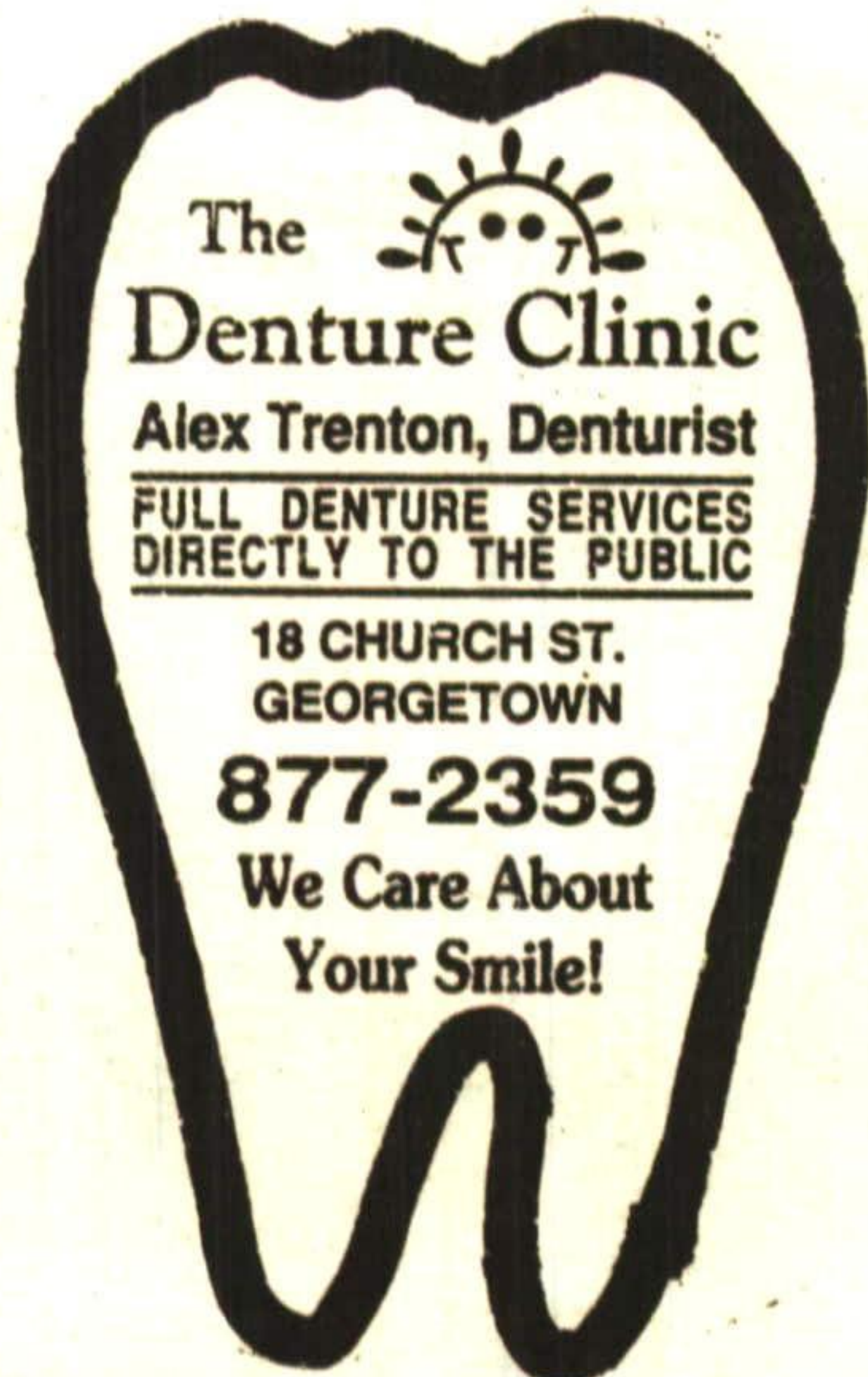


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# Police and citizens join forces for community action

By **LISA TALLYN**  
Staff writer

A successful new venture by Halton Regional Police and local citizens is putting "a human face on the police force."

Community Consultation Committees (CCC) were initiated by Halton Regional Police as part of its community policing initiative, to foster better relations between police and citizens and to improve police service.

The Halton Hills North committee, consisting of about 12 volunteers from Limehouse, Terra Cotta, Speyside, and central Esquesing north and police officers assigned to work specifically in that area, met for the first time in March. They meet once a month at the Georgetown police station's community room.

There are also three other committees in Halton Hills: Acton, Georgetown and Halton Hills South (south of 15 Sideroad).

North committee member Pam Sheldon says the program is a grassroots movement, run by consensus, that steers clear of bureaucracy. A mandate of the CCCs is to

act as a liaison between the force and the community.

"It's our role to explain to people (about the police service's) prioritization of calls. We try to assist people in understanding their (the police service) role" said Sheldon.

