vandalism is a new experience in North Halton. It has increased substantially in recent years but is no worse than in other areas. Schwartz says vandalism is a world-wide problem. He noted he recently received a bulletin from a small town in England about vandalism there which costs 200,000 pounds in damage each year. He said it is easy to blame a permissive society for vandalism but that doesn't do much to solve the mushrooming problem.

He agreed with Skerrett's assessment that police are only able to make out reports about vandalism these days because it is so difficult to investigate.

Mischief and vandalism is usually an isolated case and there isn't much, if any, evidence to connect the crime with the culprit. The key to a vandalism investigation is an eye witness. Schwartz said without a witness vandalism investigations are a waste of police time and resources.

He suggested more police aren't the answer to curbing vandalism either.

"We could have a cop on every corner and they would strike in the middle of the block. Vandals strike as soon as they are out of view of the authoritative eye."

He said it is no misconception that teenagers are responsible for virtually all vandalism.



POLICE ESTIMATE \$400 in damages to this car after its collision with a dump truck at Willow Street and St. Alban's Drive last Thursday morning. The Guelph city driver received major injuries, say police.

North trustees don't support Hinton's 100% pay cut plan

Acton-Esqueing Trustee Bert Hinton won't receive much support from North Halton colleagues, Thursday, when he asks Halton Board of Education to abolish pay for board members. Trustees receive \$6,600 a year.

Georgetown Trustee Don Long, Halton Hills-Milton separate school representative John Bradley and Milton Trustee Ivan Armstrong all said they would oppose Hinton's motion for a 100 per cent pay cut. Milton Trustee Bill Lawson could not be reached.

Long said he wouldn't support Hinton's call for no pay but is in favor of a pay cut.

He said before trustees received any remuneration there was only a moral obligation. School board members tended to school business

only when they had the time. By receiving pay trustees end up with a very distinct obligation.

"There is a moral and financial obligation to fulfill," Long declared.

He said he does agree with Hinton to the extent that financial restraints are needed and trustees could set an excellent example for the entire school system by taking a pay cut. Off the top of his head he said he would support a 10 per cent pay cut but thought discussion and study is needed before a definite amount is determined.

Long noted Hinton has the option to refuse his pay if he wants to.

Bradley said he was surprised after joining the board to find out how much money he would be receiving. At the

time he decided to run he didn't know how much pay trustees received or if they were paid at all, he said.

Bradley had served 16 years on the Milton Separate School Board and never received any pay until the last year he was on the board.

"I was shocked at the pay we would receive on the Halton board. I thought it was way too much," Bradley declared. He admitted he had considered giving his pay to charity.

However after three months he discovered just how many board, committee and school meetings he attended he began to realize the pay is justified. "There is a phenomenal amount of work, so considering the hours and pay we are receiving a low

Parking review

Halton Hills works committee wants residents of Halton Condominium 29, who are having problems finding parking space since the three hour overnight parking limit went into effect, to come to the committee to discuss solutions.

The residents sent a report to the committee stating there are 58 resident and visitor parking spots but 69 are needed. No trailers or boats are given parking spots and only two are taken up by commercial vehicles.

When the condominium was built it was assumed families would have only one car but many have two because they must travel for many services not provided

in Acton and in many families both the husband and wife work. The residents' brief warns this trend to two cars can only increase in the next few years.

The condominium wants to add 14 more parking spaces but doesn't have the necessary \$2,000. They suggest a low interest loan might be the answer, possibly from their own taxes.

They want the town to allow overnight parking on one side of Kingham Hill Road and charge people parking on the road a monthly fee. Provisions could be arranged to have cars moved during snow emergencies.

They would also like the town to allow double parking by residents with driveways leading to Kingham Road with no threat of a fine for having a car over the sidewalk at night.

Councillor Mike Armstrong wondered if it would be possible to levy a local improvement tax on the residents so they could build more parking spaces but engineer Robert Austin said that possibility wasn't likely.

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However after three months he discovered just how many board, committee and school meetings he attended he began to realize the pay is justified. "There is a phenomenal amount of work, so considering the hours and pay we are receiving a low

hourly rate."

Bradley says not paying trustees would save each household in Halton only about 60 cents a year, so that argument is "laughable."

He noted he wouldn't stop serving as a trustee if the pay disappeared.

"It is so easy to say the motion is frivolous and maybe even mischievous, but I'm convinced Hinton is sincere and really hopes the motion will pass." He added what Hinton does with the pay he has received is his business.

Armstrong said he is opposed to trustees serving without pay. He noted people at all government levels spend large sums of money on trips to conventions. "I'd sooner have the money given to elected representatives up front on the table so the public can see it."

He said Hinton can refuse his pay if he wants but he won't be receiving any support from Armstrong.

Hinton has said he proposed the motion because throughout his life he has served without pay.

"I have served my whole life on councils and boards and received little or no remuneration. Remuneration shouldn't be the motivation for service," Hinton declared.

Councillor Walter Biehn agreed the bylaw must be enforced or it is useless.

The committee recommended the summons be issued.

Crack down on dog tags

There are at least 40 dog owners, mostly in the rural areas who have dogs running around without tags. Deputy Treasurer Grant Usher told Halton Hills finance-administration committee, Monday night. He requested permission to issue summons. The fine, if convicted, is not more than \$50 exclusive of costs.

He said the summons only go to people who have consistently refused to buy dog licences.

Councillor Roy Booth asked if they were farm dogs. Usher said about half of them were.

Booth claimed there could be dogs the farmer doesn't even know about on a farm.

Chairman Russell Miller said they are rural dogs, not necessarily farm dogs. He said it is an attempt to get the people who do not control their dogs and let them run.

Councillor Pat Patterson said farmers should have dog licences, since cattle and livestock are injured by dogs running at large. He claimed he had been asked to shoot dogs running at large and found they were neighbors' dogs.

The deputy treasurer explained it is part of a two or three year program to get people in the township area to buy dog tags.

\$116,000 map

Updating the floodplain mapping of the Credit River and Silvercreek will cost \$116,000 if the Ministry of Natural Resources approves the proposals of Marshall, Macklin and Monaghan, the successful bidder on tenders.

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New titles at customs

There is no longer a "collector of customs" in Acton. Murray Harrison learned by letter that his position will now be called "commercial inspector."

Andy Crichton, who was customs officer here, will also be known as a commercial inspector from now on.

The renaming of the position is part of a federal program, but Mr. Harrison is not yet sure of all the implications involved. He is now under a superintendent at Georgetown. Previously the Acton customs office was in an area centred in Brampton.

He believes his duties are the same, although he and other people in the same position are somewhat concerned about it. The letter said the change was official last week, but was retroactive to June 6.

The superintendent in Georgetown is now in charge of the ports of Acton and Georgetown. (There is no customs office in Milton.)

Murray Harrison is just the third customs officer in Acton since 1919. Murray McDonald held the position until 1934, and then Billy Middleton from 1934 until December 1959. Then Mr. Harrison came here, transferring from a similar job elsewhere.

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