

# 18 suffer overdose following Acton drug theft

**By Linda Kirby**  
Halton Regional Police are linking a recent theft of an estimated \$200 value of prescription drugs with a drug overdose involving 18 North Halton students.

Police report following a break and enter at Acton Pharmacy in the early morning hours of Thursday, eight Acton juveniles were taken to Georgetown

District Hospital suffering drug effects that evening.

"We suspect the drugs involved were the same pills taken from the drug store," said Sergeant Keith Robertson, head of the Halton Regional Police criminal investigations branch in Georgetown.

The following morning a school bus load of Acton and Milton students travelling to General

Brock High School, arrived with 10 students sick.

Burlington police stated they suspect the high school students received pills taken from the pharmacy break.

"When the bus arrived at school, some were violently sick and approximately 10 were taken to hospital," said a Burlington police spokesman.

All students taken to

Georgetown District Hospital and Joseph Brant Hospital have been released, police said.

Police are withholding the names of those students who suffered drug effects, owing to the fact they were juveniles.

Two Acton juveniles have been charged in the incident, according to Milton police youth officer Bill Riddle.

He said further charges are

pending investigation.

An investigation is underway by Halton Regional Police detectives and Milton and Burlington Police youth bureaus to determine how the pills made their way into the hands of the students.

According to Sergeant Robertson, police have not recovered all drugs taken in the pharmacy theft.

Drugs believed still in cir-

culation include an estimated 2,000 capsules of Serax.

Sergeant Robertson described the pill as similar to Valium and possibly fatal, if taken in any quantity or with alcohol.

Other stolen drugs included Tussionex, Hycon and a cough syrup remedy with codeine.

Police have charged two Acton people with the break-in at Acton Pharmacy.

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### Region joins town in 'losing' venture

**By Rod Lamb**  
Halton will support Halton Hills.

The matter of consent is launching an appeal.

The appeal is with regard to the Ontario Municipal Board allowing Ontario Hydro to extend a power corridor through Halton Hills to Milton.

Halton approved the appeal, despite advice it would lose.

Councillors were told last week the region has more than a 10 per cent chance of winning the appeal.

The opinion was expressed by a representative of the region's legal department.

Council was informed appeals from OMB decisions are not being approved by the provincial government.

Justice has little to do with appeals. The comment was made by Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett.

He was one of a number of councillors who spoke.

Halton Hills Mayor Peter Pomeroy favored the appeal.

He said the town had agreed to appeal.

The man in the street should be backed, he said.

"I think there is a place for the small person," Mayor Pomeroy said the town believed a big corporation shouldn't be allowed to throw its weight around.

Milton Mayor Don Gordon said he was suspicious of hydro's intentions.

He said most of the power system is already in place. Only the section in Halton Hills remained to be settled.

Thus, to appeal is a lost cause, he said.

Not every councillor from Halton Hills was in favor of appealing.

Roy Booth was opposed.

He said he fought the appeal at town council. He lost.

He said he was fighting it at regional council. Again, as events proved, he lost.

He said Hydro had already built the towers in the corridor.

They are not going to be torn down.

He said the decision to put the corridor through has already been made and to appeal is useless.

Halton Hills has spent between \$6,000 and \$7,000 fighting the corridor.

Mr. Booth said it is going to cost another \$6,000 - \$7,000 to launch an appeal.

"It's a losing case," he said.

"Why should we throw more money down the drain?"

Bonnie Brown of Oak-

vile favored the appeal. "We should continue to support," she said.

"Just because your team is losing is no reason to withdraw the team."

She said she felt the Ontario government has no control over Ontario Hydro.

McLean Anderson, Oakville, opposed the appeal.

He said council is "riding a rocking horse."

He said the previous

council was "sucked" in to fighting the corridor.

Now that the OMB has ruled, it is "time to get off the rocking horse."

Mayor Pomeroy said the Ontario government is involved with "egg over its face."

"This route is the wrong location," he said the provincial government doesn't care, but the town does. So should the region.

The motion carried.



