

Stopping crime

After its first full year in Halton the success of the Crime Stoppers program has become apparent.

Although 56 actual crimes were either printed in the local media or broadcast on radio stations across Halton last year, the organizers of the Crime Stoppers program say 89 cases were solved.

When Crime Stoppers first burst on the scene in New Mexico several years ago, after a Canadian police officer offered a reward for a violent crime from his own pocket, there were detractors who said the program was set up to encourage people to turn their neighbors in to police.

While that can make someone feel uncomfortable, if their neighbors broke into a house and ransacked it, they deserve to be turned into police.

Actually, it's not the reward aspect of the program which has made it so popular. It's the guaranteed anonymity. In fact, says Sgt. Dave Atkinson, who organizes Crime Stoppers for Halton Regional Police, up to 30 per cent of the people don't even bother collecting their rewards.

Halton Police Chief James Harding says the Region had 17,080 crimes last year. That's up only 39 crimes from the year before.

But, when you take into account the growth in Halton in the past year, the crime rate has actually decreased by about 2.2 per cent, Chief Harding says.

Crime Stoppers has enabled the police to increase its major crime solving rate - things like theft, fraud - by about three per cent to 41 per cent last year, the chief says.

When you look at the totals, you have to appreciate the results of a program still in its infancy. Almost \$260,000 worth of stolen goods and illegal drugs recovered, 89 cases solved, 44 charges laid with 26 arrests.

Crime Stoppers, which gets its money from service clubs and corporate donations, dished out \$1,600 in reward money last year. That averages out to \$1 for each \$157 worth of illegal drugs or stolen property recovered.

If only our government programs were as productive. Last Wednesday in Oakville, Halton police and the Crime Stoppers board of directors held an appreciation night for the media.

We in turn, would like to pass that appreciation on to you, the readers.

It's you who pick up your community newspaper every week, flip through the pages and respond to what you read.

Crime Stoppers' success shows you've responded well.

Have a heart



Brian MacLeod
Editor's Notebook

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario wants to raise \$29 million this year and it's going to need a lot of help during the month of February - Heart and Stroke Month - to make that goal.

Here in town, the foundation is having a kick-off luncheon at the Halton Hills Golf and Country Club Feb. 7 at noon. Anyone interested in fighting Canada's Number 1 killer - heart disease - will be there.

Rick Gallop, Executive Director of the foundation will be at the luncheon and baseball fans can renew some great Toronto Blue Jay memories with former catcher Buck Martinez.

Martinez is probably best

remembered for that famous "play at the plate" in the mid '80s when, in the midst of a stretch drive, his leg was badly broken in a collision at the plate. As Gorman Thomas rounded for home, ready to give his team victory, Martinez, flat on his back, caught the throw in from the infield and tagged the would-be scorer out. The Jays won that game.

Although Martinez did play after the injury, it effectively signalled the end of his career. Interestingly enough, Martinez ended his career along the same lines as he started it. He was knocked unconscious in a home plate collision in his first major league start in Kansas City in 1969.

Canvassers are still needed for the heart foundation for areas near Rexway Drive, McIntyre Crescent, Baitstow Crescent and Prince Charles Drive, Crombie Place, Garnet Drive, Lucinda Place, Mountainview Road, Calvert Drive and Hale Drive. Anyone interested can call 877-2972.

Tickets for the luncheon are available from NRS Brand Realty, 45 Mountainview Road or by calling 873-0300.

Slogans won't save the forests

Derek Nelson

Queen's Park
Thomson News Service



"Save the old-growth forest" is the latest rallying cry in the dispute over the Temagami lands in northeastern Ontario.

The Temagami Wilderness Society and allied environmentalist groups have found the "save the old-growth forest" phrase a useful propaganda tool with which to beat local loggers about the head.

To great cheers from people who never go near woods, the environmentalists demand salvation for what they call the "last great stands" of red and white pines in Ontario.

But slogans aren't necessarily reality.

An Ontario legislative committee heard testimony last autumn about old-growth forest and concluded there isn't even any consensus about what such forest is, never mind that the disputed Temagami area in question is the last home for such trees.

