

# Statistics show crime down in Acton

Criminal offences in Acton in the first seven months of this year have dropped "rather dramatically" in all but three reportable categories - a great improvement over the last half of 1997 when statistics showed increases in all but three of the 16 criminal offence categories chartered by Halton Police.

In a good news update to Halton Hills politicians on

Tuesday night, Halton Police Inspector Keith Gregory reported that the number of year-to-date criminal offences in Halton Hills was down by 1.36 per cent for the same period the year before. Police solved 47.1 per cent of criminal offences in Halton Hills - up from 43 per cent last year. The national average clearance rate is between 32 and 35 per cent.

Police responded to 206

fewer calls for service so far this year in Halton Hills - a 3.46 per cent drop in calls to 5,573, a number Gregory joked won't help police when it comes to asking for more officers at budget time.

Police have investigated three sexual assaults in Acton this year - the same number as last year. None were new cases and are classified as "historical" reports made about alleged assaults

from the past. Assaults in Acton dropped 18 per cent to 41 from 50.

Break and enters of Acton shops dropped 66 per cent, to three from nine, but house B & E's increased to 10 from 8. Auto theft continues to be a problem in Acton with 4 cars stolen compared to 13 for the same period last year. Inspector Gregory noted that police are starting a task force to deal with the issue.

Thefts over and under \$5,000 have both dropped by 50 per cent and property damage offences are down 60 per cent to 31 from 78. Motor vehicle accidents have dropped 47 per cent to 33 from 63 and motor vehicle injury accidents have dropped 27 per cent to 8 from 11. So far this year there haven't been any fatal traffic accidents in Acton.


Gregory said proactive

policing and public participation have helped cut crime in Acton, along with the increase in clearance rates.

"The more bad guys you put away or charge, naturally the threat factor of getting caught goes up," Gregory said in an interview.

Halton police assign two officers per shift to the Acton area. Civilian volunteers staff the Mill Street office five days a week.

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## Expect tax bills to be mailed this week

### POLICE BEAT

#### Loblaws fined \$15,000

Loblaws was fined \$15,000 in a Milton court Thursday after pleading guilty to constructing and occupying its refurbished Georgetown store without necessary permits and ignoring a stop work order from the Town of Halton Hills. In June the company was also fined \$15,000 after pleading guilty to starting construction of its Milton store without a building permit and ignoring a stop work order from Milton.

Halton Hills bylaw enforcement officer Ron Stein said Loblaws "put the cart before the horse" and allowed customers to shop in Georgetown for three months without an occupancy permit, and agreed that Loblaws probably made enough the first day it opened illegally in

Georgetown to pay its fine. Stein told the court "in the bleakest of financial times public safety and welfare must not be a sacrificial lamb to corporate survival or economic development. Public safety must not factor into the cost of doing business."

#### Medical Centre break-in

Police report someone broke into the Mill Street medical centre between Sept. 4 and 7, prying open a small window to gain entrance. Cupboards and drawers were opened but so far police report there seems to be nothing missing.

There was also a break-in at a Kingham Road residence on the Labour Day weekend

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**FALL LINE UP:** Robert Little Grades 1 & 2 teacher Janet McCluskey (right) meets and greets her new students on Tuesday morning as they prepared for their first day. Eager to begin the new year were Hayley Gendron (front), left to right, Brian Larocque, Heather McIsaac, Matthew Mickolwin and Sara Fielding.

#### Town expects onslaught of calls about bills

By **FRANCES NIBLOCK**  
The New Tanner

The Town's long overdue final tax bills for 1998 haven't hit Acton mailboxes yet - they were to have been mailed yesterday (Wednesday) - but already there's confusion among some taxpayers.

"The phones are busily ringing now with people thinking that they've lost their bill. We're reassuring them that they haven't - they don't have them yet," Treasurer Andy Koopmans told Town politicians on Tuesday night as he briefed them on the vastly different bill.

With provincial reassessment, provincial downloading and the move to Current Value Assessment all affecting the bills, Town staff are gearing up for an expected onslaught of phone calls from taxpayers as they try to figure out their taxes.

Koopmans said they always go back to the basics calculating taxes and that means multiplying your assessment by the tax rate to get the amount of taxes owing. For Town purposes on a house of average assessment that would be \$185,000 multiplied by 0.348328 per cent to equal \$644.41.

Koopmans said there are five answers to what he expects will be the number one question from taxpayers - what caused their 1998 taxes to change so much?

• Change in assessed

value of the property relative to other properties within a property class could cause taxes to go up or down

• Use of provincially-prescribed transition ratios shifts some of the property tax burden from commercial and industrial properties to residential properties

• Provincially-set common education rate for residential and multi-residential properties shifts some of the tax burden from multi-residential to residential

• Budget increases at the Regional and local levels to address the province's Who Does What initiatives

• Small budget increase at Town level to cover increased costs for local services

Another area that has changed substantially on the new tax bill is the number of tax codes now being used to represent classes of properties. Instead of just a residential or commercial property class there could now be as many as eight separate codes for one property. The new codes will be explained on a special insert with the bill.

The Town also expects a  
See **EXPECT**, Page 3

## Reconstruction, not restoration

Members of the Heritage Acton sub-committee for the restoration of the old Acton Arena met yesterday (Wednesday) at Purity Life to discuss the preliminary report from consultant Gerry McMonagle.

Although McMonagle said after he had reviewed the reports from the Town of Halton Hills and the University of Guelph, "I had some preconceived concepts that the building should be completely demolished." He now believes it is viable to reconstruct the existing site.

The report recommends that the facility be reconstructed which would extend the life of the arena in excess of 25 years.

The consultants advise the existing electrical service and the lighting for the ice surface is adequate. It would be necessary to install a new fire alarm system, carbon monoxide detection unit and emergency light system to meet building code requirements.

McMonagle said in his report, "After reviewing the facility I felt that it would be worthwhile to consider the costs of completely upgrading the arena structure."

The committee will now have to decide whether they can raise the funds for reconstruction and if it can be done in stages.

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