Theta Psi Sorority recently presented the staff of the Glenlea Medical Centre with a colorful handmade bookcase, some books and toys for the waiting room. Dian Bowers, left, and Paula Stuckey,

right, were on hand Thursday for the presentation while office receptionist Stella Brunelle accepts the gift.

Photo by HELEN MURRAY

### Drug charge trial

An Acton man was one of three committed to trial on a drug trafficking charge after a two-day preliminary hearing at Brampton Provincial Court March 6.

No date has been set for the trial, on a charge of trafficking four ounces of cocaine, for Geoffrey Earl Dubois, 33, Acton; Norman William Hunt, 36, Belwood; and John Robin Swackhammer, 28, of Cheltenham, according to RCMP drug squad Cpt. Fred Hollis.

Mr. Dubois and Mr. Hunt also appeared last Thursday at Burlington Provincial Court to set a date for a preliminary hearing on charges of conspiracy to import cocaine, conspiracy to traffic cocaine and conspiracy to traffic in speed, according to the RCMP.

The three men and four others were arrested by RCMP, provincial and Peel police following a four-month undercover investigation. The arrests were made in December.

Police alleged the men were part of a drug smuggling ring, with Brazilian connections.

### Apartment blaze

Residents of 200 Churchill Rd. S., received a rather rude awakening early Monday morning when fire broke out on the fourth floor of their apartment building.

Fire chief Mick Holmes said the fire was confined to a clothes basket in a closet of the apartment of Robert Bannerman. He

explained a rag, which had been covered in cleaning fluid caused combustion, causing the clothes in the basket to smoulder.

No one was home at the time of the 1 a.m. incident. Mr. Holmes said, and a was discovered upon the residents return. He said there was

no way of knowing how long it had been smouldering.

Estimated damage is set at \$100, the fire chief said. Firefighters removed the basket from the building and used fans to clear the smoke from the apartment.

Mr. Holmes assured the Free Press had it been a blaze requiring hoses and additional fire fighting equipment, local firefighters would have been more than capable of handling it. Hoses and equipment are able to reach five floors, and each floor of the buildings are equipped with individual extinguishers and hoses.

### Region spurs Halton business

**by Denis Gibbons**

Halton Region plans to establish economic advisory committees in each of its four municipalities as part of a program to stimulate business and create jobs in the 1980s.

Regional Chairman Jack Rafitis told the Burlington Chamber of Commerce last Thursday that Halton will need 36,000 jobs by 1986, an increase of 60 per cent over the present figure of 29,000.

Burlington now has its own mayor's advisory committee and Oakville has a similar body as part of its Chamber of Commerce.

Committees, appointed by the mayor of each municipality, will be formed in Halton Hills

and Milton.

**Local input**

According to Bill Marshall, director of business development for the Region, the committees are being created "to provide input from local industries and assist in promoting the respective communities with prospective investors."

Rafitis said the new jobs will be necessary because more of the female population are moving into the work force, there are 3,000 people under the age of 25 unable to find work and Halton's population could increase by 70,000 over the next eight years.

"We will have to get investment actively up to \$60 million in building

permits," Rafitis explained.

"In 1977 and 78 we got only \$35 million."

**Land banking**

The chairman also

revealed the Region is investigating the feasibility of industrial banking in both Burlington and Oakville so that serviced land would be ready for prospective de-

velopers.

He said he expects \$4 to 6 million to go into the Region's capital budget for that purpose.

Rafitis said over 20 industrial-commercial developers are working now to attract businesses to Halton and that Marshall has been given a \$100,000 budget to do his own selling.

The Region has already sent out brochures to 400 firms in the Metro Toronto area and plans to make a pitch to 100 large industries in the Chicago area.

Rafitis said the regions of Peel and Hamilton-Wentworth are spending a lot more money than Halton on industrial development.

In future, Rafitis said he'd like to spend 25 per cent of his time working with Marshall on industrial development.

He said he'd like to beef up the industrial development department by transferring two employees from planning.

Rafitis predicted construction of the new Cambridge Mall in Oakville will cost Burlington \$6.8 million in department store-type merchandise trade.

Studies indicate that Burlington residents already spend \$50 million in DSTM trade outside of the city.

