

Helicopter search finds 'pot' in local fields

Hundreds of lovingly tended pot plants, some as big as Christmas trees, were found in numerous swampy areas around Acton on Thursday by police officers using a new helicopter being shared by Halton, Peel and Hamilton-Wentworth police.

In all, 15 "grow" sites were discovered in north Burlington, Milton and Halton Hills and 1,500 pounds of pot, valued at \$1.5 million, was seized. In the Acton area police found three separate illegal grow sites with approximately 600 plants in total in the swampy area

between the Blue Springs golf course on Dublin Line and the Blue Springs Scout Camp on Nassagaweya Sixth Line. Police also found one site in Limehouse that yielded almost 500 plants.

At one Acton site that police described as "beautifully done", 400 plants were found, all in individual pots with the bottoms removed and protected by wire mesh and moth balls at their base to keep rodents and bugs away.

"These plants were very healthy. Some of them were 12 feet tall and would produce well

over a pound of marijuana when harvested. The price of out-door marijuana is about \$1,000 a pound, so the 400-plant operation in Acton would have been worth \$400,000," Mitchell said.

Mitchell called the seizures "significant" and said a specially trained OPP officer from Goderich and a RCMP officer from the Milton detachment were able to easily spot the illegal crops from the air. Once the sites were pinpointed, ground crews were directed to the site to remove the plants, which were photo-


graphed, tested for potency and disposed of.

Mitchell said in all instances the plants were started indoors hydroponically as seedlings and then transplanted outdoors and would have been ready for harvesting within three or four weeks.

At one site on a hydro right-of-way in the Trafalgar Road-401 area police arrested two men, one from Mississauga and one from Hamilton, who were camped out, protecting the crop. Both were charged with producing, and

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What's Inside



It's FAS Day on Thursday, September 9. An Acton mom tells how to avoid FAS on Page 16.



Holding the cup they won in Scotland, this B.C. band met publisher Ted Tyler up in the air. See photo on Page 5.



Whew! What's this pair doing? Is there someone in the box? Check photo on Page 16.



Cruise Night in Rockwood again brought out some shiny specimens of car care. See Page 13.

24 hour ambulance on threshold

Mini-crime spree here

The theft of \$6,000 worth of golf and fishing equipment from an unlocked Dairy Drive garage last week prompted Halton police to remind homeowners to be "diligent" about locking garages and sheds.

Police have no suspects. Two sets of clubs, two fishing rods and tackle boxes were taken between 2:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. last Thursday and police warn there's been an increase in thefts of tools and equipment from garden sheds and unlocked garages.

Trucks vandalized?

Damage is pegged at \$7,500 after person(s) unknown cut electrical wires and smashed taillights on five transport trucks parked at Tyler Transport on Queen Street between August 13 and 20th.

"It looked like a vendetta,"
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STARTING THE DAY: Lloyd Smallwood, left, and George Forrest pose by Smallwood's sorting box as they prepare to go out on their routes. Each pigeon hole represents a street address. For a story on the pair who are celebrating 25 years on the job see Page 7. - Maggie Petrushevsky photo

Starts in September

Halton and Acton officials were excited and relieved on Friday to announce a service they hope won't be needed - expansion of ambulance service in Acton to 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, as of September 20. With the expansion comes a search for a new, larger Acton depot and a move to upgrade paramedic training.

Until now, Acton has had substandard ambulance service when compared with the rest of Halton, in that the Acton satellite station wasn't manned during the day, except on weekends. From 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., ambulances needed in Acton were dispatched from Halton Hills Ambulance Service station in Georgetown, leading to longer response times. If an ambulance wasn't available from Georgetown, the call went out to adjacent communities resulting in longer response times, in some cases.

Halton's new land ambulance director, Jim King, said the expansion will "dramatically improve" response times in Acton where there were 320 service calls during the day in 1998, or 1.23 emergency calls per day when ambulances had to come from Guelph, Milton, Brampton, Streetsville or Dufferin. Eighty-nine per cent of the calls were life threatening.

The North American "Gold Standard" for ambulance response is 8 minutes and 59 seconds, but an Ontario study set an urban

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HHCSI & I moves out of town hall

By FRANCES NIBLOCK
The New Tanner

Acton will have a one stop information, community support and youth centre on Mill Street as Halton Hills Community Support and Information (HHCSI) amalgamates its Acton services and vacates the old Town Hall on Willow Street before the end of October.

HHCSI signed a five-year lease for 45 and 47 Mill Street, owned by Acton's Jon Hurst. HHCSI currently operates a Youth Services Canada project in 45 Mill and the last tenant at 47 Mill Street was the pet store.

HHCSI executive director Rosslyn Dowell said they looked at renting addi-

tional space at the Town Hall, and other locations, but were looking for "the right combination that would be efficient, in terms of staffing and finances."

Asked if the new facilities were cheaper than the Town Hall Dowell said they couldn't be compared.

"Because we can utilize the space at both 45 and 47 (Mill Street) it's more economical," Dowell said, adding that renovations were underway and the design would allow the same space to be used as classroom or office during the day and the youth centre at night.

Committed to Acton
Mindful of rumours that "ASSIC" was leaving Acton - Dowell who said that some people, mainly seniors, accuse her

of "taking things away from Acton" - stressed the amalgamation is a return to Mill Street and means more services.

"The level of service in Acton has, in fact, increased," Dowell said, offering to "pull stats" in their reports to government as proof and pointing to the new Acton youth centre and expansion of the supportive housing program at Elizabeth Drive as examples.

"Our commitment to Acton is as strong as it's ever been and I encourage people who have concerns to come and talk to me," Dowell said, adding if she was writing the story it would be that "community and support services return to Mill Street."

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