

Community pride behind Acton Victim Services Unit

By BEN DUMMETT
Herald Staff



The Halton Regional Police Victim Services Unit established a branch in Acton, May 15 at the urging of Village Constable Bill Riddle, and the town's residents. Front row, Nancy Van Der Eyken (left), Mr. Robert Hart, Justice of the Peace. Middle row: Sylvia Ash (left), Ann Dohm, Heather Halliday, and Michelle Hiller. Rear, Constable Bill Riddle. (Photo submitted)

Acton's sense of community is the primary impetus behind the Victim Services Unit establishing a branch in the town.

The people of Acton wanted to serve victims of crime living in the town rather than have people come from Burlington to do it, Acton Village Constable Bill Riddle, said.

He explained life in Halton Hills is slower than in Burlington. Consequently the people of Acton are best suited to help members of their own community.

The Acton branch, like that of the main unit which was established two years ago out of Burlington, provides moral support to victims of crime in the Acton and Georgetown area, the unit's coordinator, Linda Ellison said. The branch will be operative on Monday, May 22.

Ms. Ellison explained the Unit's volunteers make personal contact with victims of serious crimes, like assault and sexual abuse, to listen and console them, provide information about agencies that can help them get over the physical and mental trauma, and to accompany them through a court system which can be confusing and intimidating to the layman. "In this way we help the victim become a better witness," she said.

Indeed, Acton Victim Services Unit volunteer, Joan Phillip, said part of the reason she joined the group was because she once had to go to court and found it to be a difficult system to understand.

A letter is sent to the victims of less serious crimes, Ms. Ellison said.

The six Acton volunteers went through an extensive training session during the month of April where they were taught about the different experiences associated with a variety of victim types, ranging from those who had a bicycle stolen to those who had been battered.

According to Ms. Ellison the main unit in Burlington has 30 volunteers and since its inception in 1987 has contacted 4,000 victims.

People interested in working with the Acton unit should contact Village Constable Bill Riddle at 853-2050, or Linda Ellison in Burlington at 634-6161.

P G Bell offer

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"retabled" by the company and rejected by the union.

And "there are really no other negotiations planned," said Mr. Gri.

But the union said it sent a registered letter to the company saying the IAM was ready to re-enter negotiations for workers who have been without a contract since January. "We would meet with the company tomorrow," said Mr. Short.

Staffing concerns exist despite police contract

Although members of the Halton Region Police Association recently signed a new two-year contract, they still are concerned with the need for a larger staff to properly serve the Region.

"The issue is currently being addressed by the Board of Police Commissioners, and we expect a response by the end of June," said association representative Staff Sergeant Gary Bogue.

He said understaffing was the major concern of those who attended the contract vote, May 1.

Sixty-six per cent of the 200 association members who attended the meeting voted in favor of the new contract. The association represents 340 police officers and 120 civilians.

Staff Sergeant Bogue explained the provincial average is one police officer for every 650 to 700 people. However in Halton Region the ratio is one for every 900.

On March 8 of this year, the Region approved the police department's budgetary plan to hire 20 new staff, 19 police officers and one civilian. The 20 are scheduled to be hired this coming fall.

The association, however, was for the most part satisfied with the contract.

He said it wanted a seven per cent increase over the two-year period but he said the negotiated five per-cent increase was all that

could be expected.

The new contract will mean a first class constable's salary increases from \$41,000 in 1988 to \$43,909, starting July 1 and \$46,992 as of July 1, 1990. Along with five per cent salary increases in '89 and '90 the contract also stipulates increases of 1.9 per cent compounded during the last six months of July and 1.925 compounded during the last half of 1990.

Halton Region police officers will also receive improved payments for time spent in court, the department's entire staff will receive improved maternity and retirement benefits, and a survivor's pension for widows and widowers of police officers was included for the first time.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

WARD 2/FOURTH LINE/HIGHWAY NO. 7

Council for the Town of Halton Hills will conduct a Public Meeting to examine and discuss a proposed amendment to the Halton Hills Official Plan and Zoning By-law 74-51 to permit a hardware store having a gross floor area of 9,990 square feet.

The subject property is located on the south-west corner of the intersection of the Fourth Line and Highway No. 7, with the property being described as part of Lot 27, Concession 4, Town of Halton Hills (Esqueewing).

Further information is available in the Planning Department.

ALL INTERESTED CITIZENS ARE WELCOME.
Bruce D. MacLean, B.A., M.C.I.P.
Deputy Planning Director

Time: 7:00 P.M.
Date: Monday, June 19, 1989
Location: Council Chambers
Town Administration Building
7th Line, Trafalgar Road
File No: H-89-3

Ad. No. 1092