

TRU gets Tasers Officers ready to zap crime

Halton cops now have more power to fight crime—literally.

The service last week officially introduced battery-powered Tasers as part of its use-of-force options for the Tactical and Rescue Unit (TRU). A Taser was introduced to TRU on a trial basis about a year ago. TRU has two six-officer units that are specifically trained to respond to serious situations within the region.

Each of the 12 TRU officers went through a four-hour training course to use the weapons, however, only three Tasers are currently in use.

The service received \$35,000 from the provincial government to pay for Tasers and associated training. Staff Sgt. Andrew Fletcher said Halton Police bought the first three Tasers for about \$750 each and, ultimately, plan to outfit each TRU officer with upgraded models once they're approved for use in Ontario, which could be later this year.

Fletcher said Tasers give TRU a less-lethal alternative to guns, night sticks and pepper spray for subduing suspects if needed. Other weapons could still be used if needed, but Fletcher said

the Taser offers the best option for officers when dealing with potentially dangerous suspects.

"The firing range is 21 feet," he said. "It incapacitates the person right away."

The Tasers are slightly bigger than the standard issue 40-calibre Beretta handguns carried by Halton officers.

Officers who carry the weapons holster them on their chests, away from their handguns.

Tasers are powered by nickel-metal hydrate batteries that provide enough energy to shoot two probes at an object that can penetrate about six centimetres of clothing or latch directly onto skin. The probes emit a small electrical charge (0.162 amps) that causes involuntary contraction of muscles on the person who is hit, dropping him or her to the ground within seconds. The probes stay attached to the suspect allowing officers to emit a second charge if necessary.

Because the amperage is so low, Tasers do not cause permanent damage to anyone who is hit. Fletcher said Tasers can eliminate the need for an officer to draw his or her gun and means stray bullets won't hit innocent



Sgt. Brian Carr of the Halton Regional Police Service's Tactical and Rescue Unit (TRU) displays one of the service's new Advanced Taser M26 weapons. The less-lethal weapons temporarily disable a person with electrical probes.

Photo by Peter C. McCusker

bystanders. Tasers can also be better options than sticks or pepper spray because shortly after the five-second charge is emitted into a person he or she can return to complete motor skill use. It can take some people up to 40 minutes to recover from pepper spray

blasts and night sticks can cause bruises and fractures.

"There is always an after-effect (with the other use of force options) whereas with Tasers there is none of that," said Fletcher.

—By Robb Swybrous, special

Live from Georgetown... Breakfast Television

The stage of John Elliott Theatre was home to a remote news broadcast on CITY-TV's *Breakfast Television* Monday morning as members of Georgetown Globe Productions performed a few numbers from their upcoming production *Cabaret*, which opens Thursday night. During the broadcast, *Breakfast Television* co-host Jennifer Valentyne (right) received a few pointers from Globe lead Cheyenne Harvey as they joined forces to perform the title song together.



Photo by Ted Brown

Police/fire blotter \$400,000 in equipment stolen

Halton Police are investigating the theft of approximately \$400,000 worth of steel cutting equipment from Oxytech Industries on Sinclair Ave. late Saturday or early Sunday.

Police report entry was gained through a rear door and stolen was a 1,500 lb plasma cutter unit valued at \$350,000, a \$40,000, 500 lb Toscan CNC mill, a \$12,000 Yale forklift and a 1998 white Ford cube van. The cube van has since been recovered. Police report there was no sign of forced entry.

Police report \$5,000 worth of construction and office equipment was stolen from a construction trailer at the Christian Reformed Church on Trafalgar Rd. late Friday or early Saturday. A padlock was broken on the trailer door to gain entry. Taken were a Skilsaw, drill, laser line level, grinder, computer, printer, fax machine and portable space heater.

A Georgetown man is facing charges after police were called to Zellers because a man was seen running from the store carrying two white shopping bags. Store security chased the man and police located the man a short time later on Sinclair

Ave. Several DVDs were found on the ground.


Charged with theft under \$5,000 and possession of stolen property is Michael Blanchard-Simmons, 20, of Mill St.

A Georgetown youth is facing charges in connection with the theft of a Gameboy and games from a vehicle parked at a Webster Way home Sunday evening. Police report a short time later a youth was found in the parking lot at St. Catherine of Alexandria School with the stolen property.

Charged with possession of stolen property and theft under \$5,000 is a 15-year-old Georgetown boy.


Halton Hills firefighters were called to Weber Dr. after it was reported a pick up truck was on fire Thursday afternoon. When firefighters arrived they found the engine area of a 2002 Chevrolet truck parked close to the garage fully involved. The cause of the blaze is believed to be a faulty electrical cord attached to the block heater. Damage to the truck is \$35,000, and radiant heat caused an additional \$1,500 damage to the home.

Dr Lisa Lindstrom
Dr Harry Greig
Dr Natalie Novak



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22 Guelph Street
downtowngeorgetowndental.com
(905)877-4371