

# Chief Campbell: Reflections of a cop's cop

In a scant four months or so, Halton police chief Peter Campbell will walk out of his second floor office at headquarters and not look back. He will be closing the door on 36 years of policing and taking on new challenges to fill his days. But, while he is obviously content in his decision not to continue as chief, Campbell, 55, makes it known he is leaving behind a rewarding career which started in 1962 after responding to an OPP advertisement.

"I was only going to do it for a year," he said with a smile, "and then I was going back to school."

Sometime during that year, Campbell must have decided a future as a police officer was worth pursuing. It wasn't until 1974—through an OPP sponsorship program—that Campbell went back to school. This time he received his Bachelor of Commerce degree.

When Campbell agreed to be interviewed for this story, he wanted to make sure it reflected policing—its rewards, its disappointments—and was not solely about him. Campbell, while highly visible in the community, has managed to keep his private life private and even though he answers all questions openly, one gets a sense he would much rather be discussing his beloved force than his retirement plans. Yes, he spoke of exciting travel plans with his wife of 30 years, Liz. And yes, he will be

keeping busy curling, golfing and playing bridge. But you can see his thoughts are still firmly entrenched in Halton Police Service.

Campbell speaks with pride when he reflects on the hours of community work police personnel give so freely to the various groups and organizations throughout Halton.

"They have enormous commitment to the community," he said.

As an example, he talked of the Ontario Special Olympics Spring Games held in Burlington and Oakville this past spring.

He also spoke of the police officers who took the initiative to set up a skateboard park for youth in Oakville and are working on doing the same in Georgetown. He described the 550 members of Halton police (410-420 are uniformed members) as people who go beyond their line of duty to help make Halton a better place in which to live.



HALTON POLICE CHIEF PETER CAMPBELL

Perhaps the fact Halton is such a safe region makes it easier for the police to be so actively involved in charitable projects.

While knocking on the wooden table before him, Campbell said Halton has not had a homicide since May 1996. But, says the chief, Halton is unique in that it has a special blend of key factors which keep it distinct from other municipalities similar in size, but with

more crime. From higher levels of education and income to social services to topography, Halton is "privileged", said Campbell.

The positive numbers do have their downside though. When Halton Regional Police Services Board endorsed an 8.3-percent budget hike in the spring there was an audible gasp from Halton council. This was a council bent on keeping taxes down and looking for decreases, certainly not a hefty hike. If the region's crime rate per capita is

the lowest in Canada for municipalities of more than 100,000, why were additional officers needed?

But Campbell is as adamant now as he was at council when he says Halton police is extremely lean in its staffing.

"I wish we could give them the answers they want," the chief said of his critics.

Yes, the crime rate may be down, but that isn't what should be the only criteria, Campbell explained.

"There is more to be considered than dollars and cents."

He said it has been a challenge to get politicians to look at the "total package" and compare Halton police to neighboring communities.

The chief's plea for money was not lost on Halton regional chair Joyce Savoline.

"Halton has really been served well by Peter Campbell," Savoline said. "He truly has the interest of the community at heart."

She said the service has to continue to balance the needs and wants of a community.

So what advice would Campbell have for his replacement, who is expected to be known by mid-November? The outgoing chief was thoughtful in his reply. He said it is imperative he or she understand and get to know the organization first.

"Learn its strengths before you muck with it," he said.

—By Jill Davis, special

**CORRECTION**

We wish to draw your attention to the following in our current "Fabulous 2-Week Sale" flyer

Page 8 - ORAL-B PLAQUE REMOVER, 99-2129-0  
The illustration is incorrect. This item includes only one brush and does not include a storage tower.

Page 14 - 13" DRILL PRESS, 55-5911-2  
The vise does not come with the drill press as shown in the illustration.

We wish to draw your attention to the following in our current "1998 Catalogue"

Page 308 - ITEM #3, REESE SHADOW MOUNT CUSTOM CLASS II TRAILER HITCHES, 40-7004X  
The illustration is incorrect.

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