

Break-ins on the increase

Family "castle" fast becoming a fortress

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A person's home may still be their castle, but with the rising number of break-ins in homes in Halton in the last few years, it would be no surprise if people began to consider building a moat around their "castle" and filling it with man-eating crocodiles in an effort to protect their property.

Sgt. Keith Robertson of Investigations, Division 1, of Halton Regional Police, said there were 1,740 break-ins in Halton

in 1976, 1,948 in 1977, and "I think there has been an increase in the number of break-ins in 1978, but the figures haven't been compiled yet to say for sure."

With break-ins increasing, and every homeowner or apartment-dweller a potential victim, The Herald decided to look into the methods available to property owners to make their homes and apartments more secure.

Sgt. Robertson said the first step in protecting your home

and property is to make the house look occupied and lived in. Most burglars are not looking to run into the owner of the house in the middle of a break-in, and if they think someone is home, or will be back shortly, they'll move on to a more vulnerable target, he said.

Rural homes are particularly vulnerable to break-ins, particularly during the daytime, and most of the home break-ins... estimated by Halton Regional Police in Halton

Hills and Milton are in rural homes. Sgt. Robertson said. Rural homes tend to be secluded, surrounded by trees and generally cut off from the neighbor's view, he said, and often the entire family is away during the day, with both parents working and the children at school.

TWO BURGLARS

Sgt. Robertson described an investigation involving two professional burglars who travelled the rural roads looking

for empty homes. They would double-check by knocking at the door, and if someone answered, they asked for directions. If no one was home, they proceeded to carry off as much as they could. During the time they were operating, these men were responsible for over 50 per cent of the rural break-ins being investigated.

With secluded rural homes, the best protection the homeowner can have is a watchdog, Sgt. Robertson said. He added that if the setting of the home permitted it, the neighbors could be asked to keep an eye on things during the day when no one is home.

Security for the home is best achieved through the use of dead-bolt locks on doors and pins drilled through window frames to prevent them from being opened. Dead-bolt locks are those locks which, once locked, can only be opened with a key. Plastic credit cards, which can be used on many locks, are ineffective against a dead-bolt lock.

Leaving a spare key hidden outside the house is a mistake, because although it may be well-hidden, a thief has only to watch, and someone will lead him to it sooner or later.

With sliding doors or windows, a piece of wood or a broom handle in the runners will prevent the window or door from being opened from the outside, but if they can be opened even a little, the burglar will be able to pry them open the rest of the way.

Once a break-in has taken place, and the burglars have made off with valuable pieces of property, the most important factor in the recovery of the property is the homeowner's ability to identify the stolen items. Sgt. Robertson said. Telling a police officer that it was a 10-inch portable color television, even if you can provide the brand-name, doesn't help in identifying a specific piece of property.



CAUGHT IN THE ACT

Secluded windows which aren't properly secured make tempting place. Another suggestion, particularly for rural homes, targets for burglars. Police suggest asking neighbors to keep an eye on your house during the day, when the greatest proportion of break-ins take place. (Herald photo by Lori Taylor)

Daughter third barber in family of hairstylists

Sid Miersma cut hair and shaved the German prison guards as a Dutch prisoner of war during the Second World War; his son, Art, learned barbering as an apprentice in his father's shop, and now Art's daughter, Kathy, has qualified as a hairstylist, making Art's Hair Shop a real family business.

Art's Hair Shop is probably one of the oldest family businesses operating in Georgetown at the moment, having been in the family for 25 years. When Sid first arrived in Canada from Holland, he worked at various "odd jobs" in a wood mill, and at Dale's Flower Shop, before starting a barber shop in the living room of his home. Sid arrived in Canada in 1951, and built a home in Georgetown on Rexway Boulevard, which, at that time, was surrounded by farms.

Sid said that at first he was afraid the house and barber shop were too far from the town, but the town gradually moved out to include his shop. He retired about six years ago, selling his business to his son, Art, after forty years as a barber and hairdresser.

OWNED SHOP

Sid owned a barber shop and a hair salon in Holland before the Second World War, and competition for customers was fierce, he said. Barbers often offered deals such as a free haircut once a month for those who came twice a week for a shave.

Before he had his own business, and later to earn extra money, Sid shaved dead men

prior to their being embalmed. He said it was necessary to perform the shave as soon after death as possible, so that he was called out at all hours of the night.

When Sid was made a prisoner of war, it was found he was the only one in the camp who spoke fluent German. That, and his barbering skills, made life in the camp a little easier for a brief time, and he was even given a pass which allowed him to travel within a three-kilometre radius of the camp. If he strayed outside the radius, however, any German was entitled to shoot him on sight.

Sid escaped shortly before the camp moved in the face of the Allied Advance, and spent some time in hiding.

"I asked one lady, could I hid there, and she said, 'Oh no, they'll shoot me,'" Sid said. "I said, 'lady, I'll come back and I'll shoot you.'"

After the war, Sid decided to emigrate, but it took him five years to convince his wife, who had no relatives in Canada. He started cutting hair in the living room of his Georgetown home in 1955 and giving permanents in the kitchen. He built a barber shop on to his home in 1957. He and his wife still live in the apartment behind their hair shop, though Art carried out some renovations on the shop when he bought the business.

Sid said prices have changed with haircuts, as with everything else. At one time, a barber in his town in Holland decided to raise the price of his haircut by five cents to twenty

cents, but the other barbers in town were afraid they would lose business if they followed suit. A shave cost five cents, and a man who gave a five-cent tip for a shave had money to burn.

CUTHAIR

Art, who has been cutting hair for about 22 years, said when he first started out, haircuts were 35 cents, going up to \$1.

