

# Police try to find solution for Acton man's identity woes

By **LISA TALLYN**  
Staff Writer

Halton Police believe they have come up with a way to help ease the problems a local man who shares his name and birth date with a convicted criminal has been having.

For the past 20 years Michael Gordon of Acton has been hounded for his namesake's

mistakes—receiving letters saying his driver's licence was at risk of being suspended for non payment of fines—letters intended for the other Michael Gordon, and being hassled at the border.

Until recently, U.S. border agents always managed to verify, eventually, that Gordon is not an outlaw.

But things changed this past summer,

when Gordon and his father, Don, tried to cross the border at Queenston for a few hours of shopping and dinner in Lewiston, N.Y.

While their vehicle was searched, Gordon was taken to a secure room and questioned about why he was attempting to cross into the U.S. He was also asked to remove his clothes so agents could search for tattoos and scars—some of the other Michael Gordon's distinguishing features. Gordon has been convicted of something bad, police have told him, while refusing to provide any details.

Gordon said he spent about six hours waiting for the mix-up to get resolved, during which time agents photographed and fingerprinted him twice.

It never was ironed out. Gordon and his father were denied entry.

Since then, Gordon has applied to be a parent volunteer at his sons' school, a job requiring a police security clearance, which at the time Halton Police couldn't provide because a convicted person with his name keeps popping up on their computer.

After reading about Gordon's plight in the *Toronto Star* Halton Regional Police Inspector John Van der Lelie called Gordon offering to help. Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette has also been involved in attempting to clear up the situation for Gordon, who works as a parks employee for the



**MICHAEL GORDON**

Town of Halton Hills.

Van der Lelie said Gordon has to provide his fingerprints so he can be cleared through the RCMP database of sexual offenders, then police can provide him with a letter permitting him to volunteer at his kids' school.

He said Halton Police will be able to go a step further in helping Gordon by running his fingerprints then providing him with a certificate he can take with him when he travels across the border stating he does not have a

criminal record.

Van der Lelie doesn't think it will stop border agents from doing a second check, "but with extra documentation he will be starting on a positive note."

Gordon is appreciative of the efforts of both Van der Lelie and Bonnette to help.

"They've done a fantastic job in addressing this," said Gordon.

He said getting the clearance to volunteer at school is one hurdle and he's hopeful the certificate from Halton Police will help him at the border.

"I've got young kids and I want to take them to Florida," said Gordon.

It's been suggested he change his name, but Gordon doesn't want to do that.

He thinks that will just serve as red flag to border agents, and also, "I would rather stay in Canada than have to change my name."

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