

Amateurs bump up local crime stats

By LINDA KIRBY

Crime in Halton is on the increase, but according to police officials, it is not the professional criminal who is contributing to that climbing number.

In fact, only about 5 per cent of all criminal activity in Halton is done by "hardcore" professionals.

For the most part, crime is committed by those who take advantage of an opportunity—be it a result of peer pressure or the need for some quick money.

Sgt. Peter Whittaker, head of the crime prevention bureau for Halton Regional Police, estimates only 5 per cent of the population to be "totally" honest.

At least 90 per cent of the population, depending upon the situation, could be tempted to commit some offence, he said.

"This applies directly to youth, where peer pressure is often the motivating factor," he said.

"They might be basically good kids and know right from wrong, but if the opportunity is there or the pressure is on, they might do it."

He has noticed a definite rise in the number of offences committed by those between the ages of 16 and 21 years. Many are high school drop-outs, unemployed or laid off workers—but, all with time on their hands.

"Peer pressure had not changed over the years," he said.

"Kids and older ones still want to fit into a group. They usually don't do well in school or are unemployed and are hanging around with other

kids."

"They might be getting into drugs or criminal activity, or they could just be loitering around—wanting to feel part of that particular group."

"They will put aside their personal feelings, just to be part of that group," he said.

The biggest jump in criminal activity among youths has been in the fraud category and shoplifting.

"At one time you didn't see many youths or teenagers involved in that."

"Now there are a lot—forging signatures, stealing identification, or credit cards and opening accounts in other peoples' names for the purposes of writing bad checks."

"Having worked in the juvenile section, I was surprised by the number of 14 and 15-year-olds involved in fraud," said Sgt. Whittaker.

The rise in shoplifting incidents has prompted most firms to take a hard stand against those caught. With a few exceptions, most apprehended (even for \$1 nail polish) are brought before the courts.

"The problem is a lot of people don't realize the consequences of their actions."

"People must realize shoplifting is a theft and that they can have a criminal record for it."

For that reason alone, most shop owners will prosecute offenders.

Sgt. Whittaker believes at least one-third of all residential break-ins cases could be avoided if homeowners were more careful about securing their premises.

"About one-third of the break-ins in Halton are committed in homes where the doors or windows were left unlocked."

"It is not a break-in as much as a walk-in," he said.

Leaving valuables in plain sight in a car is another invitation to thieves or would-be thieves, he said.

Cash, credit cards and jewelry are among the popular items to be stolen.

But, also taken are stereo equipment, cameras, and any property that can be easily converted into cash.

"A lot of the same people who are breaking into houses are also doing the shops and businesses," said Sgt. Whittaker.

Small portable typewriters, calculators, machinery and even vehicles are being stolen.

While the rate of break-ins has risen in Halton only 2 to 3 per cent over the past year, those doing them are knowledgeable about valuables and what can be easily turned into quick money.

Sgt. Whittaker encourages parents to be more aware of what their teenage sons or daughters are bringing home, be it a lot of money or property.

"Parents are responsible and they shouldn't always accept things at face value."

"Obviously, if their sons or daughters are not working and they turn up with a new stereo or new clothes, something might not be right."

"This doesn't mean you have to be suspicious all the time."

"But, a lot of criminal activity, however, could be regulated if kids were checked out more often."

What is the sense of a kid stealing a stereo if his parents are going to ask questions?"

The Halton Regional Police Department is seriously considering developing a program similar to "Operation Aware" (now being used throughout the United States) in a move to discuss the consequences of crime with school students.

"The lack of discussion on the topic and peer pressure are the biggest problems in dealing with youthful offenders," said the police sergeant.

He said the program would be similar to a life skills course and would include speakers and tours of correctional centres.

"Peer pressure begins as early as senior public school where kids begin to place great importance on being part of a group," he said.

A juvenile court diversion program was recently launched by this force to deal with young offenders.

The project involves the participation of parents who are invited to attend, with their sons or daughters a group session at the local police station.

In many cases, the incident might have warranted only a stern reprimand from police to the youth, but by bringing the parent and child to the station, the matter takes on more importance.

"We have had excellent response from the parents," he said, although some feel slightly embarrassed about the whole thing.

"We tell them it is important they face these problems as a family and not brush it off, and it also helps the kid to hear it from a professional," he said.



Ian Keith, Planning Director

Planning — where the action starts

It's the front line as far as developers are concerned and the department where the battle is first joined.

