Sex assault victims to be videotaped

By David Stover Special to HHTW

Halton police will begin videotaping statements by sexual assault victims under some circumstances, under a directive issued June 28 by Chief James Harding.

That directive comes in the wake of claims by an Oakville woman that a Halton police officer forced her to retract her report that last November 13 she had been attacked and then

robbed by a man wielding a

According to Chief Harding's instructions, "All interviews conducted with a victim of sexual assault, conducted for the purposes of determining the validity of the complaint, will be audio and videotaped in their entirety."

The directive doesn't mean initial reports of sexual assaults would be videotaped, said Halton police

Meral Kesebi appointed **HMC Managing Director**

ganization at the Halton Multicultural Council, Willie Campos, president, is pleased to announce the appointment of Meral Kesebi as its Managing Director.

Ms. Kesebi will be responsible for the administration of the council's programs and services, the effective management of its financial responsibilities and the effective delivery of the advocacy/consultation mandate of the council.

She has worked in social planning and research for some time in Halton. She has had extensive experience working with ethnocultural groups.

Kesebi is a graduate of Dalhousie University with degrees in Master of Public Administration Bachelor of Arts in International Relations -Honors.

The Halton Multicultural Council has been operating since 1979. It is a community agency promoting intercultural understanding throughout the community by educating the public on subjects such as the cultures, traditions and values of different ethnic groups. It also assists immigrants and refugees to settle and integrate in Canada. It has established a free English as a Second Language program and provides volunteer translators/interpreters to various community

After a recent staff reor- agencies, school boards, government organizations,



Meral Kesebi





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Sgt. Joe Barker. Taping would take place only if the validity of the initial report had come into question and was being investigated, he

The case, which led to the new directive, is now being investigated by the Ontario Police Complaints Commission.

In the case, the alleged victim later stated in a videotaped confession she had fabricated the incident. But she has since said that, just prior to her confession, she was forced to recant her story during an interview with one of the investigating officers. No one else was present at that interview and it wasn't taped.

The woman said she approves of the direction the police are taking on videotaping. "I think it's a very good idea, considering what happened to me," she said. "What happened (in the interrogation room) only the officer and I know," she added, noting videotaping interviews would avoid similar problems in the future.

But, the woman said, safe-

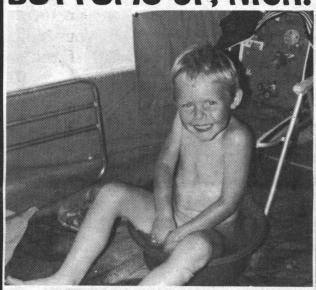
guards should be built into the system. "I also think there should be a witness there to make sure there's no starting and stopping of the tape," she said.

Bev LeFrancois, executive director of the Halton Rape Crisis Centre, also approved of the new directive, saying it will "definitely" help to avoid similar situations.

Videotape has come into increasing use by police in recent years. Halton police have videotaped "all accused persons" for some time, said Sgt. Barker. He said police also videotape statements by some victims, including small children.

A spokesperson for the Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General said the decision on what statements to videotape remains with local police departments. "There is no provincial standard as to videotaping by police," said Dianne Bernez. But, she said, police are making "more and more" use of video equipment. "Certainly this is not unusual for police to issue a directive of this sort."





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