

Editorial

# Law and order

While Halton Hills is a growing community, crime statistics released by Halton Regional Police recently indicate growth hasn't led to a huge increase in criminal activity.

According to Halton Police, Halton Hills posted the lowest crime rate in the region last year with a rate of 3,866 occurrences per 100,000 population. Percentage-wise the town's crime rate was .2 per cent lower than Oakville's, 6.4 per cent lower than Burlington's, a whopping 43.7 lower than Milton's (which has a casino and provincial detention centre) and was 8.8 per cent lower than the regional average.

According to Detective Sgt. Jackie Gordon, Halton Hills saw a decline in the number of robberies, break and enters, auto thefts and fraud cases last year.

But, the news was not all good.

The number of occurrences rose slightly in 2000—by about 4.5 per cent—while the number of sex offences, assaults, domestic assaults, property damage cases and other criminal code offences increased.

Vandalism has also continued to be a problem in Halton Hills and police officials urge residents to call police when they see acts of vandalism.

As reported earlier the number of auto accidents rose sharply in 2000, a problem police hope to rectify by cracking down on bad drivers in the next few weeks.

The numbers don't lie: Halton Hills is a relatively safe place and for that we can thank our local police officers.



## Letters to the editor....

# Glen residents have no reason to fear heritage designation

Dear editor,

On March 23, *The Independent & Free Press* reported on the discussions held at a public meeting concerning the proposal to designate a part of Glen Williams as a heritage conservation district.

This designation would recognize the unique heritage character and charm of the Glen and would promote the

preservation of the community's history for the enjoyment of future generations. Glen residents have been working towards this designation since 1989.

As we approach the end of this long process, there appears to be a good deal of misinformation which is making residents nervous about the proposal. I would like to respond to four themes which were highlighted at the meeting and then offer some positive thoughts concerning the benefits of designation. First, the concerns expressed by those now opposing designation:

1. Decrease in property values: Research based on almost 3,000 designated properties in 24 different Ontario communities does not support this position. Studies by Dr. Robert Shipley of the University of Waterloo demonstrate there appears to be a robust market for designated properties and prices of heritage houses continued to rise even when there was a downturn in property values. The same conclusions have been reached by the Heritage Society of British Columbia. Conclusion: Research

proves designation does not have a negative impact on property values.

2. Increase in insurance costs and taxes: One would expect if a property decreased in value, insurance and tax costs would go down as well. Designation does not require that a heritage building which is destroyed by fire, for example, be rebuilt to its heritage specifications. Conclusion: Any increase in insurance costs and/or taxes resulting from designation would be minimal and would be more than offset by the increase in property values.

3. Restrictions on future alterations to the property: Some say owners will no longer have control over their own properties. In fact, a review of Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act clearly states the municipality cannot prevent changes being made by a property owner. While it can delay the issuing of a permit for such changes up to 180 days, it cannot ultimately prevent owners from carrying out their plans. Conclusion: Designation does not remove the ultimate control of a proper-

ty from the owner.

4. Lack of public input: Public discussions on the proposed designation have been going on since 1989. There have also been material delivered to the doors of the properties in the designation area. Various steering committees composed of Glen residents were established over the years. Through their work design guidelines were developed, discussed and modified many times to gain the support of the citizens' groups. At these meetings the vast majority of residents have supported the designation. If it had not been supported, it would have been dropped years ago. Conclusion: The public has been kept fully informed from the outset of this exercise.

I hope the fears based on myths do not wash away all of this hard work and that Glen residents will come forward to express their support for the heritage conservation district.

Don Payne, chairman  
Heritage Halton Hills

### Send us your letters

The Independent & Free Press welcomes letters to the editor.

All letters must be signed and include an address and a daytime telephone number. Letters requesting names be withheld will only be published pending a valid reason at the editor's discretion. Letters should be not exceed 300 words and may be edited for content or length.

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