

Area's new chief detective says standards high

The Canadian Constitution has been a good incentive to police officers to maintain high standards of performance, asserts the new head of criminal investigations for area regional police.

"With the Charter of Rights everything has to be done letter perfect," says Staff Sergeant Roy Smith, "which is good because it is making us better police officers."

That means building a strong case through meticulous work that is fair to the rights of the accused. But it also means police must spend more time and money on investigations to meet the standards required by the courts, adds Staff Sgt. Smith.

Staff Sgt. Smith replaces Staff Sgt. Les Graham as head of the Criminal Investigations Bureau for 11 Division which covers Halton Hills. The transfer takes Graham to Oakville where he will head the Criminal Intelligence Bureau.

The transfers are not promotions, but are part of the Halton force's career development program to give its officers wide-ranging experience.

"It is a valuable position for me to assume because I get to expand my knowledge of the department," says Staff Sgt. Smith. "It's personally gratifying to me because I get to work with other people in the district."

He previously worked as a uniform staff sergeant with 11 Division where he would only have contact with one shift at a time.

As head of criminal investigations Staff Sgt. Smith, along with his staff, are responsible for case management. They co-ordinate and guide involved investigations, doing such things as setting up surveillance, tracking down witnesses and information, and ensuring both appear in court at the appointed time.

Staff Sgt. Smith is careful to point out

that detectives do not overshadow uniformed officers in their responsibilities. Each tackles a different side of crime fighting.

"I don't want to give the impression that this is an elite office," he says. "(Uniformed officers) are the front line troops and we are there to back them up." Uniformed officers are the first at the scene of a crime and often handle their own investigations. However, because they have patrol responsibilities, they can't always devote the time needed in more involved cases, such as homicides or robberies. In such instances the detective will assist or take over.

"Most of our work is follow up investigation work," says Staff Sgt. Smith.

Staff Sgt. Smith's previously worked in CIB for six months in 1978.

His involvement with police work, and especially police work in the area, is a long

one. After spending three years as a military policeman in the Canadian Forces during the late Sixties, he joined the Town of Milton Police Department in 1970, which later became part of Halton Regional Police.

He and his wife live in Milton. "I've policed here for pretty well my whole career," he says. "I find it an enjoyable place to work with excellent facilities."

He does remember, with some fondness, his days here in Georgetown in the early 70s when police worked out of cramped quarters on Mill St., near the hotel.

One of the big concerns then was bar-room brawls on a weekend evening.

"Several times I would be at the desk and would have to walk across the street to back up the other officer on duty and haul the guys in," he smiles. "Times have changed."



Staff Sgt. Roy Smith

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Mayor Russ Miller says the rural area of Halton Hills were hit worst by recent heavy snowfalls but it doesn't seem to bother these two girls exercising their horses on the Sixth Line, Sunday afternoon.

Rural roads are clear but some of the huge snow banks blow back onto roads when the wind whips up.

Mayor says Rural areas hit worst by December snowfall

Mayor Russ Miller says he can fully understand why taxpayers in every corner of Halton Hills are upset with snow plowing and removal service this year.

He called this newspaper Friday and offered some observations about the snow service this winter and the many, many complaints he's hearing.

"I know people want action and not excuses. But most years the situation wouldn't be this bad. If we went out and hired more men when we have a disastrous winter, what would we do with them the next nine years when we have normal winters? Then we'd be getting complaints that we're paying people to lean on their shovels," Miller declared. If the winter continues to be severe everyone's just going to have to "suffer" at times.

"I agree it's tough to get around town (Georgetown and Acton) these days, but it's even worse in the rural area," he said.

Miller says he isn't getting many calls from Acton residents, but that's only because the people are calling Councillors Rick Bonnette, Ross Knechtel and Dave Whiting. He said he knows the ward one representatives are receiving lots of calls.

However, the mayor says he's getting loads of complaints about the roads in Georgetown and the sidewalks too (the wishes people would clean their walks).

