

# Police addressing safety concerns of area seniors

By KAREN SMITH  
Special to the Independent/Free Press

Police are taking steps now to address the safety concerns of senior citizens — issues that are expected to become more prevalent with the province's aging population.

For the past year, a committee of police and senior citizens from across the region have met to develop a program aimed at easing the minds of the elderly and their families.

The program is called Seniors and Law Enforcement Together (SALT) — a coalition of the Elderly Services Advisory Committee (ESAC), Halton Regional Police, and Ontario Provincial Police.

"It is unique in the fact that two police agencies and a group of senior citizens have united to reach a common goal," said Halton police spokesperson Sgt. Joe Martin.

SALT, an idea initiated by Halton police's Deputy Chief John Barratt, was launched June 7 at regional headquarters in Oakville.

Since the senior population in Halton is expected to increase from 33,000 to 41,000 by 2001, public safety and crime-related issues affecting elder citizens have become "apparent and in need of immediate attention and resolve," said Sgt. Martin.

The issues include senior citizens' fears of being victimized through violent crimes and fraud. Other concerns are as complicated as emotional and physical abuse, or as straightforward as snow removal.

Fear of walking outside at night is high on the list of concerns among seniors, according to Dorothy Edwards, 79, of Milton who is a



BILL RIDDLE

member of SALT in north Halton.

She is joined by Jean Hasselfeldt, also of Milton, who, through her involvement, said she has already learned better ways to protect herself.

"There's things (scams) we never knew that happened."

Headed by Acton village constable Bill Riddle, the north's 14-member committee meets twice a month. Burlington and Oakville each have their own committees.

The local SALT group is made up of two Milton seniors, eight seniors from Georgetown and Acton, Milton OPP Constable Dave Thomas, as well as representatives from the Region's Elderly Services Advisory Committee and Acton Social Services.

Glenn Bell, a Burlington OPP constable on his city's committee, said the program will

bring about a better understanding between police and seniors.

"A lot of police officers are not aware of the problems that senior citizens have in their day-to-day lives."

SALT will also help "provide services to seniors that maybe they are not getting that they should be getting," he said.

All in all, the three SALT committees will assist police in determining the needs and concerns of the elderly and recommend ways to respond.

While the program already has a year of funding under its belt, funding still remains in question. SALT is looking for sponsors to cover the cost of meeting facilities and other expenses.

The north Halton committee is also in need of two more Milton seniors, said Const. Riddle.

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# WEEKEND

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## News

### Digest

#### Appointed to council

Kate Murray of Glen Williams has been appointed to the Halton District Health Council. The community development worker was one of three new members named to the board. Other appointees are Susan Brown, past president and coordinator of the Head Injury Association of Peel and Halton and Dr. Roger Nicholson, a consulting paediatrician at Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital. He is a past board member of both the hospital and the Children's Aid Society. All three have been appointed by Order-in-Council for three year terms.

#### New Acton street

Although it has to get final council approval, a new street in Acton to be installed as part of the Royal Canadian Legion development, will likely be called Birchway Place. That was the name suggested by the developer, and recommended by town staff. Committee members selected the Legion's suggestion over the Esquesing Historical Society's suggestion of Nelles Circle.

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## Doing it the 'United Way'

United Way campaign chairman Bob Malcolmson (left) was presented with a certificate of appreciation by the organization's president Stephen Williamson at the annual general meeting Wednesday night in Acton.

This was Malcolmson's first year with the United Way as campaign chairman, helping raise \$193,000 for local organizations. For a full report, see page 12.

JANET BAINE Independent/Free Press

## Food bank vandalized — again!

By JANET BAINE  
Staff writer

No one received any food at Love in Christ Food Bank Wednesday, because someone broke into the storage area — again — vandalized the facility and stealing some food.

This is the third time the food bank had to deal with vandals in its three years of operation.

About \$100-worth of food was stolen, and \$100-worth was vandalized, co-ordinator Laura Ellison said.

"It doesn't sound like much, but you have to realize our shelves are bare to begin with. It's an astronomical loss for us," Ellison said. The food bank is in the basement of Mountainview Baptist Church.

Vandals broke the lock to get into the food bank, and tried to break the lock on a large food storage cabinet. They were unsuccessful, so they pulled the door off the hinges, Ellison said.

Several cans of food were punctured, while some jars of baby food were opened, losing the vacuum seal.

"I think this was just purely a case of boredom, but that's my opinion," Ellison said. "It would be one thing if they had eaten the food, but just to arbitrarily vandalize it, and waste it so no one can use it."

Police have no suspects in the investigation but they said the vandals entered the church through a door which was left unlocked.

# SEASON PACKAGES

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