

# Dream of being policeman, firefighter fulfilled

By LORI TAYLOR  
Herald staff writer

Ask most little-boys what they want to be when they grow up, and they'll say a policeman or a firefighter. Lucky Bill Cunningham grew up to be both.

Mr. Cunningham, 31, has the distinction not only of being a constable with Halton Regional Police (presently in the capacity of acting sergeant) but also the district chief of the Georgetown area firefighters. His father, Jack, was a firefighter for 32 years and also a district chief, the last man to hold that position in the town of Georgetown.

Mr. Cunningham is a third-generation Georgetown resident, his father and grandfather both having spent their lives in the area.

"One question I'm asked is whether it isn't difficult living in the community and being a policeman here as well," Mr. Cunningham said. "I find that if I'm fair, and use common sense, people understand I'm doing a job, and they respect me for it."

He joined the police force "really just by accident" twelve years ago. He was in the police station when someone asked him if he would be interested in becoming the Georgetown police department's first cadet. He filled out an application, and was successful in getting the job.

Being asked to make comparisons between the Georgetown police department and the regional force are inevitable, he has found.

"The regional concept of a police force is very practical, and I believe in it," Mr. Cunningham said. "I was one of the fellows who said we could do nothing but benefit from the regional police force. It means better opportunities for promotion, and a wider range of services to draw on, among other things."

Mr. Cunningham does not discount the advantage of a smaller police force, such as Georgetown's was, however.

"In a smaller force, you're closer to the community, and

there's more personal contact and more community involvement," he said.

"It's (police work) a job where you don't know what to expect next," Mr. Cunningham said. "Going into a factory every day, I don't know if I could hack that after this job."

There is a side to police work that can be unpleasant, he admitted.

"The odd encounter I've had with death, I don't think I've enjoyed, but I don't think anyone does," Mr. Cunningham said. One of the worst incidents, he recalled, was a husband-and-wife drowning at the papermill dam, in which the wife was nine months pregnant. Although it will probably never be known for sure, police think one of the couple went into the water, and the other went to the spouse's aid, but neither could swim.

"I was the first officer on the scene on that one, and it wasn't pleasant," Mr. Cunningham said.

One of the highlights of his career as a policeman was the year he was voted policeman of the year. The Herald asked residents in 1974 to vote for the most well-liked policeman, and Mr. Cunningham was the first choice. He is also proud of a commendation received from the deputy chief in 1976 for his work with the intelligence division in a drug investigation.

Mr. Cunningham has been a director of the Halton Regional Police Association and also sat on the steering committee for the creation of Halton's regional police force. He studied at the police college in Aylmer, taking the two courses for recruits, and courses in supervisory and command management, riot control and organized crime.

Mr. Cunningham is presently holding the rank of acting sergeant, to replace Sergeant Jason Field, who presently holds the rank of acting staff sergeant.

If police work is considered Mr. Cunningham's vocation, his work as a district fire chief



Bill Cunningham, left, and his father Jack Cunningham posed for this photo of the official opening of the Halton Hills (Georgetown) fire hall in 1977.



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By ROMA TIMPSON

Hey there ladies. Now is our time to shine. Sunday August 20th is Ladies Day on the fish pond and so it's off to Glen Halfey for the day. This fishing trip is for members, their wives and family BUT the big plus is that the prizes are for LADIES ONLY. There will be two (2) prizes. Best Rainbow and best Speckles trout. Ladies MUST hook and land fish (I knew there was a catch to this) themselves. The men may assist in anyway EXCEPT with hooking and landing. Weigh-in is from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm. (That's for the fish, not the ladies). Sounds like a terrific day and let's have a good turn-out for it.

There is a notice on the board that there will be a Korean Veterans Reunion in Sudbury August 26th. This is sponsored by the Korean Veterans Association of Canada, for further inquiries write to Korean Veteran Assoc., Box 460, Angus, Ont. L0M 1B0.

Another reunion will be held in Dunneville, Ont. This is the 33rd reunion of No. 6 S.F.T.S. R.C.A.F. Wartime Personnel. September 22nd, 23rd, and 24th are the dates and further information can be found on our bulletin board. Ladies... remember the C.W.A.C. reunion in Toronto on Sept. 29th and 30th write 201 Niagara St., or phone Shirley Wood Heesaker at 652-0192, 652-0164.

