

Sheriff's role changed since Robin Hood's day

by Gerd Kelle

The present office of sheriff has changed since Robin Hood's day but some of the sheriff's duties are identical with those carried out by his ancient namesake. The duties of the modern day sheriff include seizing property, collecting debts and serving subpoenas. But people still think of the sheriff as the bad guy, says Robert (Mac) Sprowl, the tenth sheriff of the judicial district of Halton, since the district was created in 1855. "Despite what people say, the sheriff is even-handed," says Mr. Sprowl. "He's not out to destroy anyone." The origins of the position date back to ninth century Britain, and the creation of British common-law. In those days, the shire-reeve was a high

ranking officer in the King's court who administered political and legal power in a land division called the shire (a district). The Shire Reeve had powers of arrest and imprisonment and could be a nasty customer for the local peasants to deal with. Today, the sheriff conducts real estate searches to see if there are judgements against disputed properties, serves summonses on civil court action, and subpoenas jurors. A far cry from the days when he could throw people into dungeons, says Sprowl. "We leave the enforcement of the law to the police, though in some US states, the sheriff is a police officer," he says. Ontario has 49 sheriffs and Mr. Sprowl is eighth on the list because Halton is one of the more populated districts with 250,000

people. The Halton sheriff's department consists of Sprowl, a deputy sheriff, three sheriff's officers, five clerks and a dozen support staff in the Supreme and County Courts. His office served 256,000 writs, summonses, and executions this year, more than twice the number served in 1964 because the amount of work has grown in proportion to Halton's population growth. "I farmed in Acton for 19 years before I was approached by the former sheriff of Halton, Andrew Frank, who asked me if I'd be interested in being a deputy sheriff," he recalls. "I was interested, so I tried it, and I've been doing it ever since." The sheriff's office also serves Ontario's Supreme and County civil courts where it acts as a "butler", looking after the needs of the judge, jurors and accused.

But by far the largest part of the sheriff's job is serving executions. This is a legal document from a supreme or county court judgment against an individual who has been sued for money owed. The sheriff can seize all forms of property to ensure that the creditor is paid, but law also demands the debtor be left with \$2,000 worth of clothing, appliances and furniture and that suits Sheriff Sprowl. "The sheriff has a duty to both debtor and creditor," he says. "The idea is to get the debtor to re-pay the creditor and then get the debtor out of debt." But it's hard to go through with some of the tasks of office, especially when a family must be evicted, he says. "Then, you do feel like you're the sheriff of Nottingham."



Halton Sheriff Robert Sprowl

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Pomeroy's car gets rough ride at the Region

Regional Chairman Pete Pomeroy's days as the owner of a large Mercury Grand Marquis leased by the region could be numbered.

In fact, he may not even get the Ford LTD that council originally intended him to have for his extensive travel requirements as Halton's full-time chairman.

Today council will deal with an Administration and Finance Committee recommendation that Pomeroy not be given approval to lease the more expensive Grand Marquis from Ford and pay the added costs out of his own pocket.

As well, Halton Hills Councillor Mike Armstrong says he and Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett will ask that an earlier council decision to lease an LTD be rescinded.

"Personally, I don't care what kind of car he drives," said Armstrong in an interview. His objection was that car dealers were not given the chance to bid on the lease and the region did not negotiate with competing firms for the best deal.

"I think we are making a mockery of the system and I am not going to go along with it," he said at Wednesday's committee meeting.

Other councillors agreed. Burlington Councillor Joan Little also objected because she said a large, costly to operate car like the Grand Marquis would make a statement of wealth to taxpayers that was improper for a political representative.

Pomeroy said to the committee, "I am sorry I caused all this hassle."

"I didn't know you approved a status symbol," he added, "I thought you approved a price range."

It seems there is a lot of confusion on council about what was approved December 21 which resulted in negotiations with Ford for an LTD and later a Grand Marquis.

The motion passed reads, "That staff be directed to negotiate the lease of the mid-sized vehicle, Ford LTD..."

This was done and Halton was offered an LTD for about \$280 per month.

Pomeroy was later conferring with the president of Ford in Oakville on an unrelated matter when the subject of the lease came up. The president offered to provide a large Grand Marquis executive car with 12,000 km already driven at a good price.

Pomeroy agreed on the condition that he would pay the extra leasing and operating costs for the larger car—about \$100 per month. He also agreed to cover the additional penalty for breaking the lease before its three year term expired which amounted to \$703.

But when this was explained to the Administration and Finance Committee Wednesday, some of its members were surprised.

Both Armstrong and Little said they had not read the motion carefully enough and had assumed the original council decision called for the leasing of a car the size of an LTD, not necessarily a Ford product. They also assumed normal tender procedures would apply.

Chief Administrative Officer, Dennis Perlin said that when a fleet of vehicles is leased by the region, dealers of different makes are allowed to tender bids.

But when only one car was being leased, as in this case and when a car was leased for the Business Development Officer, a Ford product is obtained to show appreciation to the Oakville plant for being a Halton business.

Perlin said they got the car at an excellent price.

Burlington Councillor Walter Mulkewich said he knew they had voted for a Ford product in December, but assumed Ford dealers in the region would be allowed to bid.

