

Marijuana march goes up in smoke

Although the participants were vastly outnumbered by police, town officials and media at the Global Marijuana March in Acton Saturday, the global co-ordinator of the event considers it a success because it got people talking.

"If the organizer wanted to encourage debate on this issue, I'm sure it was a resounding success," said David Malmo-Levine, Cannabis Culture Global Marijuana March co-ordinator from Vancouver.

The local organizer couldn't be located prior to, or at the event.

Only three youths, two from Halton Hills and the other from Toronto, turned up at Acton's Prospect Park for the march billed on posters in Acton as "a march for marijuana freedom and drug peace."

"I thought there was going to be at least 500 people here," said one of the disappointed youths, who did not want give his name.

Another youth said he believed there would have been a better turnout if the event had been held in Georgetown.

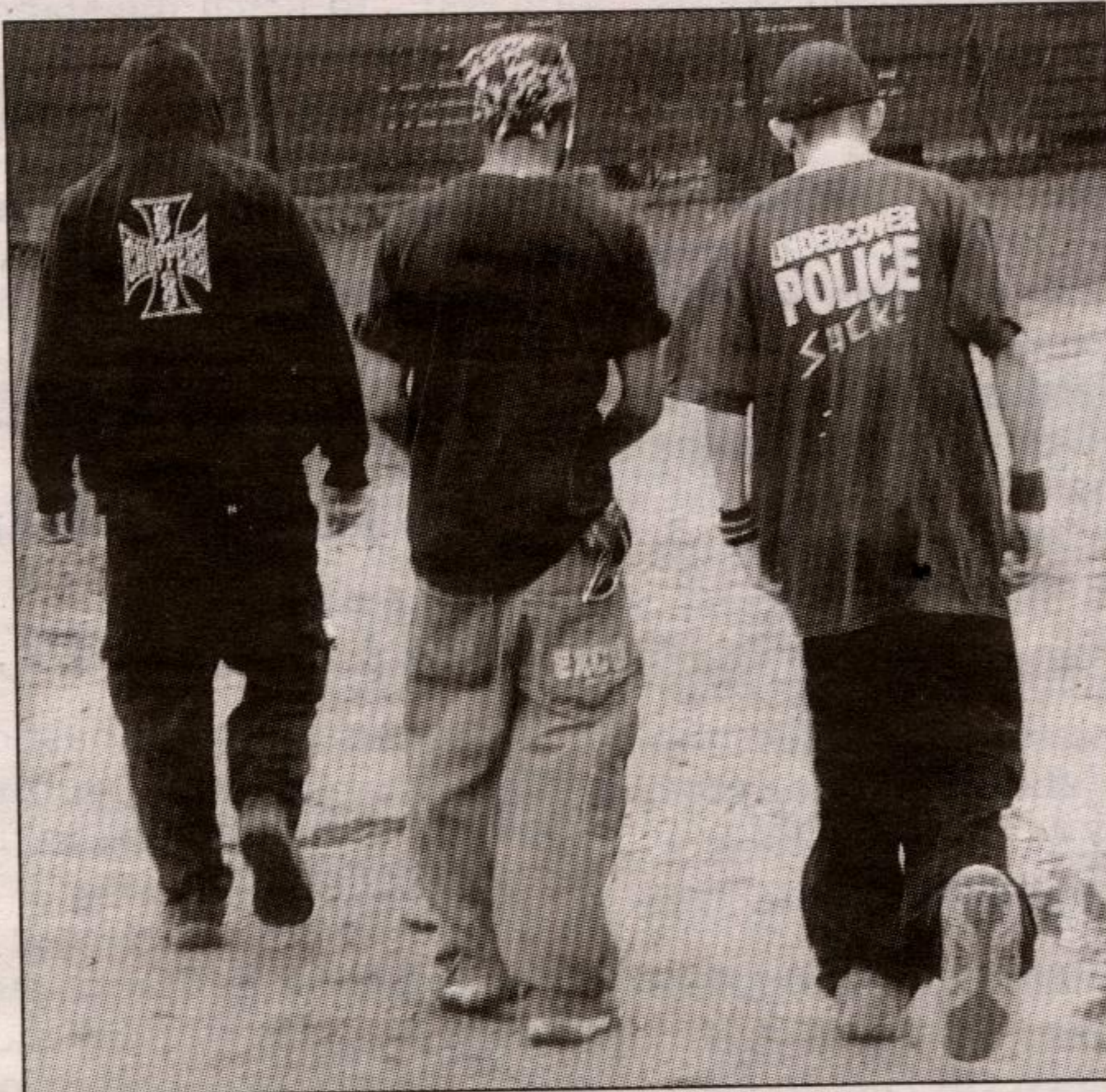
"They use it (marijuana) to help patients so why can't we use it," said one of the youths.

"We expected a much larger crowd to attend," said Detective Sgt. Don Cousens. "It was a non-event."

Police had several officers, on bicycles and in cruisers, at the entry gate to the park early in the afternoon, but their numbers dwindled to one later in the afternoon.

