

# 'Gang activity' or kids playing games—graffiti shows lack of respect for property

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The most prevalent form of graffiti is "tagging", which has been seen around town lately in blue, orange and yellow colours, he said.

He passed around photos of some examples of tagging in town with words "Bloods" and "Crips".

"That is gang activity. That gang activity is here in town," said Jander. "The crimes haven't followed it yet. ... But because of the fact that they are now here in our town and tagging our properties is showing a turf war."

He pointed to one photo, which had one building tagged "Bloods" and stroked out by the word "Crips".

"That is a turf war," said Jander. Pointing to areas like the St. George's Anglican Church, and commercial buildings in downtown Georgetown as recent examples.

"There is no proof that there is gang activity in town. This is gang marking. This could be just the local kids playing games..." added Jander.

Halton Regional Police Inspector Ron Welsh said he can't attribute the recent spate of graffiti in Halton Hills to gangs.

"There is no indication that we have any gang members committing these crimes or (gangs are) located in Halton Hills," said Welsh.

"The graffiti itself, although it may emulate gang symbolism, we're not entirely convinced its being committed by gang members," said Welsh.

He said the incidents in Halton Hills could be copycat crimes.

This type of vandalism is prevalent right across the country, said Welsh.

Welsh stressed police are asking for public co-operation in catching the culprits.

He asks if anyone sees or hears of any youths purchasing spray paint or caught in the act

painting graffiti somewhere to contact police immediately.

Jander, who says he has a large portfolio in graffiti and gang background, said graffiti must be reported and removed within 72 hours and if it's gang-related within 24 hours.

"If we don't take it down, it shows them that we don't care and we're allowing them to move into our community," said Jander.

"They (property owners) have to demonstrate they're not going to tolerate this," said Welsh.

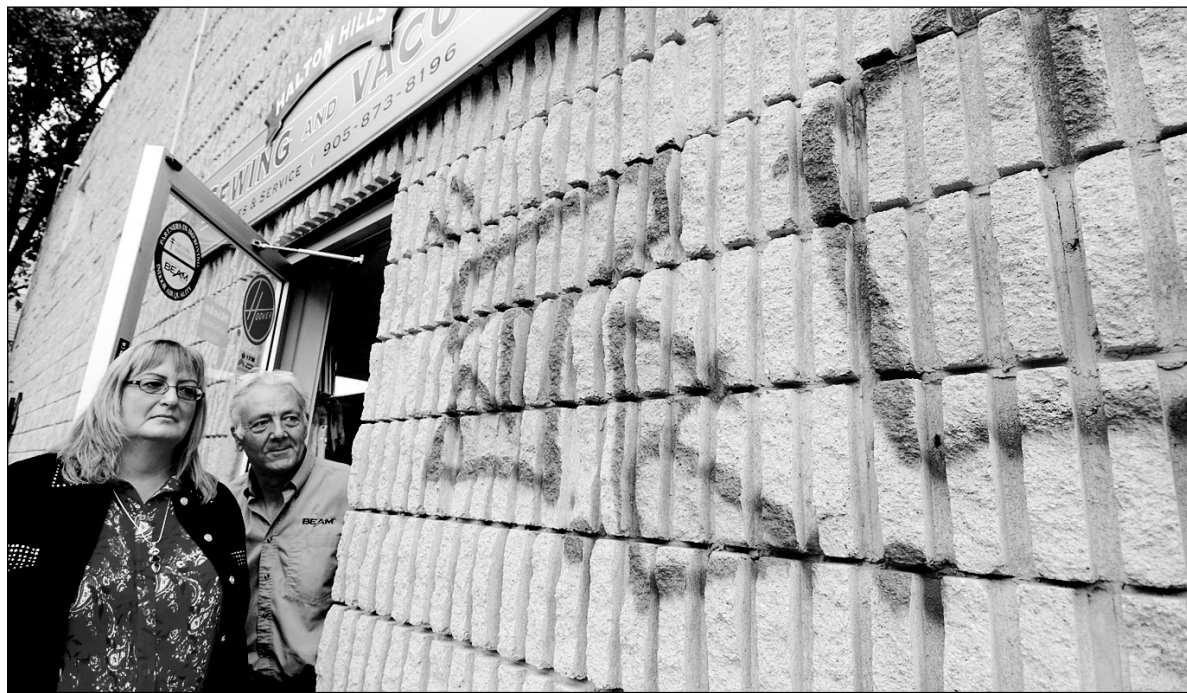
Jander saluted Town of Halton Hills public works department and Halton Regional Police for removing graffiti within 24 hours after a recent spree.

"I've never seen this happen before. They had it down that day—all of it," he said.

"They're (graffiti artists) getting really brave by doing the sides of churches. They've been really brave by doing the sides of the Salvation Army and what

they're doing is taunting the police," said Jander. "The fact that we went in there right away and took it down, showed them that this is still our town and they're not going to take the turf from us. But we have to keep on top of it."

Jander has convinced the



Heike and Tony Ciufu of Halton Hills Sewing and Vacuum look at the graffiti that was spray-painted on the side of their business recently. Photo by Ted Brown

Town of Halton Hills to implement the Graffiti Eradication program here for a one-year basis at the cost of \$51,000, provided the money can be raised through corporate sponsorships.

He runs a similar program in Toronto that is completely paid for by corporate sponsors.

Jander will spend \$24,000 towards organizing and establishing the program in the first three months, followed by \$3,000 a month for ongoing "maintenance". He plans to enlist the services of high school students who need to complete their 40 hours of community service to help paint over the graffiti.

While Jander's team of volunteers will be responsible for taking care of property owned by private firms and individuals, the Town will continue to be responsible to remove graffiti from Town facilities. As well, the spot-

ting, recording and removal would become one of the top priorities for the Public Works Department.

A hotline and e-mail will be set up so that residents can at

just manage to keep up with graffiti on its own property and "we can't take on (financially and staffing) the private businesses and churches and so on."

She said the involvement of students is key.

"If we get on it now, and deal with it, maybe we can stop it in its tracks before it gets out of hand," she said.

"If we leave it, I think it leads to more vandalism... broken windows and other types of vandalism. ... Graffiti is a cost to the municipality and a cost to the public."

Jander's resume also includes being a certified instructor in crime prevention through environmental design, and doing risk assessments, aviation and train security and is a marine disaster certified instructor. His website is [www.camainternational.com](http://www.camainternational.com).

*'If we leave it, I think it leads to more vandalism...Graffiti is a cost to the municipality and a cost to the public.'*

**—Regional Councillor Jane Fogal**



Graffiti or "tagging" has occurred at several locations in recent weeks: at a mailbox on Gardiner Drive (above); on a walkway between the Fairgrounds and Gardiner Dr. (right) and on the Georgetown Agricultural Society building in the Fairgrounds (above left inset). Photos by Ted Brown



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