Another study revealed that only 32 per cent of Burlington residents actually work in the city

### Border plazas help Bolton? depends on who is talking

**by Eric Elstone**

Landown Shopping Centres Ltd. developer Jerry Sprackman claims a Zehrs store on Acton's eastern border will not adversely affect the downtown. He invited people to check the effects on other towns where his plazas have been built.

One such place is Bolton about 25 miles east of town where Highway 50 meets the Humber River. Henry Joseph, one of Mr. Sprackman's consultants, indicated Bolton benefits from the Zehrs and other stores in the plaza. The IGA Store at Bolton upgraded its facilities and the Red and White is doing fine, according to Mr. Joseph.

"Doing fine" depends on who is talking.

"My business dropped off 50 per cent over the first six months," Bolton Red and White Store manager Gene Bidmell said in a telephone interview last week. "What does he (Joseph) classify as doing fine?" said Mr. Bidmell.

"We're hanging in there," Bolton IGA manager John Killeen said.

The IGA store is opposite Zehrs on the south end of Bolton. The older part of the town is nestled in the river valley. Plaza developments, including Zehrs and IGA, are on top of the hill. Bolton's population is about 6,500 but the official plans envisage about twice that number of people.

Not all storekeepers agree with the glum picture drawn by the food stores.

Downtown Business Men's Association president Larry Nelles said he has no doubts about the effects of Mr. Sprackman's efforts. "We are particularly glad about Zehrs," Mr. Nelles said.

"With the exception of the IGA, everyone has benefited," said the association president. "It's kept people shopping here. Groceries and other shopping provides fuller service."

Mr. Nelles runs a book store in downtown Bolton.

Mr. Nelles went on to say the Red and White store had to pull up its socks. He also said he has never met Mr. Sprackman.

Grocery shopping in Bolton before Zehrs was just too expensive, acknowledged Mr. Nelles. Even his wife shopped for food at Brampton.

Association vice-president John Davidson, Home Hardware, also said the Zehrs plaza is not affecting the downtown. The hardware is in Bolton's downtown.

Bolton's downtown business association has the increase in business downtown as its main purpose. This year, Mr. Nelles said, the group's name will be changed to drop the downtown so that the association includes stores up the hill.

The Zehrs plaza is one of four added onto Bolton's southern end. They straddle Highway 50. Development is to the south because the land is zoned commercial and because there is not too much room in the valley.

Much of the valley land is also in the flood plain of the Humber River so that no construction is carried out there.

Bolton merchants have taken steps to provide parking downtown. However, there are plans to widen Highway 50 to four lanes through the town. The widening will eliminate much of the parking on the highway which also runs through the heart of

the downtown core.

In addition to the Zehrs food store there are eight shops in Mr. Sprackman's plaza at Bolton. One is empty, but there is a Toronto-Dominion Bank, travel agency, hair stylist, cleaners, restaurant, drug store and a Stedmans. The exterior of the single storey plaza is brick and wood. In the parking lot there is a gas-bar and photo store.

The IGA and Red and White store people were divided as to whether Mr. Sprackman's plaza has drawn shoppers to Bolton.

The plaza, according to Red and White's Mr. Bidmell, has made a "more cut-throat market," and has "not necessarily" meant a decrease in prices.

IGA's Mr. Killeen said he did not doubt the Zehrs store has brought people into the Bolton area, but from what he has heard from other store owners, the additional people have not translated into business for the established stores.

Caledon town planner John Stevens, whose authority includes Bolton, is of the opinion the time is too soon to tell the effect of the Zehrs plaza on the town. Mr. Stevens indicated he would like to wait until two years after the opening of the plaza, until it and its clients become established, before carrying out a study.

Halton Hills council recently voted against the proposed plaza by Mr. Sprackman. The proposed plaza would include a Zehrs and eight other stores to be located on Highway 7 and Churchill Road South. The proposal was deemed premature in Halton Hills and Mr. Sprackman is appealing to a higher authority, the Ontario Municipal Board.



Identification bureau Staff Sergeant Dave Garlick lifts a print from the door used by thieves for a break and entry at the Acton Pharmacy last week. A man and a woman have been charged as well as a pair of juveniles in the drug theft.

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