"Being a part of the committee has been very informative," said committee member Sherry Cameron who manages the Speyside Store. "It has made me aware of what police are really out there for. I have a better understanding of what they do, and know that they do have a real concern for the rural area."

Sheldon says the Halton Hills North committee is working on increasing public awareness of how residents should call police, (on the 911 or 878-5511 line), what information they require, and how to ensure

**'(it) hails back to when officers ... really got to know the people on their beat.'**

callers are providing police with the details they need. She says it is up to residents to know their address, lot and concession number, and emergency numbers.

The community policing initiative hails back to when one or two officers worked in a community or town, traveled by foot, and really got to know the people on their beat.

Sheldon says that officers working in north Halton Hills have become familiar faces to many area residents.

"We are trying to put a human face on the police force," said Cst. Scott McLaughlin, a community

police officer in north Halton Hills "And also to put a human face on the community. Community members don't just see someone who is isolated in the cruiser."

Cst. McLaughlin says through participation at the committee meetings, visits to area homes and businesses, the police are very aware of residents' concerns.

He says that at the beginning of each shift community policing officers check a book that outlines concerns, and attempt to work on those concerns.

The committee is working, Sheldon thinks.

"At the first meeting I got a sense of frustration from the people there. They didn't know it could be so easy to talk to the police," said Sheldon. "We are extremely optimistic. Police have been very responsive. Any concern that we raise is treated with seriousness."

Anyone interested in becoming a committee member in their area should contact the following police officers at 878-5511: Halton Hills North Committee, ask for Sgt. Don Cousens; Halton Hills South, Sgt. Wayne Eastwood; Georgetown, Sgt. Dave Gwilliams. For Acton call Cst. Bill Riddle at 853-2050.

## CCC's successes so far

Although the Halton Hills North Community Consultation Committee (CCC) has only been around for five months, members can already point to an impressive list of achievements.

- Suggestion boxes, placed in several stores for area residents to voice their concerns about rural policing, top that list. Boxes are located in Vito's Produce on Hwy. 7 (Limehouse), Ballinafad General Store, Speyside and Terra Cotta General stores. While no one has made a suggestion yet, Sheldon says the boxes are a good first step.

- A crackdown by police on speeders through Ballinafad is another committee achievement. Police monitored the area in May, and 26 speeding-related charges were laid.

- A decrease in the number of bush parties in north Halton. An officer went into the Georgetown and Acton high schools and talked to students about the hazards of bush parties, and the legal consequences they could face if they were caught drinking under age.

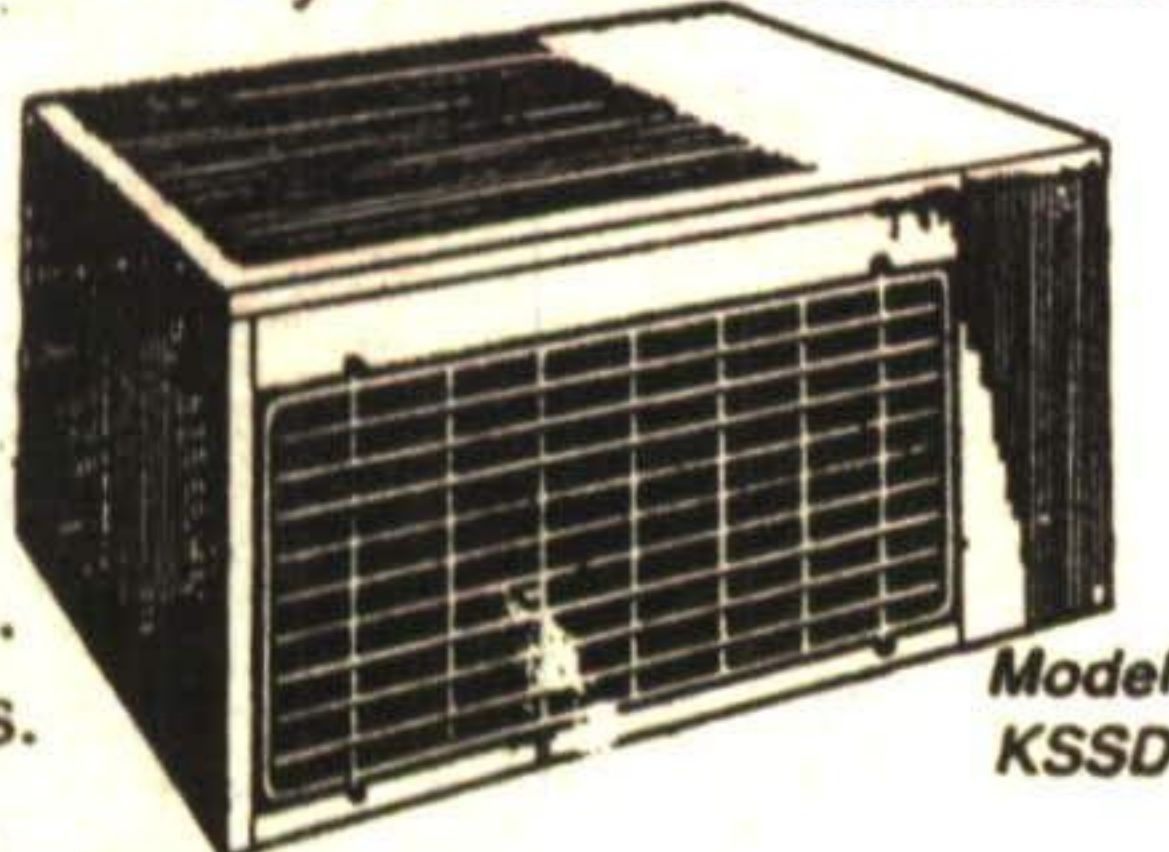
- Due to a concern about two colors of pavement at the intersection of Hwy 25 and 15 Sideroad, Halton police have sent a letter to the Ministry of Transportation asking for an investigation. That action meant a lot to residents because they feel the two colors of pavement have been a contributing factor in traffic accidents for some time.