Burlington Councillor James Grievé and Milton Councillor Brad Clements both stated that they had no objection to the arrangement, saying it was normal business practice.

"I think we got a good deal," said Clements.

Armstrong said he hopes to set a policy that all cars leased by the region will be put up for tender. It would also be much simpler if Pomeroy took a car allowance rather than a leased vehicle he also said.

Barrett said council should decide how much it wants to spend on the car and then give the money to the chairman and let him buy whatever he wants.

Of the whole debate Pomeroy said, "I think it was pretty petty."

He said that in two weeks he had driven 1800 km on region business and that while he had no objection to an LTD, he liked the Grand Marquis because "If I am going to drive a lot of miles I want to be comfortable."

"The thing I like about the full size car is that the one piece frame makes it safe," he added.

He also said that he was just as willing to be treated like other councillors and get a straight mileage allowance rather than a leased car.

But according to Perlin it would be cheaper for the region to lease a vehicle because the chairman must do much more driving.

After a lengthy debate the committee finally turned down Pomeroy's request for the Grand Marquis. If council approves their recommendation today, Pomeroy will have to return the Grand Marquis he is now driving on a short term lease.

Concluded Mayor Barrett, "We are going to have a great year if the chairman's car takes this much time."



One way to keep warm on a crisp winter day—roll an "Earth Ball".



Glen Williams scouts keep warm and dry out around a roaring camp fire.



Coordinator Tom Ruggle snowshoes across the frozen creek. He "broke his butt" organizing the event.

60 Scouts brave sub-zero weather at winter camp

Story and photos by
Jean Layman

Romping in the snow with an "Earth Ball" was great fun for 60 Scouts attending "The Call of The Wild", in sub-zero weather at Winter Scout Camp '84, last weekend January 13, 14 and 15.

Tom Ruggle, co-ordinator and other members of 1st Limehouse Rover Crew made all arrangements for this Winter Camp under the leadership of Dick and Liz Rock. Camp was held in a pretty setting at Limehouse Conservation Area, behind the Limehouse Scout Hut.

The weather was crisp, sunny for all

activities which included Cross Country skiing, instructed by Laurie Williams and Ken Genoe, Show shoeing, Spear throwing by Mark Siddall, Survival training and building quickie snow shelters—known as a Quincy. Highlight of Saturday was the "Great Snow Slide Tag".

Klondike sleds were used to transport the gear and wood into camp with a Klondike sled race as well.

Two video films were enjoyed on Saturday evening shown in the Limehouse Scout Hut, compliments of H & H Video.

Each troop came self contained and

cooked their own meals. Forty bales of straw was provided, making a great insulator for all Scouts sleeping under canvas.

Twelve Rovers and two Venturers from 1st Limehouse built a large lean-to from evergreen boughs for their sleeping quarters, making a very practical giant size Quincy.

Sunday morning after the Scouts own service, a mass tug-of-war was held.

A vote of thanks goes out to 1st Limehouse Rovers for a good camp during a Horse shoe closing. Ron Rock made a plaque for "The Call of The Wild" camp, which was presented to the troop with the most points.

Committee appointments

As is customary at the beginning of the year, Halton Hills council Monday night appointed representatives to boards and committees.

George Albert, 337 Delrex Blvd. will serve on Halton Hills Library Board until the end of 1986. He is replacing Doug Magwood who informed council he did not want to serve another term on the board.

The ActiVan Advisory Committee will have M. Connolly, B. Pollock, and A. Dodds as well as Councillor Marilyn Serjeantson.

Halton Region Safety Council will have new members D.J. Williams, 58 McGilvray Cres. and Eileen Dix, R.R. 2, Rockwood.

Rookie councillor Peter Norton will fill the spot on Ballinafad Community Hall Board, held by Mayor Russ Miller for the past ten years.

Councillors Finn Poustrup, Pam Sheldon and Marilyn Serjeantson will sit on Georgetown and District Hospital Board.

Former Mayor Pete Pomeroy and Councillor Marilyn Serjeantson will continue to be members of Credit Valley Conservation Authority.

James France, and Mike Armstrong will serve on the Property Standards Committee.

The committees within Halton Hills council are: Pits and Quarries—Sheldon, Kuiken and Norton; Secondary Plan—Armstrong, McDonald, Bonnette, Sheldon and Miller;

Aggregate Task Force—Sheldon, Kuiken and Whiting; Site Plan Review—Armstrong, Knechtel and Miller;

Official Plan—Miller, Armstrong; Transportation Study—Poustrup, Miller; Acton Urban Boundary—Whiting, Miller;

Bicentennial committee—McDonald, Serjeantson, Norton, Bonnette, Miller; Budget Committee—Knechtel, Levy, Sheldon, Carney and Miller.



Halton Hills Hydro Commission chairman Mart Allison welcomes new mayor Russ Miller to the commission, replacing Pete Pomeroy, who was elected regional chairman last month. Left to right, Hydro general manager Jerry Trudell, vice-chairman Ab Tennant, Miller, Allison, and commissioners Doug Mason and Bill Smith.