Complaints are flooding in from the rural area, he says. Miller rhymed off lists of roads he's had complaints about, like the Fifth Line, Tenth Line, Ninth Line, Eighth Line etc.

"People in the rural area say they're having no trouble getting around the two towns, they can't get into the urban areas. One lady asked me why we're removing snow from the White Bridge (the bridge over the railway tracks on Highway 7 or Guelph St. in Georgetown) nobody can get in from the country to go over it. There're people who have been snowbound in the rural area."

Citizens are also complaining about difficulties in getting around in parking lots like the Alcott Arena or the parking area at Acton Library. Miller says he's taken these up with staff, but they understandably are countering that how can they worry about parking lots when people can't get around on the roads. Solutions to this problem are being worked out.

"We've got more work than we can handle this year. We've had more snow and really cold weather early in the winter than usual. We'd be doing fine if this was a normal winter."

Miller explained there're 34 men working on the snow crews and with a winter like this "probably" we should have 40. "There have been more deaths recently than usual, so works staff have been busy in the cemeteries too, cutting into snow service time."

"We're short the men we need to handle this and we've been practising restraint. If the rest of the winter is like this the people



Mayor Russ Miller

will just have to suffer and put pressure on councillors to increase the snow budget. In fact it's something we're going to be looking at anyway and a lot of us (members of council) are talking about it now."

He says this problem with snow has been building for several weeks now and the situation has just been getting worse. "If we could only have a week with no storms we'd get caught up and we'd be fine." He noted that as of Friday morning there hadn't been a lot of fresh snow, so crews were out then and would be on the weekend, hopefully the mess would finally be cleaned up for a while.

Money the Town saved last winter because it was an easy winter had to go into rural roads, which because of the mild winter wound up being in worse shape than usual.

Miller acknowledged that he's aware a lot of Acton residents believe Georgetown gets better service, but the same kinds of complaints the Acton Free Press has written about in recent weeks he's also hearing from Georgetown people.

In a "disastrous" winter like this one has been so far, he thinks the only sure solution is for the Town to hire "six to 10 more men and put an extra \$50,000 to \$100,000 in the budget."

He realizes snow service is a high priority with citizens in December, January and February. People suggest cutting back on other things, such as recreation, in fact he's already heard some councillors talking along the same lines, but then councillors will just hear another set of complaints later. The complainers about recreation spending cuts may be from different citizens, but they're still taxpayers.

"In winter snow removal is important. In the summer it's forgotten and the complaints are about lack of recreation spending on fields."

Summing up the winter situation Miller observed "maybe we just have to accept a few things which are really unacceptable for a short time"

Roads bad? Don't put children on school buses if worried

Parents shouldn't put their children on school buses if they have the slightest qualms about the weather or driving conditions, according to Halton Board of Education Trustee Ariene Bruce (Acton).

Bruce, Esqueping Trustee Dick Howitt, and Georgetown trustee and board chairman Betty Fisher, discussed bussing in light of the bad winter Halton Hills is experiencing this year in interviews this week.

"Parents must realize they are under no pressure to send their children on the buses if they have any concerns about the weather. In the case of parents of toddlers when the weather is iffy they should feel comfortable not sending their children," Bruce declared.

Fisher said she and her colleagues Howitt and Bruce have been on top of bussing problems this winter. She noted Howitt and Bruce have brought problems to the attention of the administrator in charge of the buses while she herself has taken the matter up with Director of Education Wally Beavor and executive committee.

Parents have been calling the trustees and they noted they welcome the contact with parents.

Fisher said the board "strives for perfection" where the safety of the children on buses is concerned.

There have been a few problems this winter, one morning in particular when roads were quite icy. Fisher explained when conditions are bad because of snow it's easy to see, icy roads can be more difficult to detect.

"We're (the board) trying to be more astute to early morning conditions, Fisher explained.

Howitt explained board administrator Jim Hunt is in touch with the regional police, regional public works, the airport weather office and all the bus companies, before deciding where buses will run. The Esqueping trustee has suggested staff also contact Halton Hills public works to obtain even

more detailed information about weather and road conditions in this area.