It's the planning department, where soft-spoken Planning Director Ian Keith presides in a direct understanding manner, always seeing the Town's and the developer's side of any disagreement.

He's been on the other side, since he has worked in private industry as a planner with Kleinfeld Associates and Lehnard Corporation, as well as with other municipalities before coming here, just this year, as planning director.

To the average person planning is a vague term that means little, but in the words of Ian Keith, a planner deals with the physical environment, manages growth and deals with development applications, hopefully in a way that improves the Town's appearance. "Our role is to stand between the administration and developer to assist and encourage the best."

He stresses, as all department heads do, that his department only makes recommendations to council, but the decisions are made around the council table.

The reams of paper generated in this department are probably greater than anywhere else. And no wonder—reports of all kinds are the order of the day.

Every application for development, even a small one, has to be circulated to an endless number of agencies. They go to the CVCA, Halton School Boards, both of them, the fire department, police department, building department, parks department, engineering, regional works and regional planning departments, Halton Health Unit, some to the Niagara Escarpment Commission, the Hydro, and sometimes to the CNR.

Then when all their comments come back to the planners, they have to be summed up and incorporated in a lengthy report to council. The report tries to resolve all the comments and come up with a recommendation to council. This, of course does not necessarily mean council will accept it, as many a planner has found out to his sorrow.

Keith understands the political compromise, often necessary for elected officials, and says, "They have to balance the effect on competing forces, I guess that's democracy".

It's a bit of a surprise to find a philosopher lurking under the maps and regulations surrounding the planning director, particularly one who has some doubts about his own profession. "I often wonder if we are interfering too much with people's rights on their own property." He sees the necessity that brought planning to the fore in the '40's and early '50's, when development has happened, but since then wonders if it has not become a tool of the political process, where it could be an obstacle to development rather than an encouragement along the right path.

The philosopher peeks though again, when he points out man and woman, has strong territorial instincts. He says frequently opposition to a rezoning by an individual or ratepayers group, while outwardly using traffic, noise, dust, or any other reason as the basis of objection, are really feeling threatened by change in their territory.

Keith says the Ontario Municipal Board recognizes this instinct, by insisting nearby residents must be notified of any proposed change. "We, as planners, have to recognize that strong intuitive feeling and take it into consideration."

By this time most readers know the Halton Hills Official Plan is close to finalization after almost six years of effort, but not too many know what an Official Plan really is. Well, according to the planner, it is a statement of public policy intended as a guide to all development but it is not a law, until a zoning bylaw specifically designating areas is passed. It is the zoning bylaw which can be enforced. Even the Town cannot spend public money on a project, unless it conforms to the Official Plan, and zoning bylaw.

He predicts the survival of downtowns as more intimate specialized shopping areas and apartment redevelopment in that area in Georgetown.

He feels Acton has grown more gracefully than Georgetown, simply because they do not have the large plazas.

Keith feels the local municipalities are caught in a squeeze play, with all the provincial ministries such as the Ministry of Transportation, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Food, all trying to have the Town adopt their policies, which frequently conflict. In addition Ontario Hydro and the railway companies want their policies given priority. "But it is the local council who are faced with the irate ratepayers."

Within the next 20 years, development will occur south of Silvercreek and west of Georgetown, with some growth in Acton, the planner predicts. He sees only government subsidized apartment building since apartments have become expensive to build and returning too low a yield to the developer.

He insists the backbone of the planning department is the staff, including Bruce MacLean, deputy planning director, Brian Murdoch, planning technician and Marg Boyer secretary and woman for all seasons and jobs.

Before entering private businesses he worked as a planner for Metro, Markham and Etobicoke. Married with two children James 19 and Christina 15, he is living in Willowdale at present.

newsmakers

Georgetown/Acton,

New face in sep. school race

There will be a race for the one Separate School Board seat in the whole Town of Halton Hills.

Irene Wood is challenging incumbent Irene McCauley. Irene Wood a resident of Georgetown for the past two years, is a native of Bowmanville, she attained a BA in French and German literature at Queen's University, and has taken continuing education courses at McMaster University.

She is one of the Separate School Board appointees to Halton Hills Library Board, and a lector at Holy Cross Church.

The candidate making her first bid for public office, is a volunteer with Georgetown Hospital Auxiliary and also with Georgetown "Y", where her husband is the director. She is also a member of Georgetown University Women's Club.

Before coming to Georgetown, where she is a real estate agent, she was office coordinator for Citicorp Leasing in Burlington.

