

IS VIOLENT CRIME ON THE INCREASE IN HALTON?

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Is violence on the rise in Halton?

The question is definitely on the minds of many residents after the region, long touted as the safest regional municipality in Canada, experienced three homicides in less than a week.

On Aug. 21, Burlington resident and 911 dispatcher Laura Grant, 57, was fatally shot in her home.

Her husband, Kenneth Soederhuysen, has been charged with first-degree murder in connection with her death.

On Aug. 25, Oakville resident and retired firefighter Robert Smith, 74, was stabbed to death at an apartment complex.

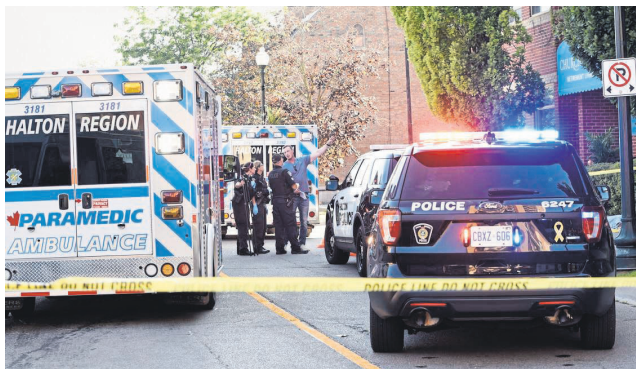
His son Brett Smith has been charged with second-

THE QUESTION:
IS VIOLENT CRIME ON THE RISE IN HALTON?

THE CONCLUSION:
ACCORDING TO A REPORT PRESENTED TO THE HALTON POLICE BOARD IN 2018 THE VIOLENT CRIME RATE IN HALTON ROSE 7.3 PER CENT DESPITE HALTON'S OVERALL CRIME RATE DROPPING 1.7 PER CENT.

degree murder in connection with this killing.

On Aug. 24, Edmund Ferrari, 91, was found dead outside his retirement



Graham Paine/Torstar

Halton police attend the scene in Downtown Oakville where 91-year-old Edmund Ferrari was found dead. His death has since been ruled a homicide.

home in downtown Oakville.

Halton police have confirmed his death was a homicide but are not releasing the cause of death.

As of Aug. 30, no arrest had been made in connection with his murder.

Non-fatal stabbings, a shooting, and other violent

incidents have also dominated recent local headlines, resulting in many residents taking to social media to voice their concerns.

"So much for being the number one place to live in Canada," said one Facebook commenter.

"Oakville is losing its

quiet, peaceful, safe little town status," said another.

"What is going on lately," asked another individual.

When reached for comment, Halton police Chief Stephen Tanner said he gets that recent events have left some members of the public shaken.

"We understand that when people hear about violent crimes such as these, they are concerned and have questions about the safety of their community. We have had three homicides in a very short period of time. In two of these instances, the victim and accused were known to each other. We hope the families and friends of Laura Grant and Robert Smith know that the residents of Halton grieve with them, and we hope they find the strength to begin to heal," said Tan-

ner. "We continue to apply all available resources to investigate the circumstances that led to the death of 91-year-old Edmund Ferrari. It is unimaginable that, after nine decades, this was the end to Mr. Ferrari's life. We extend our sincerest condolences to his family and friends, and we are committed to bringing the perpetrator(s) of this cowardly crime to justice."

Homicides are not unheard of in Halton. According to Halton police, the region experienced one homicide in 2013, one in 2014, two in 2015, one in 2016, three in 2017, and two in 2018. It is worth noting that in all but one of these homicides an arrest was made, or the case was cleared in some other way (e.g. through the death of the person believed responsible).

It is also worth pointing

See SUSPECTS, page 8

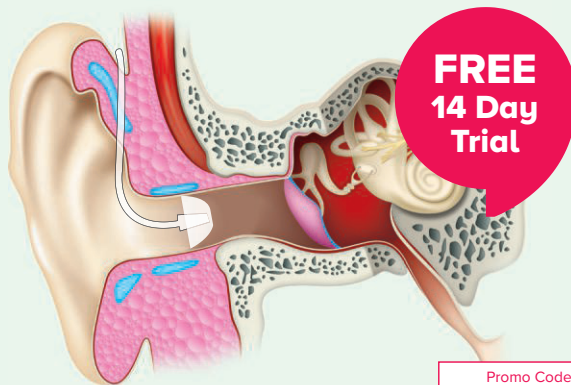
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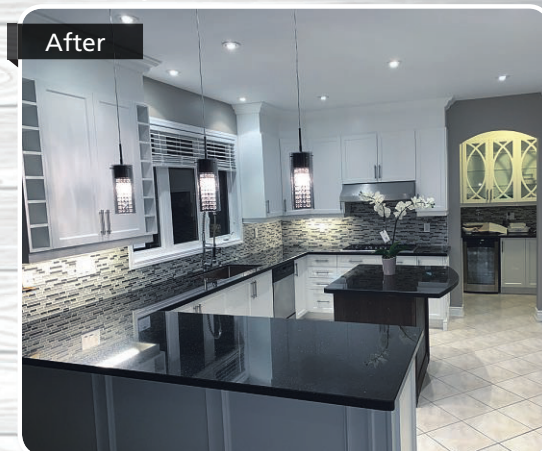
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