All of the trustees noted it's a difficult decision to make and it's hard to predict what will happen with the weather. However, Howitt noted, a decision must be made about the buses before 6.30 a.m. so radio stations can be notified.

Fisher admitted one morning this winter there was a "complete error in judgement" regarding if the buses should run. "We hope it won't be repeated. We'll be more astute to conditions in the future. We will have errors, but I hope not again this winter."

She emphasized the board would never send the buses out in poor conditions just to keep the school open.

Throughout the entire winter there's probably a month's worth of bad days when tough decisions have to be made about bussing, Bruce observed.

She said the decision isn't made in Burlington, (where the board office is located) it's made locally through consultation between Hunt and bus company operators who go out and examine the roads.

"We're not perfect, there can and will be bad decisions made, so parents shouldn't send their children on the buses if they are at all worried," Bruce declared.

Even on the one bad day in north-west Halton Hills when the buses shouldn't have run, Howitt said the right decision was made for 90 per cent of Halton.

Bus drivers have "standing orders" to turn around if the road conditions are bad. "They're not expected to plow on through the snow drifts and ice no matter what," Howitt explained.

"The board and Hunt do a good job of making a difficult decision 99 per cent of the time," he declared.

The board is on the "horns of a dilemma". Howitt explained there are complaints some days if the buses run and complaints the same days if they don't run. "I'd rather see us err on the side of safety if there's any doubt at all."

Pomeroy pays for bigger car

Don't get your dander up if you see Regional Chairman Pete Pomeroy driving around in a large, new Mercury Grand Marquis, rather than the mid-size Ford LTD Halton Region was going to lease for him. Everything is above board.

At least one reader was annoyed enough by the sight to phone The Independent with a complaint, but an investigation determined Pomeroy is paying for the added costs of the larger vehicle out of his own pocket.

It was reported last week that Pomeroy was going to receive a leased mid-sized Ford LTD through the region, along with mileage costs and a \$9,000 increase in salary. This was approved by council because he has taken on his regional duties full time, while his predecessor, Jack Raffits, was a part-time chairman.

The region is paying \$280 a month to lease the Grand Marquis—the full lease price of an LTD—and the additional leasing price and operating costs of the Grand Marquis will be paid by Pomeroy, totaling about \$100 a month.

In addition, if the three year lease is broken before its expiry date, a penalty must be paid to the dealer, Pomeroy will have to cover the additional charge for the Grand Marquis, over an LTD—about \$700 extra.

Pomeroy's term as regional chairman lasts for two years.

Two car crash

There were no injuries in a two car crash on 27 Sideroad of Erin Township near Con. 8, according to Guelph OPP.

Police say Lynda Horne, 38, RR 4 Grand Valley, was westbound and Karen Kilner, 19, or RR 1 Limehouse, was eastbound when they met on a curve. Both applied the brakes and skidded into each other, according to police.

Horne's vehicle sustained about \$2,600 in damages and Kilner's \$1,900.

There were no charges laid.



Regional chairman Peter Pomeroy

Seek Guide handbooks

White Oaks area Girl Guides are having a tough time buying Girl Guide Handbooks, and they're hoping former Guides in Acton and Georgetown areas will help alleviate the problem.

Eileen Nagels, a Girl Guide trainer in the White Oaks area, says the handbook is sold out in stores, and is now being reprinted. In the meantime, she's hoping people who have old handbooks will donate them so girls in the program now won't have to do without.

In addition to the old handbooks, Nagels is looking for any other books that have anything to do with Guiding, to become part of a resource centre that would be available to all Guide leaders in Whiteoaks area, which includes Acton, Georgetown, Oakville, Mississauga, Brampton, Milton and Bolton.

She's hoping anyone with handbooks or other material pertaining to the Girl Guide movement will call the area office at 416-279-2790, or Nagels herself at 416-275-7922.