

# Crime Stoppers of Halton

## Crime Stoppers not a new concept in policing

By CHARLENE LEGGO

Crime Stoppers of Halton

Crime Stoppers is not a new concept in policing. It is an investigative tool that has been successfully employed by law enforcement agencies for many years — cash for information that solves crime and anonymity. The difference is in the way the information is collected and the cash is paid.

Crime Stoppers began in Albuquerque, New Mexico when Canadian-born Greg MacAleese, a detective in their police department, reached a dead-end in a homicide investigation.

Michael Carmen was a young University of New Mexico student working at a small gas station in Albuquerque's Northeast Heights in July, 1976. The young man was two weeks away from marrying his high school sweetheart.

On a fateful Friday night, two men entered the gas station, robbed him, and for no apparent reason, fired a shotgun blast into his abdomen. Carmen tried to tell the detectives who it was that shot him, but failed. He died later on the operating table.

MacAleese was one of the detectives working the case. He told

cast on the 10 o'clock news. The next morning, MacAleese received a call from someone stating they had watched the re-enactment. The caller also advised he remembered walking home from a party the night Carmen was killed, and he heard a loud bang similar to the noise made by a large firecracker.

The caller informed MacAleese

tors were able to trace one of the two gunmen.

It took only 72 hours to solve Carmen's murder after MacAleese received this tip from the caller.

As a result of the success of this re-enactment, MacAleese was able to convince his police department this sort of program was needed on a regular basis.

Most major crimes are not solved by brilliant police work, but as a direct result of information provided by the public. However, many citizens are reluctant to provide the information needed.

There are two reasons for this; fear and apathy. MacAleese designed Crime Stoppers to overcome these two barriers.

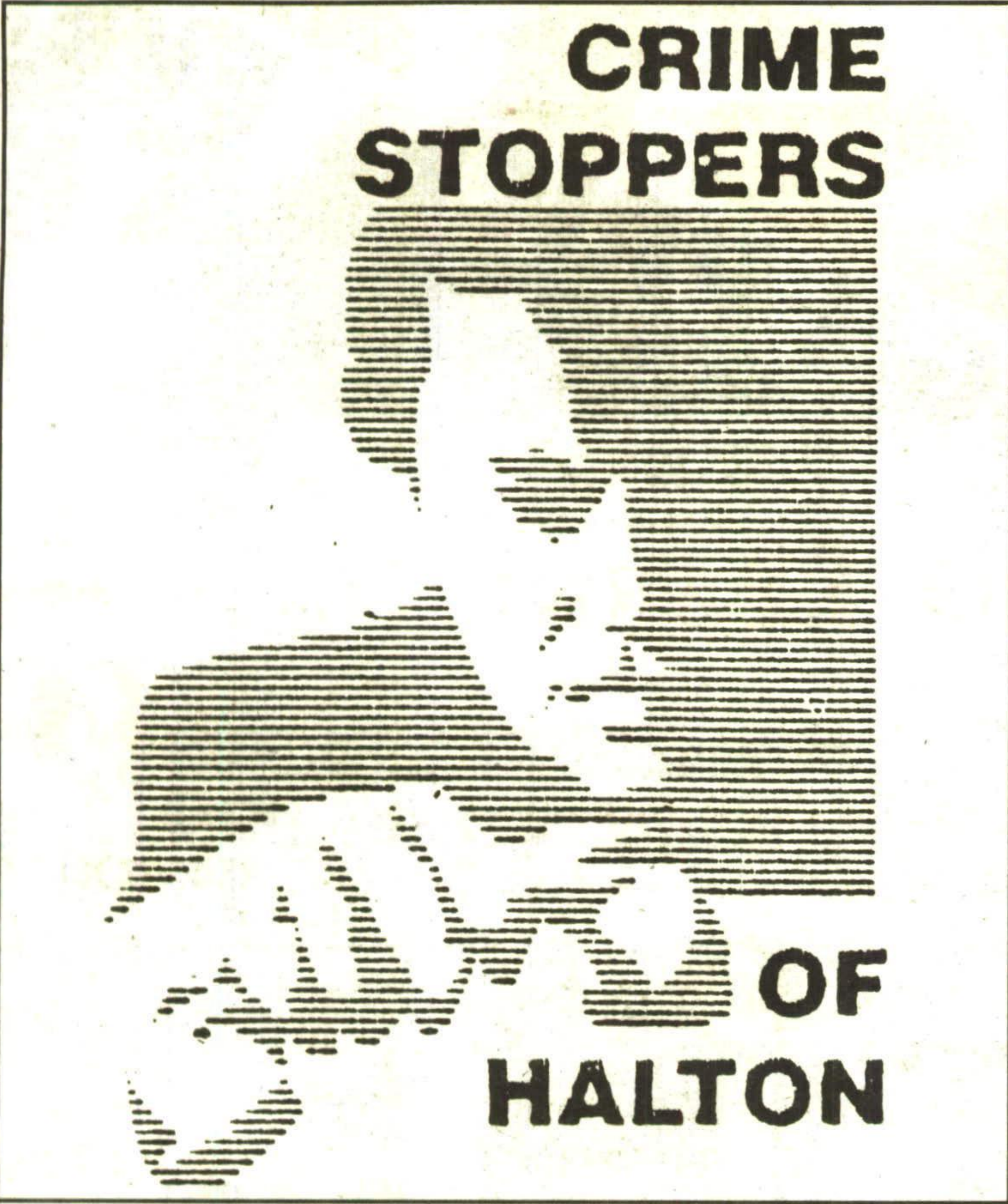
For those who fear retaliation from the criminal element, anonymity was provided to allow callers to Crime Stoppers to remain

