

Profiles

with Jennifer Barr



John Barratt is a dandy disco dancer. He also happens to answer to Inspector Barratt and head up the largest police district of Halton Regional Police Force—Burlington.

As District Commander of the City of Burlington, John is responsible for a police force of 100 and the safety of 115,000 people.

In 1980 John was in command of district one (Acton, Georgetown and Milton) on a temporary basis before going to force headquarters in Oakville to serve as Executive Officer to Chief James Harding.

An Acton resident for 12 years, John and his wife Audrey originally emigrated from England. John was only 15 when he joined the police cadet corps in Wolverhampton, England. That was 25 years ago and young John was keen as mustard.

He ran errands, answered the phone and was even a grease monkey in the police garage as he learned his job. After six months police training he was assigned to "tag along" with detectives of the criminal division. He was also attached to various constables and trained "in the fine art of walking the beat".

When he was 19, John spent 13 weeks in basic training to prepare him for walking the beat himself—"I still walk the beat", he says.

RAF camps near Wolverhampton provided the police with some "fun"—a few knife slashings and such—but John remarks "rarely the kind of trouble we expect now".

John was young and kept "on the outside of the good stuff" he complains. He had his share of robberies, break-and-enters and some "routine knifings" though, and never worried about his responses. One of his instructors told him, "Never wonder what happens when you don't know what to do—it never happens!"

"We had good training and we were selected for our instincts", John maintains.

At 22 John was made the youngest detective on the force and on his first shift alone was told to "grab the murder bag, we've got a live one."

"We don't become insensitive but you have to develop a shield to cover up the heart" John says. He found his first autopsy at 16 "totally interesting" but admits he couldn't sleep that night.

In 1964 John decided to emigrate to Canada and ended up in Guelph for two years. He never had a gun in his hand until then (English police don't carry guns) but now wins trophies in competition with the Ontario Police Revolver Clubs.

There came a time when John decided he was "too smart to be a police officer" and spent the winter in Listowel as a professional photographer but the call was too strong and in 1967 he joined the Georgetown Police Force.

"All I ever wanted to be was a detective" John states and he looked after investigations in Georgetown with the rank of detective until the advent of regional government in 1974 abolished that rank "which thrilled me to no end", grumbles John. He headed the criminal investigation bureau in North Halton.

In 25 years John has seen a lot of changes in police work. "I remember when Telux was the new 'in' thing but in no time it went out...now we have computers."

Police work has changed from the early years when John was called on the beat by means of a flashing light on the top of a neighborhood telephone box and he'd dash off to fight crime on his bicycle.

Now policemen are trained like an army in riot control. Vandalism is considerably more noticeable although John says "nothing has changed with the youth". He feels lack of personal involvement is the greatest contributor to crime.

"This live-and-let-live attitude is not right", he says, "people don't show their displeasure enough. Peer pressure still exists. We need more concern from the public...more people should speak out." He adds, "we (the police) were never intended to replace the duty of the ordinary citizen...crime prevention should be aimed at community involvement."

Even though he now commands the Burlington detachment John says he would "spend an awful lot of money on gas" before he would move from Acton.

"It's my security blanket" he grins as he surveys the trees visible from his Division St. patio.



John Barratt



The Halton Board of Education and the Haemon Board of Education in Quebec are taking part in a student exchange program. Involved are, front row, left to right, Steve Girard, 13, Acton, Andrea Fagan, 13, Acton, and Josee Bolvin, 14. Back row, Leah Marks, 13, Acton, Charloee Simard, 13, Sonja Amstaeetter, 14, Acton and Suzie Tremblay.

Acton students host exchange

Four young Acton residents are playing host this week and next to four young Quebec residents as part of a bilingual exchange program sponsored by the Halton Board of Education.



Paul Nielsen gets help from Stella Brunelle and Tracey Tyler during the Actario draw Saturday. Mrs. Brunelle was the co-owner of the winning ticket.

Actario winners

Stella Brunelle, Acton Blvd., was a big winner in the weekly Actario draw.

First she and Lee Colero, Islington, shared the \$350 weekly cash draw prize as well as \$50 in merchant voucher prizes since Stella was on hand for the draw.

Then Mrs. Brunelle and her son Steve shared merchant bonus vouchers from Acton IGA, Acton Bowling Lanes, Canadian Tire, and Superior Shoe Repair in the first bonus draw. John McHugh, 274 Mill St. East won the super shopper draw taking home vouchers from Acton Family Cleaners, Acton Family Restaurant, Acton Photo and Camera, Stedman's, Wooden Heart Restaurant, Nielsen's Clothing, Joffie Shoes, Jug City, Toddlers to Teens, Acton Bakery and Deli, Acton Family

While here, they are supposed to be totally immersed in English.

In their plans are visits to Burlington, Toronto, Black Creek Pioneer Village, the Science Centre, Niagara Falls and Ontario Place among other attractions.

The program was funded by both the federal and provincial governments. Parents were asked to contribute \$55 to the exchange, and students sold garbage bags to help raise funds.

As well as helping the eight students learn a second language, the program is also designed to bring Canadians closer together.

While in Quebec, the Acton students toured Quebec City, and the zoo, and other areas of interest. They were there for two weeks, and the French customs, and the Quebec students arrived in Acton last Friday and have a full agenda for the next two

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95 g. deodorant reg. Coast soap 2/1.89	Purina 500 g. aet. cat food Tender Vittles 1.29	Sun Blest tins kernel corn (14 oz.) or peas (19 oz.) 2/1.79	Rosa 24 oz. jar sweet mixed pickles .99
Facette-Royale 4 roll pkg. toilet tissue 1.59	Schwartz 1 kg jar peanut butter 4.49	Weston pkg. of 12 junior burgers .69	Weston pkg. of 6 lemon filled buns .99
Granny's 350 g pkg. chocolate chip cookies 1.29	Granny's pkg. of 10 butter tarts 1.39		

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Thieves hit Canada Battery

Thieves broke into Canada Battery in the industrial park over the weekend.

They got into the building by opening a sliding window, Halton Regional Police said, and escaped with \$35 in cash and caused \$50 in damage to the plant.

The burglary took place either late Saturday night or early Sunday morning.

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