Art started cutting hair as an apprentice in his father's shop, and he gave his first haircut "cold turkey," with no training at all. The proof of his skill lies in the fact that the customers, who told him, "You have start somewhere and it might as well be me," is still coming to Art's shop.

Art said when it came time to decide on a career, he talked to his father, who suggested he try barbering, because if he didn't like it, he could go on to something else, but he would still have a trade to fall back on.

Since he took over his father's barber shop, Art has expanded into unisex hairstyling, although men looking for a barber can still come in and get a haircut. Art said he has taken training in various courses, and regularly attends seminars and conventions.

"To stay on top of what's happening in hairstyling, you have to go to conventions and things, because if you don't go, somebody else will take advantage of them," Art said.

It is important for barbers and hairstylists to know hair, the products they use and sell,

and their chemical composition, Art said.

"I take up seminars now in things like chemistry," he said. "There is much more chemistry involved in the products you're using and selling. Sometimes I test some of the shampoos that come in, and they're mostly alkaline, which means they're mainly detergent. There seems to be a psychological thing that shampoos have to have a lot of suds."

Art says he enjoys doing creative things with long hair, an attitude he attributes to his interest in art. He says he has talked to barbers about re-training themselves but many of them are not interested in working with long hair.

"Long hair is here to stay, and even short hair is styled," he said. "But these fellows don't want to get involved in long hair. If you're in the business, you have to make time for re-training and upgrading your skills."

MANY CUSTOMERS

"A lot of barbers have one eye on the till and the other on the customer," Art said. "They're mainly interested in getting as many customers in and out as they can. Barbering can be somewhat monotonous. The individual customers are different, but the haircuts are the same."

"I've been in the business for 22 years, and I'm still learning," Art said. "It's a job I've never tired of. You have to become very critical of your own work, because if you don't you lose interest in it."

"When I went back to school to learn about long hair, I had to change my whole attitude," he said. "I had to change some of my methods, not because they were wrong, but because with long hair, things are done differently."

Kathy said she went into hairstyling because, among other things, it's a good way to meet people.

"Deciding what I wanted to do was on my mind most of the time, and this always stood out," she said. She took her training at a school in Toronto, and qualified after passing an examination in November, although she has one more examination to take.

"With your first haircut in hairstyling school in Toronto, you've got somebody coming in off the street for a haircut, and you think, 'Oh my God, what if the clippers slip?'" Kathy said.

Kathy works in the shop with Art, Bill Smith, and Crystal Dohmen. She said it can be difficult working with her father at times because she sometimes feels she has to be better than she can be, and then she isn't critical enough of her own work.

REALLY WELL

"My father and I get along really well, so there's no problem there," she said.

Sid said he had spoken to a former customer outside the shop recently who had had Kathy cut his hair, and the man told him his granddaughter had the same knack with his haircut as Sid had had when he owned the shop. Art said there are a number of customers who have had their hair cut by all three Miersma's.

Art said the hair industry has changed radically in the past five or six years, and the next few years will see more changes. He said men are becoming more conscious of their personal appearance, and they will be going in for more intensive grooming, with manicures and facials.

"You have to stay with it, or you can become stagnant," Art said. "The changes are what makes a hairstylist."



Sid Miersma, his son, Art, and his granddaughter, Kathy are the three generations of the Miersma family who have worked in the barbering and hairstyling trade. Actually, Sid's grandfather was a part-time barber, in addition to being a gardener. The family has a total of over 60 years' experience in hairdressing.

Local shoe merchants get exclusive Canadian rights to German product

Months of work recently paid off in an agreement giving a Georgetown man exclusive Canadian rights of importation and distribution of a German foot care product.

Geoff Fletcher of Fletcher's Family Shoes Ltd. has been given the exclusive rights to the Canadian market for their callous remover by Credo company of Soligen, West Germany.

Mr. Fletcher is presently arranging a sales force to show the small device to shoe retailers in the Metropolitan Toronto to Niagara Falls area and hopes eventually it can be made available throughout Ontario and the rest of Canada.

Mr. Fletcher says a shipment of 1,200 callous removers and 25,000 replacement blades has just arrived and salesmen will have their samples very soon.

The devices will be available only in shoe stores, he said, and will sell for under \$10.

Mr. Fletcher said he first became interested in the callous remover because his wife Lilian had very painful callouses on the balls of her feet that interfered with her natural enjoyment of such

activities as dancing and taking walks.

"Her feet were so painful she even had an operation to have the callouses surgically removed," he said, "but they just grew back."

Finally one of Mrs. Fletcher's friends saw a Credo remover in use when she was visiting Germany. She bought one for Mrs. Fletcher and brought it back to Canada with her. Mrs. Fletcher found it a great help and Mr. Fletcher began trying to get one like it in Canada.

"I couldn't find it in any of the outlets that handle pedicure products," he said. "I wrote to the manufacturer twice but received no reply. I was about to give up when I thought of the German consulate."

The consulate was indeed the answer he needed as they supplied all the necessary information to get in touch with the manufacturer. Eight months of negotiations followed and now Fletcher's wholesale, a division of Fletcher's Family Shoes Ltd., will begin selling the callous remover to any shoestore retailer who wants it.

"We looked at various

ways of marketing it," Mr. Fletcher said, "but decided to get salesmen already in the shoe business to add it to the goods they take to stores."

Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher live on Charles Street, Georgetown.

Mr. Fletcher and his son Ralph have owned and operated their store on Main Street for three years.

"And don't keep anything of great value in your home when it can be put somewhere else," he concluded.



Georgetown merchants Geoff and Ralph Fletcher show a sample of the callous remover for which they have received an exclusive dealership for Canada. Mr. Fletcher said he had to go through the German consulate to discover the name of the company manufacturing the product, which a friend brought back from a holiday in Germany.