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## Fire department wants to recoup cost of responding to false alarms

Continued pg. 1

A survey of surrounding municipalities showed that a \$300 to \$700 fee is charged to repeat offenders.

But Meads cautioned that there is no evidence to suggest the fees have helped to reduce the number of alarms. More detail on fees for service and the potential impact they have on reducing alarms or on offsetting fire department response costs will be collected, assessed and reported at a future council meeting.

"There are many factors involved that are difficult to measure in dollars such as the impact responding has on the firefighter's personal and family life, the impact it has on the firefighter's employer or perhaps worst of all, the potential it has to cause part-time firefighters to 'burn out' and the result is the community loses their services completely," said Meads.

In the meantime, the fire department is working on a number of strategies:

- Tracking the occurrence, cause and corrective measures implemented for every false alarm and non-emergency alarm received.
- Sending letters to repeat offenders emphasizing the negative impact alarms have on the fire service, warning of estimated response costs directed to the property owner or tenant if the alarms continue.

- Staff will investigate the appropriateness of laying charges under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act and Ontario Fire Code when two or more false alarms are reported at the same location in one month.

- A homeowner's handbook is being devel-

oped to address strategies to reduce hazards, reduce actual incidents and to reduce false and non-emergency alarms. It will also address issues such as carbon monoxide alarms, unknown odors and open air burning.

- Staff will also review more in depth the actions taken by other municipalities.

- Staff is also developing processes to collect more detailed data on the cause of alarms to find a solution in these problem areas.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer

## Georgetown mom charged after infant injured in assault

A Georgetown woman has been charged with assaulting her infant.

Halton Police report on September 6 they received information that a one-month old infant was suffering from injuries consistent with an assault. The child was admitted with serious injuries to the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. The infant has since been released from hospital and is currently in foster care.

Last Thursday the infant's mother, 20, was charged with one count of aggravated assault and is to appear in Burlington court on November 25.

Police did not release the woman's name to protect the identity of the child.

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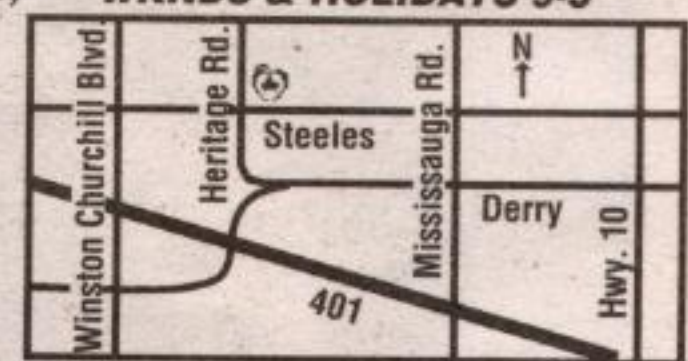
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