Cousens said the on-duty officers were brought in from Georgetown and Milton but "once we found out there wasn't any need to be there they went back to their regular patrols."

Mayor Rick Bonnette and Town of Halton Hills



Three disappointed young men leave Prospect Park after a planned marijuana march in Acton drew more onlookers than participants.

Photo by Lisa Tallyn

Director of Parks and Recreation Department Terry Alyman also stopped by.

Malmo-Levine said, "hats off to the organizer" of the Acton march for getting everyone talking about it and believes all the attention given to the march may have "scared off the organizer."

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

Norval man pleads guilty to killing wife

Continued from pg. 1

As she staggered across the parking lot, the van revved, made a hasty U-turn and crashed over a median, blowing a tire, before hitting the woman and dragging her about 15 metres. The van driver then drove away.

Police at the time said soon after a man banged on the door of an Amaranth Township house and demanded the keys to a 1996 Mercury Sable, in which he fled.

A Canada-wide arrest warrant was issued for Snow a short time later and police, acting on information from a family member and tracing a cell phone call, arrested Snow at a Thunder Bay motel two days later. He was taken to hospital suffering from an apparent drug overdose.

The couple had been married 27 years.

Court heard this was not Snow's first charge of violence against his wife. He was charged three weeks before the murder with assaulting his wife and threatening her life.

He was released on recognizance under condition that he stay away from her.

But eight days later, on April 26, 2002, he was back in court for failing to meet those conditions after contacting his estranged wife who was staying at an Orangeville women's shelter.

—with files from

Karen Martin-Robbins, special

Fall fair riot forum comes up with several recommendations

More than 30 recommendations—ranging from checking the bags and purses of everyone entering the fair to the need for Halton Police to receive training for dealing with crowd and riot control—came out of a forum on the riot at last year's Georgetown Fall Fair Saturday morning.

Approximately 50-area residents, mostly adults, attended the event organized by Halton Police and other community partners. The recommendations, made to avoid another clash like the one last fall, were presented by representatives of six focus groups and focused on security, education and training, relationships and youth opportunities.

Police used rubber bullets and pepper spray to disperse what some witnesses called a rock and beer can-throwing crowd of up to 500 who rioted that Saturday night. Chants of "kill the police" were heard and in the end of the criminal investigation 14 arrests had been made.

Some of the youths who participated in the forum stressed there was nothing for kids their age to do in town.

"Youth need more to do," said John Dalrymple representing Georgetown District High School's focus group. He suggested extended hours at the movie theatre and bowling alley in town.

"We need places to go like a pool hall and an arcade," said Britnie Mosseau, 17.

"This town does not have a youth-friendly culture," said area resident and parent Richard Landau.

"Young people are third class citizens here and I think that's something we have to address," he added to a round of applause.

Another concerned parent, Gini Bourner said, "if you want youth here, 9 a.m. on a Saturday is not going to get youth out here, they're in bed."

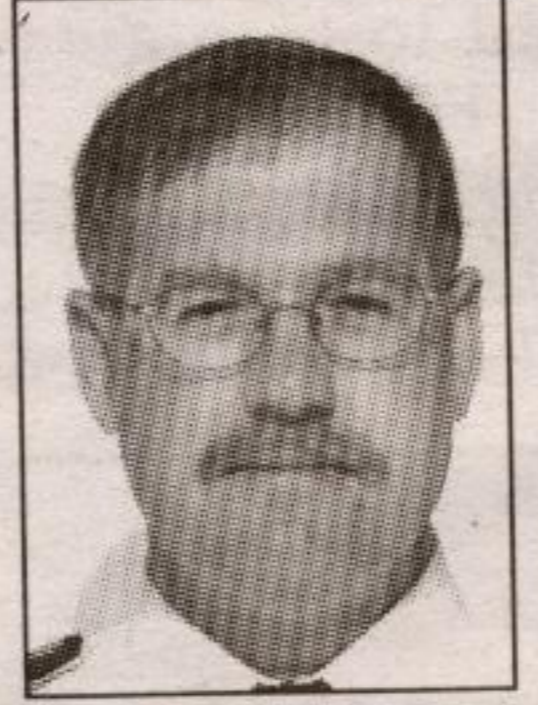
Lynn Watson and Jeremy Letkemann of the Mayor's Youth Action Committee said they want to make the town more youth-friendly and are organizing events, such as an upcoming coffee house, youth recognition awards.

Some of the 34 recommendations presented at the forum included:

- Involve youth in the planning and operation of the fair. Adults should be in charge of security, gates and money.
- Increase security and/or police presence at the fair, with regular patrol of the grounds and the perimeter areas by staff who are people-friendly.
- People who are under the influence should be refused admission.
- Close the fair earlier in the evening, perhaps 9 or 10 p.m.
- The fair should be held in a larger location where it would be easier to control entry and exit.
- Presentations should be organized

'We understand our officers have to be more approachable.'

—Supt. Mike Kingston



for youth in school about factors contributing to crowd violence, including the role of the bystander.