Just over 40 golfers will be teeing off this Sunday at Hornby Towers Golf Club and we hope all of you have a terrific day. Remember the tee-off time is 12 noon to 1:30. Jake

Timpson held the Men's Golf Day draw last Tuesday and the first number is yet unclaimed and it is 854030. Pat Chamberlain was the 2nd winner with 854096 and Harold Badham was 3rd in line with 854116.

Last week Auxiliary President Hazel Dumper, Lily Maybanks and Jessie Hayes went out to Milton Manor to visit with Mrs. Elizabeth Kemshead as it was a special occasion. It was 50 years ago that Mrs. Kemshead (affectionately known as Kempy) joined the Ladies Auxiliary and Hazel was happy to present this dear lady with her 50 year pin. During that time Kempy was elected President in 1936 and 1947. She held the office of Treasurer for about 20 years, also keeping her hand in with other things such as kitchen convener and in general helping the Auxiliary to grow to its respected role in the community with over 200 members. Always active until the past few years when her health dictated the extent of her activeness and she is still interested in all that goes on. We all send along our very best wishes and of course our love and congratulate you for your past 50 years of dedicated service in our Auxiliary.

While out in Milton Manor the ladies had a chance to visit with Maggie and Jimmy Murphy and found them to be in good health and Maggie is as busy as ever. We are happy to hear that. To all our ill and hospitalized we extend our best wishes to you and hope as the days go by you will be feeling much better.

In a few short weeks we will be getting busy as fall will soon settle in and that means darts, cards and bowling will be starting. Think it over and decide if you would like to join any or all of these leagues and when I find out more information regarding starting dates and times I will let you know. There is activity at our branch each evening and our newer members will find this is a great way to meet your fellow members and enjoy the many good times we have available. Although there are no general meetings in the summer months our first meeting will be Thursday Sept. 28th. This is a special evening with it being the Presidents Supper which begins at 7 p.m. and meeting to follow. A good date to keep in mind.

The Auxiliary Birthday supper will be held Saturday Sept. 16th and our Auxiliary Secretary has sent a letter to our Widows and Ladies over 70 with an invitation to attend our supper. Secretary Mid Brunski would like to hear from these ladies as to whether they will be attending or not, by August 31st please.

Will we see you this Friday or Saturday, Aug. 11th and 12th in our lounge? Anticipation regarding first time Disco Jockey Cliff The Music Man to our Lounge is very favourable. A few have heard him and many are looking forward to his playing this weekend. Dig down into your memory and come up with a favorite you'd like Cliff to play. He welcomes your request.

is definitely his avocation. "It's been my lifelong ambition to be a fireman," he said. "The highlight of my life was the day I was taken on as a volunteer."

"I was always getting in trouble for chasing fire trucks as a kid," Mr. Cunningham said. "Once when I was home sick from public school and the fire siren went off at about 4:30. I hopped on my bicycle and rode over to the firehall to find out where the fire was, the way I always did. The fire was at the papermill dam, so I rode over there, and what should it be but my teacher's car. I got in trouble with my father over that one."

Mr. Cunningham said he was affectionately known as the mascot of the fire department, and he joined as soon as there was an opening after he turned 21. In 1976, he was made senior captain, and in December of that year, council, on the recommendation of the firefighters' association appointed him deputy district chief. In July of 1977, he was made district chief.

The district chief works under the direction of the chief and deputy chief, and fills their responsibilities when they are away. Mr. Cunningham is also chairman of the firefighters' association, and a past executive member of the Halton County Fire Prevention Bureau. In addition, he's an active member of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs.

"My wife, Valerie (nee Kitchen), and I had a real fireman's wedding in 1971," Mr. Cunningham said. "My wife was a member of the Georgetown Girls' Pipe Band, and the arch was formed by members of the band with crossed swords. We had a uniformed honor guard of firefighters and policemen, and we were picked up at the church and driven around town in a 1942 Ford fire engine. It was a real surprise and a real treat."

Georgetown's volunteer firefighters have weekly training sessions, and may be called in for weekend practices if any special problems or new innovations come along. Mr. Cunningham has taken three 40-hour courses in basic fire prevention and firefighting techniques, basic fire prevention practices, and firefighting methods, all run through regional schools of the Ontario Fire College.

When compared to other volunteer fire departments, the Georgetown volunteers have an excellent record for the number of men who respond to a call, particularly in

the daytime, Mr. Cunningham said. On the average, 20 to 25 men respond to each call.

