The youth bureau: What do they do?

If your boy or girl gets caught shoplifting, damaging property or breaking and entering by Halton Regional Police, likely you will be meeting Sgt. Al McQueen, chief of the youth bureau in Halton Hills.

"Most people think once police grab a youthful offender, he's hauled off to court," Sgt. McQueen, told the Herald this week. He explained that except in the case of breaking and entering," an automatic court appearance", there's a big difference in how children are treated by the

"A youth officer has much greater discretionary powers in dealing with kids than in dealing with adults." He said there is "a vast difference between a criminal and a foolish child."

The "discretionary powers" which guide Sgt. McQueen, 43, are contained in the Juvenile Dellguents Act which says in

"Where a child is found to be a delinquent, he shall be dealt with, not as an offender, but as one requiring help, guidance and proper supervision.

McQueen said this section of the act and the one following are the "crux" of his work.

The act says: "...the care, custody and discipline of a juvenile shall be as nearly as possible as should be given by its parents. As for as practicable, every juvenile delinquent shall be treated, not as a criminal, but as a misdirected and misgulded child, and one needing an, encouragement help and assistance.

When your child has been picked up by the police, Sgt. McQueen said, you are contacted as soon as possible to attend with your child an in- must bear the responsibility. terview with the Sargent.

said, "is to establish a court."He added that a court appearance may not be stream. necessary because the bureau had a number of methods of dealing with children.

The 14-year police veteran, who has headed the youth bureau since its inception in Halton Hills in 1972, told the Herald that for minor offences, "Perhaps we'll take no ac-

This would be the case if he could be satisfied that the child came from a good family and had good discipline. He pointed out that the "vast majority" of

children in trouble come from middle class and upper middle "Less than three percent of

the kids I see come from broken families." Emphasizing that each case

is approached on an Individual level, Sgt. McQueen said should the child be in trouble again, he or she would receive a reprimand with a caution, "Well over 95 percent of the kids, you can talk to. You point

"when I get together with "The main reason for the the parents and a boy, it's for interview." Sgt. McQueen one reason. We're not here to discuss a criminal. We're here recommendation to the to discuss a boy and how to ease him back into the main

out he has made a mistake and

A further method the youth bureau uses, Sgt. McQueen said, is a "voluntary supervision programme," an agreement between the parents, the child and the youth officer which sets out guidelines to govern the conduct of the child for a specific period. Often, this takes the form of a curiew and a warning to stay away from potential trouble spots.

family problems which are not included in the statistics of the "Parents may wish a bit of

advice on who to see," he sald. If so, they are referred to the Children's Aid, Family Counselling, Department of Public Health, Addiction Research Foundation, Board of Education attendance counsellors, psychiatric facilities in Brampton, Guelph and Burlington, or any other

Sgt. McQueen also works with local sports groups, service clubs and army cadets in attempting to get a youngster back onto the rails. Locals groups are "most cooperative" he said.

sultable agencies:-

"When you bring a child to Juvenile Court," he sald, "it's for authority to get the child treated."

for the number of juveniles and the number of occurences in 1975, Sgt. McQueen was delighted to note a decline of about 12 percent over the previous year. Pointing out that the bureau will release only percentages and not actual figures, he added that He said that probably 50 one out of five juvenile ofpercent of his work deals with fenders was female.

bureau does. Last year, Sgt. them outside working hours.

"If high school kids were running our society," Sgt. McQueen sald "they would be much tougher on society."

have the slightest feeling you are taking them along the

to live in it. But once you learn to live, life can be wonderful. But God help us when the day make mistakes."

believes children have to be influenced by parents who set a good example and "not the big stick" but he sees nothing wrong with corporal punish-

An important part of the work of the youth bureau is to make youngsters and adults too, aware of what the youth McQueen estimated he had 35 speaking engagements, all of

In addition to attending "bear pit sessions" in local high schools, Sgt. McQueen and Constable Wayne Jessup who also works on the youth bureau covering the Acton and Milton areas, make a special effort to quench any sudden upsurge in glue-sniffing or shoplifting, for example.

He said, "the minute the kids

garden path, or just throwing In reviewing the statistics out cliches, they'll back right He sald he often points out to kids that it can be a "dirty, rotten world but a person has

> comes when children don't Sgt. McQueen sald



SERGEANT AL MCQUEEN counsels a father and a little boy

"It saves a lot of words and can't be misunderstood," he said, adding that it should never be more severe than a "cuff on the head. If you didn't make a point with the first. three won't make any difference."

Sgt. McQueen originally wanted to be an opera singer but ofter five years in the navy and a year with the Onterlo Provincial Police joined the police force here.

sons and a daughter and the

only hobby he admits to is a 10acre farm near Ballinafad. "Why did I get into the youth bureau? Well, for the record, I'd have to say for the challenge and the obvious need, but off the record, He is married and has two because it's extremely fascinating."