• Police staff assigned to Halton Hills need to be oriented to the community

because of the differences compared with policing in larger cities.

- Improve police-youth relationships through activities and discussion.
- Organize more activities for youth in Georgetown, especially for evenings.
- Plan for a free youth event at the fair to engage the youth and give them somewhere to go.

Georgetown resident Vicki Wilson, who lives near Georgetown Fairgrounds recalled the riot as "very, very scary."

"I thought they (police) handled the situation pretty well. There was really no force until it started getting out of hand."

"I saw bottles being thrown at police officer and cars," said Wilson.

She added she believes the fact kids were pushed out of the fair "like cattle" escalated the event.

Jeff Nurse of the Georgetown Agricultural Society said he thought "the police did an excellent job."

Nurse said fair organizers planned to close the fair at 10 p.m. the night of the riot and planned to have a local resident

make an announcement that it was closed, but the announcement wasn't made.

"We do not take the blame for a lot of young people that came in here intoxicated," said Nurse.

John Owen of the Georgetown Agricultural Society said they plan to develop a youth program and "hope as many youth as possible join in."

As a result of the incident at the fair and analysis afterward Halton Regional Police Superintendent Mike Kingston are doing some things differently.

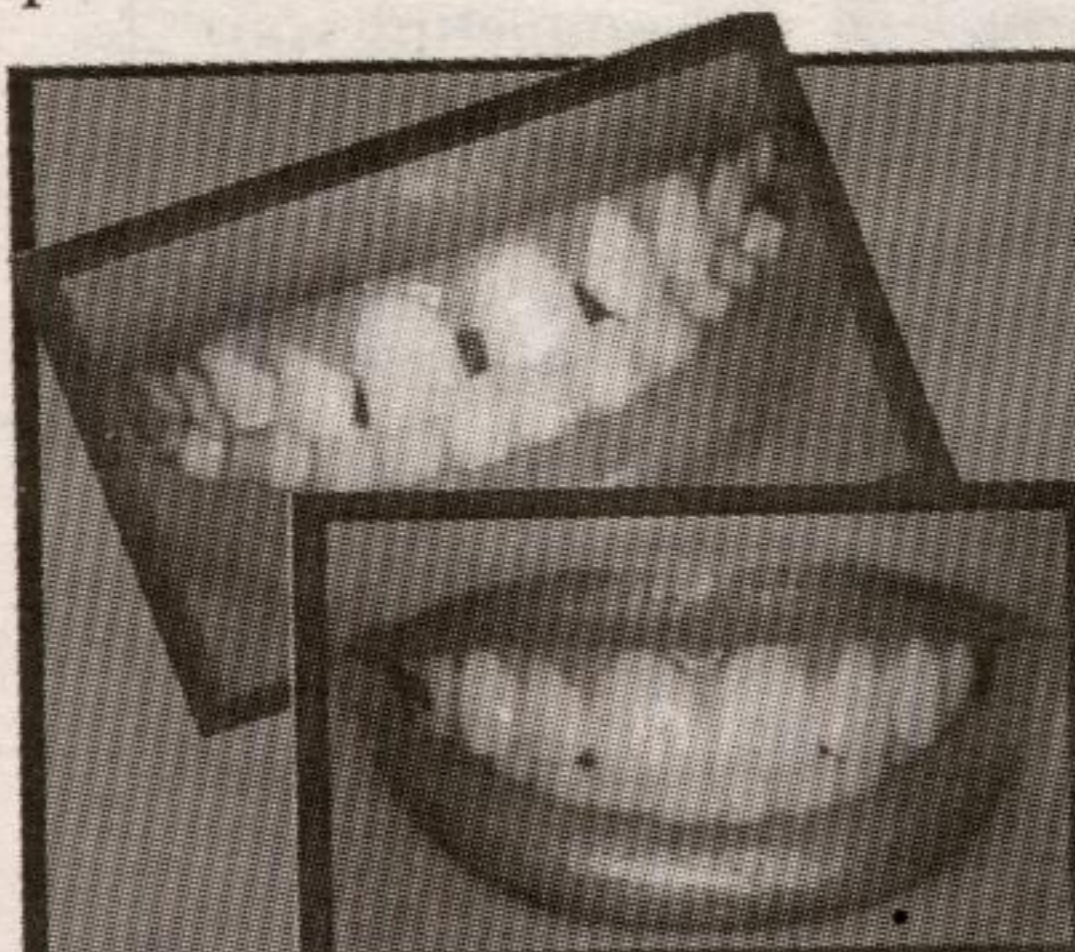
"It confirms the fact we need to be involved in a lot of different things in the community," said Kingston at the forum. "We understand our officers have to be more approachable."

On Monday Kingston said police in north Halton now do a formal operational plan for every major public event and have more interaction with the Town of Halton Hills.

He said public safety is a component in every event in the planning stages.


He said in an effort to improve relationships with youth police have participated in some in-school charity events and he said police are considering developing a play to be presented in high schools that will portray an arrest and show the perspectives of those involved including police, bystanders and the person arrested.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer



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