

Lost time remains major police problem

By LINDA KIRBY
Staff Writer

Halton has one of the most efficient police forces in Ontario according to an Ontario Police Commission study, but that position is in danger.

The 36 page study, carried out at the request of Police Chief James Harding, concluded Halton's police force is undermanned and the workload is "well in excess" of other forces.

"It is our conclusion that existing manpower is stretched to the point that delayed responses may occur with increased frequency at peak periods," the authors warned.

The study also said reduction in crime prevention and other types of pro-active policing may be necessary if the local force is to continue meeting its primary function of responding to crime.

On the bright side, the report said the addition of 11 officers to the force in 1983 may be enough to "sustain the traditional high level of service provided by the Halton Regional Police," at least temporarily.

Despite the warnings for the future, the authors praised the Halton force for its manpower systems, but also warned of a danger in increasing "lost time."

"The team is impressed with the efficiency of the manpower planning systems employed by the Halton Regional Force," the document stated. "Everything that can be done to fully monitor, measure and exploit manpower utilization is being done."

Lost time refers to the hours taken away from police duties by sickness, vacations, court work and training and cost the region one-third of its available patrol time last year.

Six for one
"Therefore to provide one, round-the-clock beat/patrol requires a minimum of six officers," the report indicated.

The study noted this problem was beyond the governing authorities and was the result of collective bargaining and improvements in the police officers' remuneration/incentive package ratified by the Working Agreement.

"This pressing concern is province wide and affects all police forces. We find Halton Regional Police Force to be above the average (29.6 per cent) for other regional forces."

"Translated into actual manpower, the percentages difference in lost time done between Halton and other regions is equal to 10 police officers," the authors added.

Reviewing workload statistics, the report noted during a 28-day period in July, officers responded to 7,267 demand calls for service. Of these calls 753 (10 per cent) required the dispatch of a backup unit for a total of 8,020 dispatches, an average of 286.4 per day or 95.5 per shift.

With an average of 72 officers actually on duty per day this averages 4.0 calls per officer per day.

Calls increase
The report went on to say along with a significant increase in the number of calls for service, there has been substantial reduction in the number of available officers, due to the "lost time" factor.

"The effect is that the calls-per-officer rate has doubled. The time remaining for all other duties including pro-active policing and follow-up investigations has been reduced by more than a third."

According to the report, Halton's

peak periods for calls are Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays with 46.6 per cent of the total workload occurring on these three days.

The average response time however, remains 15 minutes or less for 91 per cent of police calls.

A breakdown of the statistics on the time spent answering calls revealed an average of 42 minutes is spent per call.

In an eight hour shift, the average officer has four hours and 12 minutes remaining for other duties such as court attendance, vehicle maintenance, follow-up investigation and general patrol.

Crime down
In a study of 'barometer' crimes (such as homicide, attempted murder, sexual offences, assaults, break and enter, robbery, theft motor vehicle, theft and fraud) Halton Region cleared 33 per cent of its occurrences in 1981, equal to the average for other forces in these studies.

These included police departments in Durham, Sudbury, Waterloo, and York Regions and the cities of London and Windsor.

Halton Region reported a 41 per cent increase in such crimes from 1977 to 1981. This is above the average increase of 38 per cent for the comparative forces but this region's crime rate is still slightly lower than the average for other areas.

In a four year period between 1977 and 1981, Halton's barometer crimes per thousand have increased by 30 per cent and their clearance rate increased by 43 per cent.

Halton Region has the second lowest per capita cost of the comparative forces (\$31.23) and is among the lowest across Ontario.

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Ballinafad

Scouting's future to be discussed

Many people worshipped together on Sunday in celebration of Christian Family Sunday and Mother's Day. Reverend Ken Jackson came from Brampton to take the service, and there were two baptisms, Mark Allan Bailey, son of Mel and Kathryn Bailey, and Brent Andrew Norman Sinclair, son of Brian and Sue Sinclair. Both boys are grandsons of local residents, Alma and Norman Sinclair.

