

Acton's Neighborhood Watch produces 57% drop in burglaries

by Mark Holmes

The local Neighborhood Watch program was renewed in the community recently after a summer break. The program was explained to concerned citizens and new members were recruited at a meeting.

Neighborhood Watch was instituted in Acton last April after a rash of burglaries during the first three months of the year had residents up in arms.

Before the program was brought into effect the burglary rates had sky-rocketed up 79 per cent and the trend was continuing.

Since the program became operational the area has experienced a 57 percent drop in the burglary rate.

The program was initiated by Rick Bonnette, a highly productive member of the community, who travelled from door to door explaining the program to area residents. Volunteers helped him in this chore.

Within a few weeks it was no longer necessary to seek out new members as people volunteered by the dozens.



Working Together To Prevent Crime

"The program is growing all the time," said Bonnette, "and it won't be long before many neighborhoods have a full compliment of members."

Constable Bob Ustrzycki, a Halton Regional police officer, was also instrumental in starting the local chapter as he instructed new members on how to spot

criminal activities and identify criminals. "We as police," said Ustrzycki, "have the responsibility to teach citizens how to correctly identify a person or vehicle."

"Far too often police respond to a call only to get a description of a person with an average build, average looks and average attire that could fit hundreds of people. "It's almost impossible to apprehend someone with this kind of description," he said.

"What we (the police) need, is the community to become our eyes and ears," remarked Ustrzycki. "They know, much better than we do, who their neighbors are and what their habits are," he continued.

"For instance, if a person knew that his neighbor was out of town for the weekend and suddenly, without warning, there was a stranger hanging around the place, he would know, through the program, to obtain a licence plate number, to call the police and, if he saw the stranger, to get a good description."

"When a person uses this format it makes

our job of apprehending a criminal much easier," stated Ustrzycki. "Most people who haven't joined have the idea that a block captain is supposed to spend a lot of time and effort being a detective."

"Quite to the contrary we don't want the members to become directly involved with the criminal or be a vigilante," emphasized Ustrzycki. "We just want people to keep an eye on their neighborhood."

"What it boils down to," concluded Ustrzycki, "is being a nosy neighbor."

People are also trained to protect themselves against burglary by engraving all valuable items with their driver's licence number.

"It's an inexpensive way to identify or trace any stolen articles," said Ustrzycki.

Watch program is also a good deterrent to any would be thieves," said Ustrzycki.

"Not only does Neighborhood Watch deter burglars, it also helps prevent vandalism and violent crime," added Bonnette. Ustrzycki also said, "Neighborhood Watch is not a police program, it is a community venture. We (Bonnette and Ustrzycki) are just a resource to help people get started and it's up to them to continue the program."

"It's nice to see 150 or more people show up at the meetings and I know from experience," said Bonnette, "it brings the community closer together when they're working towards a common goal."

People find themselves talking to people they've known for years, but didn't realize they were living a few houses apart," pointed out Bonnette.

Neighborhood Watch has proved itself to be a valuable deterrent to crime and for the future both Bonnette and Ustrzycki hope the program will continue with the success it has already seen.

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Peace Camp fined \$250 for illegal road

Building a new road on the Twin Lakes land without a permit from the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) has cost International Peace Camp (IPC) \$250.

The non-profit corporation, IPC, proposing to develop a huge multi-ethnic cultural-recreation centre near Speyside, was convicted in Milton provincial court Thursday for a violation of a section of the Niagara Escarpment Act.

IPC lawyer Steven Keir told the court his client was pleading guilty to the charge of developing without a development permit. NEC lawyer Neil Davis (the Premier's son) told Justice of the Peace Derrick Rabley that staff viewed the newly constructed road and there was no permit issued for the development, so there had been contraventions of two sections of the Act. Fill had been removed, the road excavated, and crushed stone put down.

Keir agreed to the statement of facts read into the record, but explained his clients weren't aware of the development permit requirements. Also, IPC has taken steps to remedy the problem, Keir said.

Davis countered that the road was built sometime between July 13 and 26 and IPC was sent a letter advising them of the infraction on July 27 by the NEC. Also, he pointed out, IPC applied for the development in March of this year and should have known they couldn't start development until they received permission.

Keir explained IPC didn't feel building the road would be viewed as development.

Davis informed the court the two sides had agreed on appropriate fine, \$250. Rabley added \$3 court costs and gave IPC 30 days to pay the fine.

Afterwards NEC official Pat Boeckner explained IPC wasn't being required to remove the road and restore the land at this time because their proposal hasn't been accepted or rejected by the NEC. If the project goes ahead it would make little sense to require IPC to remove the road and then allow them to build it again later. She added there is provision to require the road be removed and the land restored the way it was before, later if the project is rejected by the NEC.

Recently the NEC voted to authorize the chairman Ivor McMullin to issue a restoration order for Twin Lakes since more development which hasn't been approved has taken place.

Boeckner explained staff, McMullin and legal advisors will meet this week to determine how the restoration order will be processed. It has been suggested the NEC will have the courts administer the restoration order so that if it isn't followed IPC officials can be held in contempt of court.

She also explained the long list of recent developments at the Twin Lakes land

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The Halton High School Girls' Basketball season officially got underway for Acton last week as they travelled to Georgetown. Both the Junior and Senior squads came away with season opening

wins. The Juniors, seen here, won 30-22. Acton's Carolyn Hoare (33) and Susan Craig (5) wait for a couple of Rebelettes to decide who really wants the ball.