There are red and white "old-growth" pines (in this case, arbitrarily defined as 120-years-of-

age or older) in Temagami. But the committee heard there are also stands outside Temagami. And in Temagami itself, Natural Resources Ministry data indicates the "largest" stand is in the already protected area of Lady Evelyn Smoothwater Wilderness Park. In fact, about 10 per cent of old-growth pine is in parks, with another 20 per cent in protected or managed areas outside, such as the Lake Temagami shoreline. That 30 per cent represents about 7,800 hectares in the Temagami region.

NOT PROTECTED

No, the Wilderness society said in response. The largest white pine stand is in the Wakimika Triangle, outside the park and slated for cutting. The society also said there really isn't any protection for the shoreline pine.

The Liberal government response to all this has been to vacillate, first favoring logging by approving access roads, then making accessible trees off-limits. Its last action, Nov. 20, gave penthouse environmentalism another boost by freezing 585 hectares of Wakimika. Environmental extremists view it as another success in their salami-cutting campaign - one slice at a time - to end logging in all of Temagami.

Yet, it is highly unclear what it is they are defending so strongly.

As Fred Miron of IWA-Canada told the committee: "Most of the old growth is a dead or dying forest. There is not too much in there. There are the woodpeckers and certain insects..."

"The beautiful forest to me is a growing forest... where you will see the moose and you will see the beaver. You will not find them in what I consider old growth... because the food is not there... To live, those animals have to go where there is a growing forest."

Others disagree and believe old-growth forests (whatever exactly they mean by it) should be left alone, free from human use. Yet, many experts don't even believe in the concept of old-growth forests. A day-long forestry seminar at the University of Toronto Jan. 20, where old-growth forest will be a key topic for discussion, may reach some consensus on the matter.

INTERFERENCE

But some things are clear without a seminar.

Human interference with the forests, such as limiting or preventing fires, has already changed them forever. Many experts believe fires are vital to the reproduction of pines because of how fire clears the terrain.

It has also been said that once old-growth forest is gone, it can never be replaced. But we don't - and can't - know that. Since we only began cutting an area like Temagami this century, there really hasn't been time to judge our success at regeneration.

Lastly, there is an impression left by old-growth advocates that without human interference, the forest would remain "unchanging." It just isn't so. Many things sicken. All things die. And Nature is ruthlessly unpredictable.



Canada speaks but who's listening?

Kevin Bell

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Canada's first week as an official member of the Organization of American States passed with some harsh words for the United States, but few people in Washington had the opportunity to hear them.

In a brief session with Canadian journalists, Canada's ambassador to the OAS, Jean-Paul Hubert, chose to brand the U.S. raid on the Nicaraguan embassy in Panama as "reprehensible," but he was silent in the OAS debate over the raid. When he eventually spoke in public sessions of the OAS, it's likely that few Washington officials paid much attention.

Despite concern within the Bush administration that last month's invasion of Panama and the em-

bassy raid have severely damaged U.S. relations with Latin America, the proceedings of the OAS have been largely ignored in the nation's capital.

When Canada joined 18 other members of the OAS in approving a resolution expressing deep concern over the raid on Nicaragua's embassy, American journalists regarded the development with scant curiosity.

The New York Times deemed the event unworthy of inclusion in the next day's edition and devoted four brief paragraphs to it on Wednesday. The Washington Post relegated the story to only two lines. It noted that Canada had officially joined the OAS, but did not mention any vote critical of the United States.

CONTEMPT

"The OAS is not particularly considered to be an important forum," says Larry Birns, director of the Washington-based Council on Hemispheric Affairs. Although Canada's decision to join the OAS is a significant development in the history of the organization, "the media treated the Canadian move with contempt," Birns said.

"It was the congruence of two

yawning factors: Canada and the OAS. In fact, it achieved the critical mass of deep slumber."

The OAS has been treated with indifference by American officials since it began refusing to be "the rubber stamp" for American policies in Latin America in the late 1960s, say observers here. Since then, the organization has, in American eyes, slowly deteriorated into virtual insignificance.

"Where once the post of OAS ambassador was among the most high-profile and influential jobs in Washington diplomacy, successive administrations have downgraded it to a virtual dumping ground for defeated politicians and big campaign contributors," the Washington Post said last year.

Recent news reports about the OAS refer to it as "comatose" or as a "powerless debating society."

"We see the waste that goes on," said one U.S. congressman. "They shuffle a lot of paper and do a lot of talking, but there are no results."

Financially, the OAS is listing badly, primarily because of the U.S. refusal to pay its dues. The United States began falling behind

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