"I think the reason we get such a good response is because of the dedication and hard work and effort of the volunteers," Mr. Cunningham said. "It's a collective effort, not an individual one, to fulfill our common purpose, which is to provide fire protection to the residents and businesses in our area."

"I think as long as the volunteer fire department can function effectively, they should be given as much support and encouragement as possible," he added.

Mr. Cunningham also had nothing but good things to say about the support Fire Chief Mick Holmes has given the volunteers, and also the support the volunteers have received from the municipal council.

"We're fortunate in having Chief Holmes, who supports the volunteer force," he said. "We've also been very fortunate in having the full support of the municipal council. We always have input in major issues, and it makes the volunteers feel rewarded. We're also provided with the best equipment."

The best part of firefighting is getting recognition from the public for the efforts of the volunteers, Mr. Cunningham said.

"Fire service is a necessary expense, rather than a luxury," he said. "When the public recognizes your efforts, it's a good feeling."

Mr. Cunningham recognizes that he has chosen two particularly dangerous jobs.

"People have asked me how I handle belonging to two of the most dangerous professions — I just don't think about it, because worrying would cause problems," he said. When asked about his wife's reaction to the potential dangers, he responded, "She's lived with it for so many years. She married into it. I'm sure it's a concern of hers."

In spite of the dangers of both jobs, Mr. Cunningham has not suffered many injuries on the job. He's had a sprained ankle, a pulled shoulder muscle and suffered burns to his face. His closest brush with serious injury, he said, was at a house fire in Ballinacord, when he fell through the floor of the house into the basement, landing on his back. Fortunately, the basement was full of water, which cushioned the force of the fall.

Because of the nature of his job as a policeman, Mr. Cun-

ningham is not able to drop his work and run when the fire siren announces a fire.

"It has created some problems with men dropping everything to fight fires," he said. "But we're fortunate to have many employees who allow their employees to leave work to fight fires, and pay them their full pay."

"When I go to conventions of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, and we sit around and talk about problems, we've had, or advantage we have, some don't believe us. They want to come see for themselves that our department works so well," Mr. Cunningham said.

He said even after 10 years with the volunteer fire department, "whenever the alarm goes off, the adrenaline starts pumping just the same as it did 10 years ago. No two fires are ever the same, and you don't know what you've got until you get there."

One of the problems which

### Minor injuries

A four-year-old Acton girl suffered only minor injuries when her tricycle was struck by a motorhome Wednesday on Kingham Road.

Charles King, 54, of 177 Kingham Road, had backed his motor home into his parking space and began to pull forward to straighten out the vehicle when Shelley Myers, 4, of 211 Kingham Road, pulled across in front of the motor home, on her tricycle.

### Recent visitors

Mrs. Verna Whitney, of Norton Crescent, had a week-long visit from her sister Mrs. Vera Root (Rogers) of St. Petersburg, Florida, recently.

## Dine at HARROP OF MILTON

878-8161

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Mr. and Mrs. Black with their attendants

## Black-Duggan vows exchanged in June

Marriage vows were exchanged between Mary Wilson Duggan and Douglas Black, both of Oakville, at Hopedale Bible Chapel Sat., June 24.

The bride is the daughter of Jenny and Jack Duggan of Oakville and the groom is the son of Mary and George Black of Georgetown.

Clergyman Doug Bramer officiated at the afternoon ceremony during which sister and brother Joanne and Bill Thornton of Oakville sang and played religious folk tunes on their guitars.

The bride wore a Victorian-style, candlelight-color gown with a pleated skirt of chiffon over satin and a wide-brimmed hat of matching chiffon with Belgian lace trim. She carried a bouquet of red roses.

Wendy Wilson, daughter of the bride, was maid of honor.

Bridesmaids were Sandra Taggart, of Milton, Janet Chaisson, Sharon Robertson and Peggy Rogers, all of Oakville and friends of the bride. Honnie Sue Wilson, the bride's youngest daughter was flower-girl.

Bob DeLeeuw of Burlington, friend of the groom, was best man. He was assisted by ushers Jon Kelly of Toronto, Jim Douglas of Mississauga, and Lee Pinelli of Toronto.

A reception was held in the Normandy Room of the Canadian Legion following the chapel ceremony. The newlyweds will be honeymooning on Manitoulin Island.

The bride is employed as a bookkeeper in Oakville and the groom works as an Oakville lawyer. He is also familiar to many as the local NDP candidate.

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