

Halton police chief ready to retire

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Perhaps the fact Halton is such a safe region makes it easier for the police to be so actively involved in charitable projects.

While knocking on the wooden table before him, Chief Campbell said Halton has not had a homicide since May, 1996.

But, he noted, Halton is unique in that it has a special blend of key factors that keep it distinct from other municipalities similar in size, yet with more crime.

Halton "privileged"

From higher levels of education and income to social services to topography, Halton is "privileged", said Chief Campbell.

The positive numbers do have their down side though. When the Halton Regional Police Services Board endorsed an 8.3-per-cent budget hike in the spring there was an audible gasp from Halton council. This was a council bent on keeping taxes down and looking for decreases, certainly not a hefty hike.

If the region's crime rate per capita is the lowest in Canada for municipalities of more than 100,000, why were additional officers needed?

Staffing lean

Chief Campbell is as adamant now as he was at council when he says Halton police is extremely lean in its staffing.

"I wish we could give them the answers they want," the Chief said of

his critics.

Yes, the crime rate may be down, but that isn't what should be the only criteria, Chief Campbell explained.

"There is more to be considered than dollars and cents."

Service could do more

He said it has been a challenge to get politicians to look at the "total package" and compare Halton police to neighbouring communities.

He said with extra staff the service could do so much more in the region. The highly-successful and popular DARE program (Drug Addiction Resistance Education) is only offered to students in Grade 6 when, in fact, it is a three-part program including a section for high school students, the Chief explained.

He would also like to have more resources to "attack the growing problem" of traffic enforcement. Speed is up, he said, and there is a need to address that.

The Chief's plea for additional money was not lost on Halton regional Chair Joyce Savoline.

Chief sincere

"Halton has really been served well by Peter Campbell," Ms Savoline said.

"He truly has the interest of the community at heart."

She said the police service has to continue to balance the needs and wants of a community.

"What price are we willing to pay to keep a safe community?" she asked.

In addition, she noted, the officers themselves need to feel safe in the community. "They need the backup."

Ms Savoline said she was disappointed to learn Chief Campbell wasn't seeking another term.

She said she was unaware the long-time Oakville resident had made it clear when he was hired it would only be for five years.

"That was never made public," Ms Savoline said.

Some down times

While his tenure has been a "very positive experience," there were down times for the Chief.

From an officer assaulting a man in custody to improper disclosure of evidence, Chief Campbell said he moved swiftly to ensure the public knows misconduct will not be tolerated.

"We made mistakes, but it was not the norm," the Chief said.

Chief Campbell also knows what it's like to come under attack by the media.

He obviously has his own views of the press saying, "I'm not afraid of what I say, but what you'll print."

Hike to kilns at Kelso

It's just about time to Hike to the Ruins.

Kelso Conservation Area's annual guided hike will take place Sunday, Sept. 20 at 9 p.m.

During the two-hour tour, participants will enjoy scenic parts of

While Chief Campbell knows criticism from the media is to be expected, he acknowledged some strongly-worded editorials and stories have left a few members of the police service with a perception of unbalanced reporting by some members of the media.

"You guys (the media) always have the last word," he said with a half-smile.

So what advice would he have for his replacement, who is expected to be known by mid-November? The outgoing Chief was thoughtful in his reply.

New chief must know force

He said it is imperative he or she understand and get to know the organization first.

"Learn its strengths before you muck with it," he said.

As he was about to wrap up the interview, the Chief was notified a charter bus carrying officers to yet another police funeral was ready to leave.

His presence was needed.

Ontario's Bruce Trail on the Niagara Escarpment, including the standing ruins of the historic Christie-Henderson lime kilns.

Hikers are advised to register early as space is limited. To reserve space, call 875-2200.

Wire warning

The Product Safety Bureau of Health Canada has issued an advisory to caution Canadians against the use of fishing wire or other types of metallic strings in building and flying kites.