Parents must accept responsibilities



YOUTH BUREAU CONSTABLE Wayne

with John Hancock (left) Since last March Constable Wayne Jessup has worked with Youth Bureau head, Sgt. Al McQueen and is responsible for the bureau's activities in Acton and Milton.

A four-year veteran of the District 1, Halton Hills police station, Const. Jessup, 34, told the Herald in a recent interview that he did not get into police work with burning

eagerness. After graduating from Ryerson Polytechnical Institue in Toronto in 1964 with a diploma in metallurgy, he worked for the Orenda Division of Hawker-Siddley, aerospace manufacturers in Windsor and Streetsville.

But working as a "part-time cop" with the auxillary of the Ontario Provincial Police for a year gave him an insight into police work, he said, and he made the switich.

"Being rather servative," he said, "I don't jump right into a thing." But after getting a chance to

work on the sensitive Youth Bureau, "I didn't turn the opportunity down." In the Youth Bureau, he said the "majority of our problem

is wilful damage of public and private property." A problem that stays with the Youth Bureau is why children from good homes whre they receive discipline should become vandals.

"I'm not a philosopher, but it must mean something." He said parents must accept

responsibility for their children and discuss their own children If they wish those children to keep out of trouble with the police.

Of the Youth Bureau, he said, "We're here basically to help the kids."

Something that has not helped keep children out of trouble is the lowering of the drinking age from 21 to 18, Const. Jessup beleives. He said children of "14 and 15" are being found drunk at school dances. Even more dangerous as a consequence of the lower drinking age is the fact police are discovering more impaired 16-year-old drivers.

Next to alchohol and the problems it causes. children. The next most serious problem is shop-lifting, said Const. Jessup who was unhappy to note that for many children. "It's the first time caught, not the first time stealing."

Like Sgt. McQueen, head of the Youth Bureau, Const. Jessup is a believer in "a certain amount of corporal punishment.

You definitely don't want to beat your kids," he said, "but you do need to get the message

across." He re-emphasized the belief

Georgetown's Canadian Tire Store set up a poster warning of dangers of shop-lifting.

that parents who must bear total responsibility for their children, adding that the job of the Youth Bureau could be easter if more parents were able to answer the question: "Do you know where your children are now?"

Bureau he said, "I enjoy it. It's six.

got its frustrations but what Job hasn't."

When he is not out looking for runaway children, holding interviews with concerned parents, speaking to children, Const. Jessup enjoys snowmobiling with his family. Of working on the Youth He has two girls aged ten and



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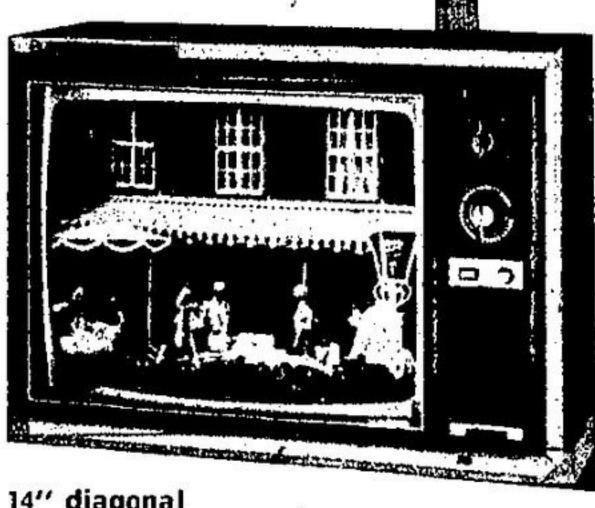
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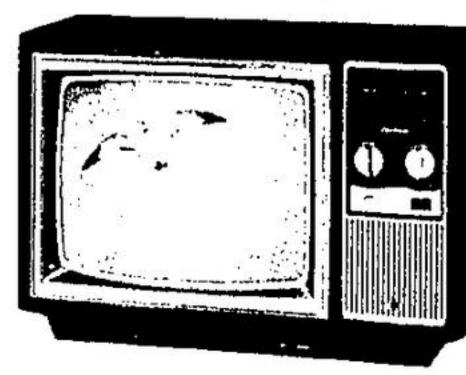
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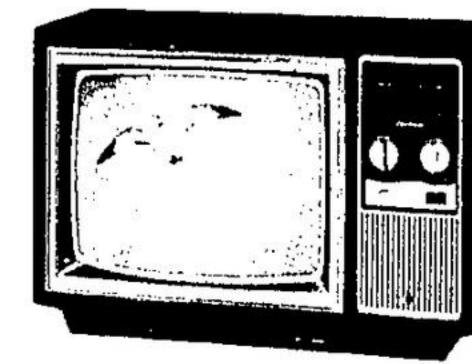
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