Kingham may fight local improvement charge



Kingham phase one and two townhouse residents may fight having to pay the region a local improvement charge for the new sewer system installed last year.

Phase one and two Kingham townhouse corporations and their members are considering fighting the region's plan to make them pay for the new sewer system installed on the road last year.

Councillor Dave Whiting, a member of one of the condominiums, Jim Kinnear, head of Halton Condominium Corporation 20 and Andy Keep, Halton Condominium Corporation 24 president, discussed the "unfair" predicament townhouse residents have found themselves in.

When phase one and two of the townhouses were built the developer installed a private sewage system and this was approved by the old

Town of Acton. It's rare that any development would get a green light without a top-notch municipal sewage system.

Obviously the system was sub-par since it had to be replaced after a short life. Residents had many, many problems with the sewage system over the years.

Last Tuesday night a regional staffer explained at a public meeting that the residents in phase one owe \$426 for each home while those across the road in phase two owe \$434 for each unit. This can be paid in a lump sum or paid off on tax bills over a 10 year period. However, if the project is paid for over 10 years the residents must pay the same

interest rate as the region is—11 per cent. This works out to \$77 a year, Keep noted.

When the region originally wrote the local improvement bylaw it was like standard local improvement deals, the landowners abutting the improvement paying for it. In this case it meant only about 15 per cent of the homeowners, those with units facing on Kingham Rd., would be charged. Recently the region rectified this error and passed a new bylaw charging all of the townhouse owners for the sewer system.

This new bylaw must be approved by the Ontario Municipal Board and the residents as individuals or the condominium corporations can

appeal it.

Following the public meeting Whiting met with the two corporation presidents and they reviewed the situation. Later the townhouse corporations sought legal advice.

Keep recalled three years ago residents were "up to our ears" in problems involving the private pump station and sewer system. The region said the only way they'd help was if the people accepted a local improvement. They were desperate, he said, so they agreed.

They feel the situation was totally unfair. Before the sewer surcharge was moved to the water bills a couple of years ago townhouse

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Robina Clark celebrates 95th

A long-time resident of Acton, Robina Clark will be celebrating her 95th birthday this week at the Elliot Home for the aged in Guelph with other October born residents.

Miss Clark, born in Peterborough on October 14, 1888, moved to Acton when she was nine months old and says she has always loved the quiet rural flavor of Acton.

Miss Clark's mother lost her first husband shortly after Robina was born and remarried to become Mrs. William Gould. Soon after remarrying, Mrs. Gould's family moved to Acton where Robina's mother gave birth to two sons.

In 1913 Miss Clark received her teaching certificate and moved to Toronto where she taught primary grades at Queen Victoria Public School.

For 49 years Miss Clark taught "the young children I love," and in 1962 she returned to Acton to retire.

"The children today are not much different than the children I knew 60 or 70 years ago,"

said Miss Clark, "but if they are truly interested in something they can be exceptionally clever."

Miss Clark attributes her longevity to always having a bright outlook on life and always treating people in a good Christian manner.

"I've had several serious operations," explained Miss Clark, "and I've always held an optimistic outlook through the whole thing."

Miss Clark said she enjoys crocheting, watching television and making cotton place mats.

"I always give away the things I make," said Miss Clark. "If people like the things I make then I want them to keep my work."

Miss Clark has also been active in the Knox Church Mission and she remembers making cotton sweaters and shirts for underprivileged children in Africa.

For the future, Miss Clark said she is going to live from day to day helping people who need help and she hoped to learn something new each day.



Well known former Acton resident Robina Clark recently celebrated her 95th birthday last week. She lives at The Elliot Home for the Aged in Guelph.

Horse killed in accident

A horse was killed when it ran in front of a car driving along the Fourth Line at about 8:45 a.m. October 6.

Dale Thibideau, 35, of Lot 12, Concession 4, Halton Hills, was southbound on the Fourth Line at about 65 km/h, according to police reports, when a horse crossed in front of his path, making a collision unavoidable. The car had an estimated \$2,000 damage.

All-candidates meet Thursday

There will be an all-candidates meeting Thursday night at 7:30 p.m. at the Georgetown Optimists Hall on Highway 7 north of Georgetown for the Esquering municipal by-election.

There are six candidates vying for the ward two area council seat: Jake Kulken; Rob Heaton; Jim France; Peter Norton; Tony Taylor and Dolly Moulden.

The vote is next Monday, October 24, and is being held to fill the vacancy created by the death of Tom Hill in August.

Turnout at Saturday's advance poll at the Halton Hills municipal offices on Trafalgar Rd. was very light, only 20 people cast ballots. Often a low advance poll turnout means there will be a low election day turnout and by-election voter turnouts are usually lower than turnouts for regular elections.

Candidates discuss issues on page B1

inside

Hartley looks at fire hydrants, a dog's best friend. See Coles Star on page 4.

The Acton Social Services and Information Centre learned it doesn't matter if you move across town or just next door, it's still a lot of work. Turn to page 8.

Acton council candidate Dennis Devine was sent to jail for six months for theft. Details on page B2.



The Reasoner wants us to believe they submit 97 for Bond of the secret service.