The warning comes as a result of the recent death by electrocution of a Cobourg man who reportedly was using a fishing rod to fly a kite.

Health Canada's Hazardous Products Act prohibits the sale of kite strings made of a material that is a conductor of electricity.



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ROYAL LEPAGE REAL ESTATE SERVICES
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SUNDAY 2-4 PM
Lot 9 Country Lane Court.
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Model Home \$329,000
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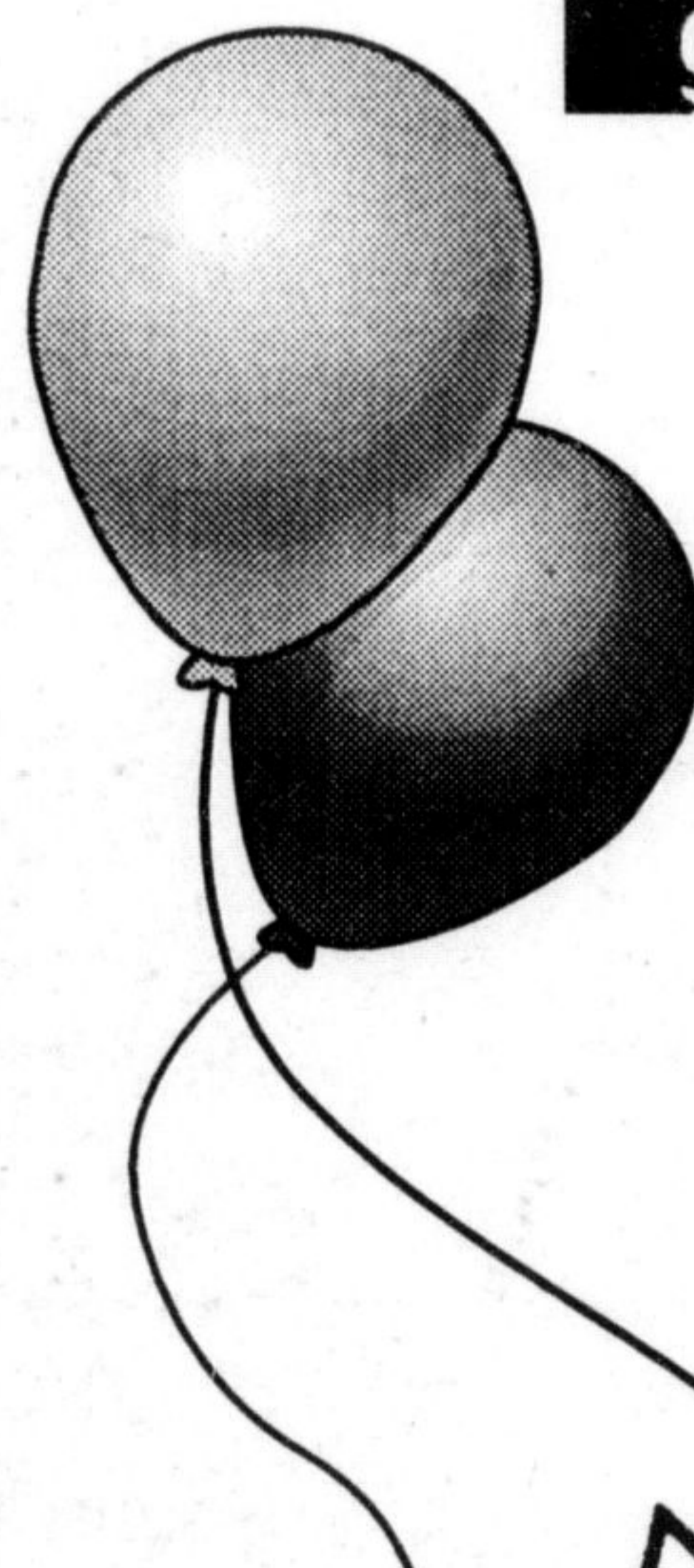
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