She says she would like to help the Halton Separate School Board "move toward effective cost efficient administration which will not jeopardize the quality of education." A better flow of information between parents, teachers principals and board is another of her aims, she states.



Irene Wood



Volunteer Firefighters from both Acton and Georgetown turned out for the annual church parade Sunday in Georgetown to mark Fire Prevention Week. The men marched down Main St. to Knox Presbyterian Church where they took part in the service.

Farmers grapple with complex modern problems

By STEVE ARNOLD

Beneath the pastoral serenity of Halton's farmland runs a current of tension as farmers grapple with the problems of modern agriculture.

Costs of production are soaring and the final prices for their crops are generally falling. The high cost of land and equipment and low wages keep young people out of the industry.

Regional and local staff and politicians from Halton's member municipalities were given an in-depth look at those problems last week during a tour of farm operations.

Ron Jones, a part-time sheep producer, told the travelling politicians that since he and his wife purchased their 30-acre farm in north Burlington, market prices for the lamb and wool they sell have fallen by 50 per cent.

"We can probably get by on these prices, but it

certainly has to be a labor of love," he said. "If you count your labor cost into it though, you just can't do it."

Mr. and Mrs. Jones currently have 38 purebred Dorset sheep and four horses they continue to raise sheep, despite the low prices, because "we're involved in breeding. We're interested in the quality of the stock."

Henry Stanley, Halton's agricultural representative, illustrated the point even further noting that in 1981 he sold four sheep from his farm for \$1,000. This year, the best price he can get for the same quantity animals is \$250.

"We're trying to find the weak link in the market chain now," he said, adding that domestic producers account for less than one-quarter of the lamb consumed in Canada.

Down the road, Ed Segaworth, told the group

that the 1,000 acres of cash crops he grows amounted to "more crop than cash this year."

He told the group that while he farms 1,000 acres of land, he owns only 55. The balance is rented, on one year leases, mostly from developers holding it for future plans.

That, he said, is creating a major problem for food producers.

"On one year rentals like this farmers just rape the land. They take everything out of it they can because they can't afford to put anything back in to it," he said.

Owning more of the land he works would give him more security, he said, but he simply can't afford to own more right now.

Currently, Mr. Segaworth has \$400,000 invested in equipment for his operation. One item, a combine, cost \$100,000 and is only used a maximum of three weeks during the year.

Owning items like that in common with other farmers doesn't work, he said, "because when I need it, I need it right away, not tomorrow or the next day."

During the planting season, he illustrated, every day he waits beyond May 15 costs him a bushel per acre in final yield.

Mr. Segaworth is one of the farmers co-operating in Halton's program for using sewage sludge as a fertilizer. He said he would know better at the end of this year how good the sludge really is, but noted there have been some problems.

Falling crop prices have also been a problem for producers in his market, he said, noting that two years ago he could sell corn for \$4 a bushel. Today the best available price is \$2.38 a bushel.

Barley that commanded \$125 a ton two years ago today brings only \$90 a ton.

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Purchasing Agent

Town will buy here when everything equal

The Town wants to buy locally and will do so on every occasion provided price, delivery and quality are equal, Hugh Patterson, purchasing agent for the Town of Halton Hills assured members of Georgetown Chamber of Commerce at a luncheon, Thursday.

He emphasized there is no mystique about buying from the Town. "If you have a product to sell, I'm interested in hearing about it, but you also have an obligation to make me aware of your product or service."

He stressed the big difference between private and Town buying is simply everything is open to public scrutiny, and there are basic rules set by council that must be followed. He noted there is no second chance on a bid, since no one can

come in later and offer to better the lowest bid. Recalling a recent controversy where local business complained they did not have the

chance to tender, Patterson explained, under the new purchas-

ing bylaw all tenders will be published in local papers as well as the Daily Commercial News or other publication relating to the item. Previously it was only advertised locally if it thought a local contractor may be able to bid.

Patterson said everything over \$20,000 will be offered by public sealed tender, but noted in the case of vehicles or specific capital items under that, the tendering process will also be applied.

Between \$5,000 and \$20,000 it is permissible to have invitational tenders, with at least three written quotations.

The new purchasing bylaw will allow purchase by negotiation if bids come in at equal amounts or where none exactly meet the specifications, said the



Georgetown Chamber of Commerce President Doug Pearce and Town Purchasing Agent Hugh Patterson chat at the luncheon meeting, where Patterson was the guest speaker.