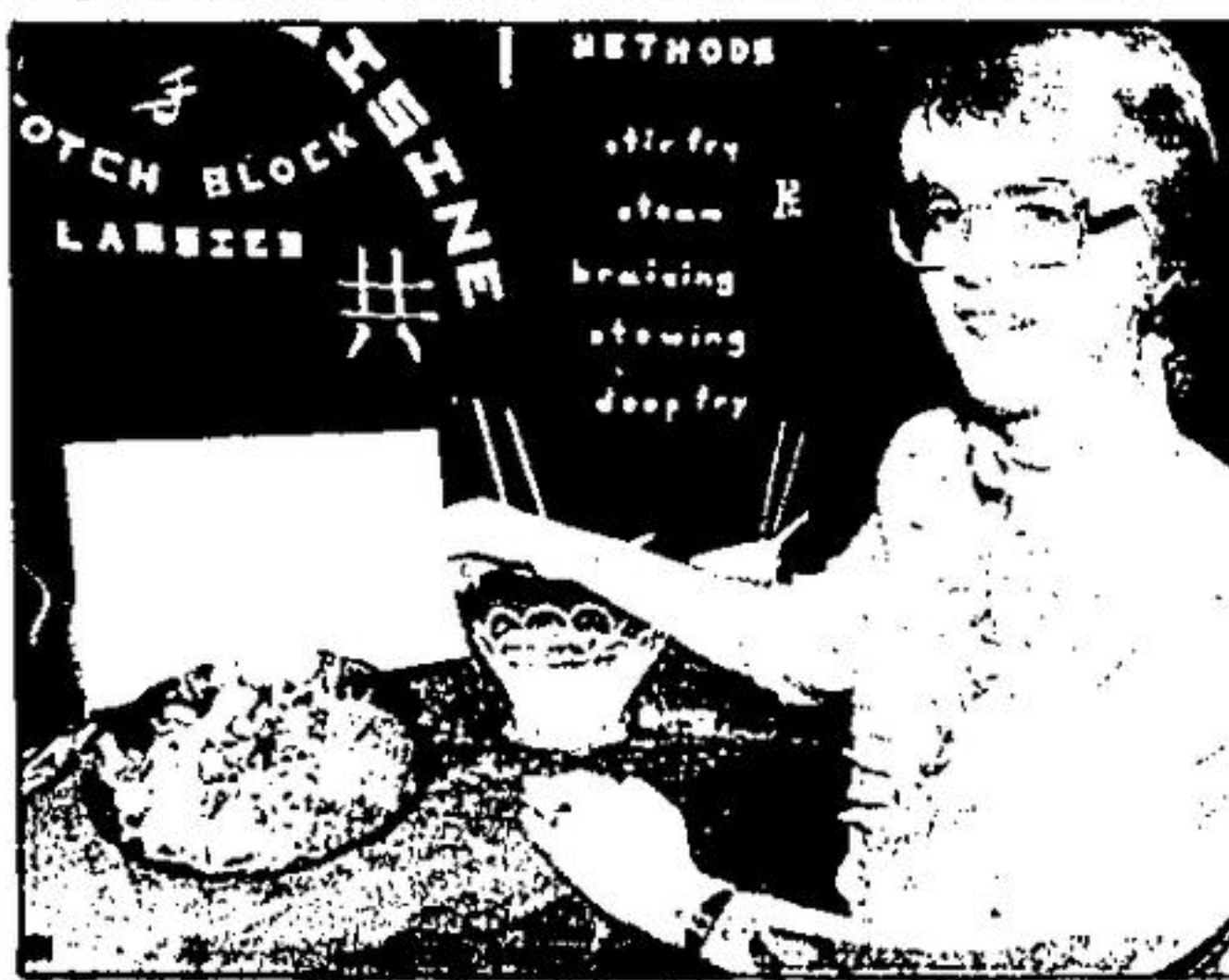
It was a real celebration, complete with a baptismal anthem by the Junior Choir under the direction of Bob Pinkerton. The congregation enjoyed the special music provided by Susan and Charlie McEbery and their daughter Catherine.

A speedy recovery is wished to Reverend Tom Bandy, who is ill.

An important meeting of the parents of Ballinafad scouts, cubs and beavers is scheduled for Sunday evening, May 15 at 8 p.m. at the community hall. Much has to be decided about next year's programs. All parents are strongly urged to attend.

Lea Douglas of Limehouse was the hostess of a luncheon, last Thursday for some of the rural Red Cross canvassers. The successful local campaign in March was due to hard work and the generous support of the rural communities, including Ballinafad, where Joyce Clarke is the area captain. Lea, whose area is "Everywhere," provided a beautiful meal, some great stories about this campaign and others, and certainly encouraged her canvassers to be there again next year!

The Ladies' Softball team started the season with a victory over the Maroon Marauders of Acton by a score of 17-11. Despite many "early in the season" errors and the rather high score, coach Jim Bailey was pleased with the outcome. The local cheering section was greatly appreciated.



Advanced honors

Elizabeth Bird-Ashgrove earned advanced honors at a regional 4-H Club Achievement Night held at E.C. Drury Wednesday, Apr. 27. Club members utilize the annual evening event to display their work carried out through the year.

4-H competition

Senior Halton 4-H Club members matched their knowledge of financial management with 81 of their peers at a recent regional competition. Susan Livingston of Hornby earned the highest marks of the Halton competitors, placing her in fourth spot in a field of 100. Kathy Galbraith, also of Hornby placed sixth. David Wilson of Norval 10th, Elizabeth Bird of Georgetown was 18th, along with John Reid and Miriam Howden of Milton placed 20th. The evaluation quizzes were part of a workshop held at the Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston, to conclude the 4-H Financial Management Project participated in by 1300 Ontario Club members.

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