

No racial problem in Halton according to police chief

Acting Halton Police Chief W.J. Harding says he doesn't think there is a racial problem in Halton, and he intends to take steps to keep it that way.

Speaking after a meeting of the Halton Regional Police Commission last week, Deputy-Chief Harding said as far as he is aware, there have been no racial problems between members of the force and members of any ethnic groups such as are allegedly occurring in Metro Toronto.

"One of the things that impresses me about this region is that we do not have racial problems here," Deputy-Chief Harding said. "I think we're in a very happy position in the Halton Regional Police Force to be in a position to build for the future."

Deputy-Chief Harding said he has been in contact with the Ontario Human Rights Commission to discuss with them a program to "pre-train and pre-condition officers to the fact that we live in a multi-cultural society and to prepare them to police a multi-cultural society."

The deputy-chief indicated this step is not in response to a problem in Halton.

NO PROBLEM

"As far as I'm aware at this time, we don't have a racial problem," he said. "We've had some instances of racial discrimination, but no serious racial problems. The idea is, let's not have it here. Our aim is to provide fair policing for all residents, no matter where they come from, what their religion is or the color of their skin."

Deputy-chief Harding, who worked with Peel Regional Police prior to joining the Halton force, said he was involved in working with the ethnic community in Peel, and mainly with members of the East Indian ethnic groups, and he said he has come to have a great love for them. "They are credit to Canada," he said.

When asked if the Halton Regional Police force was lowering its physical requirements for recruits, as some other forces have done, because some ethnic groups tend to be smaller, and with slighter builds than was at one time permitted on police forces, the deputy-chief said this has already been done.

"The days when a police officer should be six feet tall, three feet broad and bristling with muscle are gone, thank God," he said. He added that Halton is still looking for men and women with a grade 12 education and post-secondary education is an advantage, although it isn't required.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE
The complaint procedure in Halton for citizens who have a complaint about the conduct of a member of the force is "in my opinion, beyond reproach," Deputy-Chief Harding said. If the citizen is not satisfied with the results of this procedure, the findings can be reviewed, he said.

"People lose sight of the fact that police departments are more intent than almost any organization in cleaning our own house," the deputy-chief said. "In the course of my career, I have personally arrested five police officers for misconduct, and seen all five go to jail. When the moment comes for number six, I'll be ready."

"What distresses me about the publicity surrounding this latest incident in Metro (the

fatal shooting of Albert Johnson by a Toronto police officer; is that people are too ready to discount the internal arrests

and investigations that are conducted by police departments," Deputy-Chief Harding said.



Stacy Hunter, 5, and her dog Misti, receive the prize they won for the best dressed pet in the Acton Fall Fair pet show from Miss Acton Fair, Cathy McGrath. The pet show was held Sunday afternoon.

(Herald photo)

Miss Acton Fall Fair is Cathy McGrath

Cathy McGrath is the 1979 Miss Acton Fall Fair. Miss McGrath, 18, was crowned by the 1978 Queen, Victoria Lenizky, Friday in the Acton Community Centre during the opening program of the fair.

Miss McGrath was chosen from 19 contestants and five finalists, among them her sister, Tina. The runners-up, were Kim Ottaway and Wanita Andrews, first and second princesses. This is Miss Ottaway's second year as first princess. She placed second to Miss Lenizky last year.

Miss McGrath is a grade 13 student at Bishop MacDonell High School in Guelph, and works part-time in the IGA store in Acton. Her hobbies include horseback riding and various sports, including badminton and basketball. She is on the school athletic council.

HER AMBITION
Her ambition is to become a veterinarian, and she intends to apply to the University of Guelph to study there next year.

Miss McGrath said she was "shocked" when they announced that she was the winner, although she said she had concentrated on thinking positively about winning. It was actually her sister who suggested she enter the

contest, Miss McGrath said. Tina wanted to enter, but she wanted someone else to enter with her, she said.

She said she wasn't nervous while she was on stage because she has had a number of experiences of speaking to large crowds because of her work with the student athletic council.

"I'm kind of used to talking to crowds," she said. "It didn't bother me."

Miss McGrath and her family have lived in Acton for three and a half years. They moved to town from Toronto.

Over the weekend, Miss McGrath rode on a float in the parade with her princesses, and made a number of appearances to hand out trophies and make draws for prizes. Her

parents and ten brothers and sisters were all in the audience Friday evening to cheer her on.

Miss McGrath is issuing fair warning to future contestants in the Miss Acton Fair competition: next year, her sister, Lisa, plans to enter the contest, and the following year, Tina plans to enter again. Miss McGrath figures that with the two of them, they'll have the

fair queen business in Acton locked up for the next two years.

Police reject alarm terminals

The Halton Regional Police Commission has turned down a request by the city of Burlington to install a burglar alarm terminal at the Burlington police station.

Deputy-chief W.J. Harding, acting chief, said the Burlington police station does not have the facilities to allow public or private organizations to hook up burglar alarm terminals in the station. He said there are answering services and other alternatives available to companies wishing to install burglar alarms.

"Nowadays everybody and his brother has a burglar alarm, and police departments have had to back out of allow-

ing the terminals to be connected in the station," Deputy-chief Harding said.

Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett, chairman of the commission, said that when the alarm terminal is in one of the divisions, the desk officer on duty at the division has to contact the regional communications centre to dispatch an officer, so that it wouldn't be any faster than having the alarm monitored by an answering service.

The commission decided to refuse the city's request, and to suggest that they talk to the deputy-chief about alternatives open to them.

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