completely anonymous. For those citizens who were apathetic, a system was designed to provide cash rewards for information leading to the solution of a major crime.

MacAleese felt the idea of offering cash rewards and anonymity would be somewhat controversial. In order to provide civilian oversight of the program, a citizen's Board of Directors was established. More than 150 people have devoted thousands of hours of their own time to the Albuquerque Crime Stoppers Board of Directors.

When MacAleese first started Crime Stoppers, he thought the program would last six months to a year. In 1994, Albuquerque Crime Stoppers will celebrate its 18th year of service to its community.

The program has also spread to over 700 police agencies in North America.



### Program works

In just the last few months, tips phoned into Crime Stoppers of Halton have helped solve a break-in and theft at an Oakville school, an accident in Milton where one driver left the scene, and provided information resulting in the seizure of over \$33,000 worth of illegal cigarettes and alcohol (along with a vehicle they were transported in) from Burlington and Georgetown.

Crime Stoppers of Halton started processing crime information on December 6, 1988. From that date to the end of 1993, Crime Stoppers has assisted in recovering \$739,145 worth of stolen property, the seizure of \$230,705 in narcotics, and the arrests of 215 people that cleared 627 criminal cases.

All this was accomplished with a total payout of only \$14,375. Remarkably, and to the credit of the people of Halton, not all callers claim the rewards they are entitled to.

These figures work out to an amazingly low cost. For every dollar spent on rewards, more than \$67 worth of drugs and stolen property has been seized.

Carmen's mother he would bring her son's killers to justice, but after six weeks of trying to piece evidence together to solve the case, the police were no closer to a solution than they were the night of the killing.

Frustrated by a lack of clues, MacAleese appealed to a local television station and asked if it was possible to re-enact the crime for broadcast during a newscast.

On Sept. 8, 1976, the first Crime Stoppers re-enactment was broad-

cast shortly after the blast, a car came from the area of the gas station and passed him at a high rate of speed. The caller stated there were two men in the car, but he was not able to recognize either of them. The caller thought he had seen the car before, though, and felt it belonged to a resident in a nearby apartment complex.

The caller's information was the all important missing piece needed to solve the murder case. By finding the killers' getaway car, investiga-

### Message from the chair...

## Concerned for safety

I am very pleased to be the chairperson of Crime Stoppers of Halton for 1994. As an elementary school vice principal, I am very concerned with well-being of our children and their families.

It is my belief Crime Stoppers is one way to improve our community by helping to rid our streets of crime and criminals.

The Board of Directors of Crime Stoppers is a group of dedicated volunteers, from all walks of life. What they have in common is their commitment to being a part of making Halton a great place to live, to work, and to raise our families. They are a positive and energetic group of individuals, and it is my great pleasure to work with them.


Working in partnership with the Halton Regional Police Service has been interesting and rewarding. We have great respect for the efforts of our officers and support them through our program. Their support and encouragement has been very helpful. Our co-ordinator puts in many hours beyond the workday to bring to you the best possible Crime Stoppers program. To him and his family we extend our appreciation and gratitude.

I would like to thank the media of Halton for their contribution. We are impressed with and grateful for their willingness to co-operate by featuring stories, as well as printing and broadcasting Crimes of the Week.

This supplement celebrating January as Crime Stoppers Month is very exciting to us. I hope you enjoy reading it and find it informative.

Members of the board and our co-ordinator can come out to your group to speak about our program if you can think of a way you or your organization could be helpful to us, please do not hesitate to call. It is only through co-operation we can create the kind of community we want Halton to be.

Yours very truly,  
Bev Pickard

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