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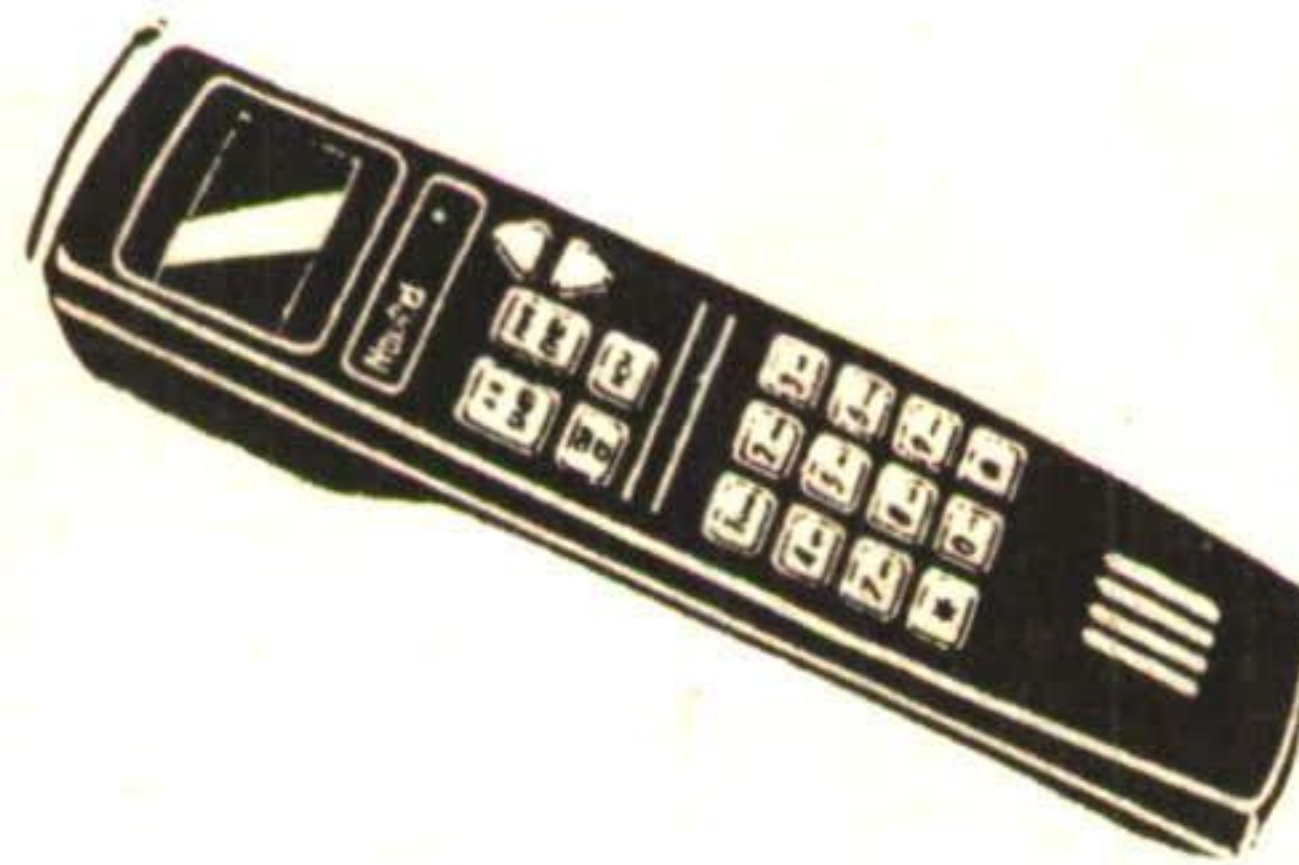
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