

They stand on guard, quietly, just up the road

By KAREN SMITH
The Champion

Just north of Hwy. 401 in the small town of Milton, numerous officers work behind the scenes protecting threats to the security of the country.

It's an RCMP responsibility few citizens realize is based in their home town, says Inspector Mike McDonell, the officer in charge for the Ontario National Security Investigations Section (ONSIS).

"We're kind of like the early warning system," he said. "We examine what the threats are."

Working out of the RCMP detachment on High Point Drive, intelligence officers are concerned with protecting people from threats of violence or injury that affect national security.

"We use the criminal intelligence we collect to discern, prevent and apprehend (those in) the commission of criminal offences," he said.

Biggest concern

"Our number one concern is human life."

ONSIS focuses on information that can be linked to criminal activities or criminal conspiracies constituting a threat to the country's security as defined by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), he added.

That includes protecting the prime minister as well other countries' officials, such as people working at consulates in Canada.

There are those, Inspector McDonell said, who routinely attempt to get close to the prime minister for the purpose of pushing and shoving.

But many people are more interested in

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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Milton-based RCMP Inspector Mike McDonell keeps an eye on national security.

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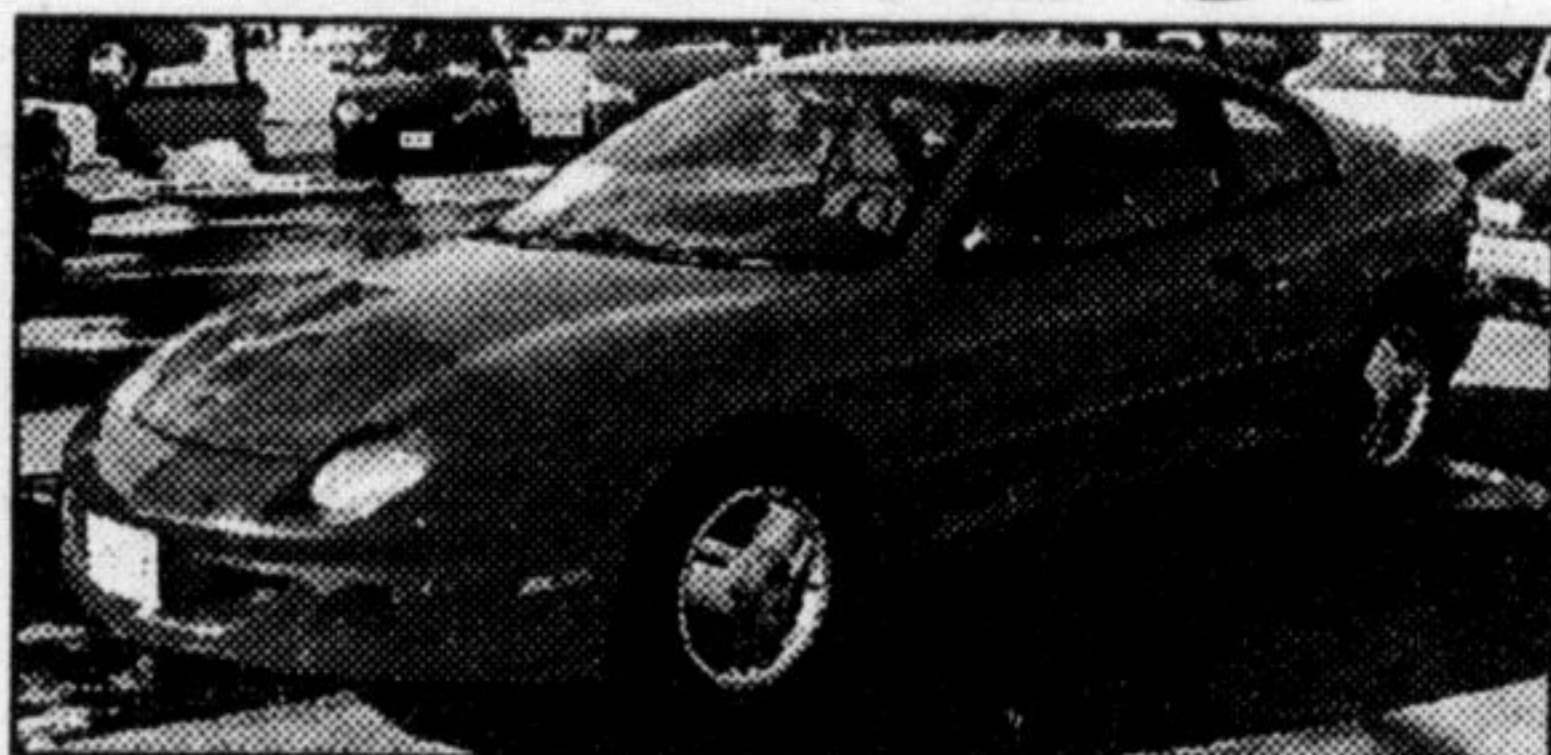
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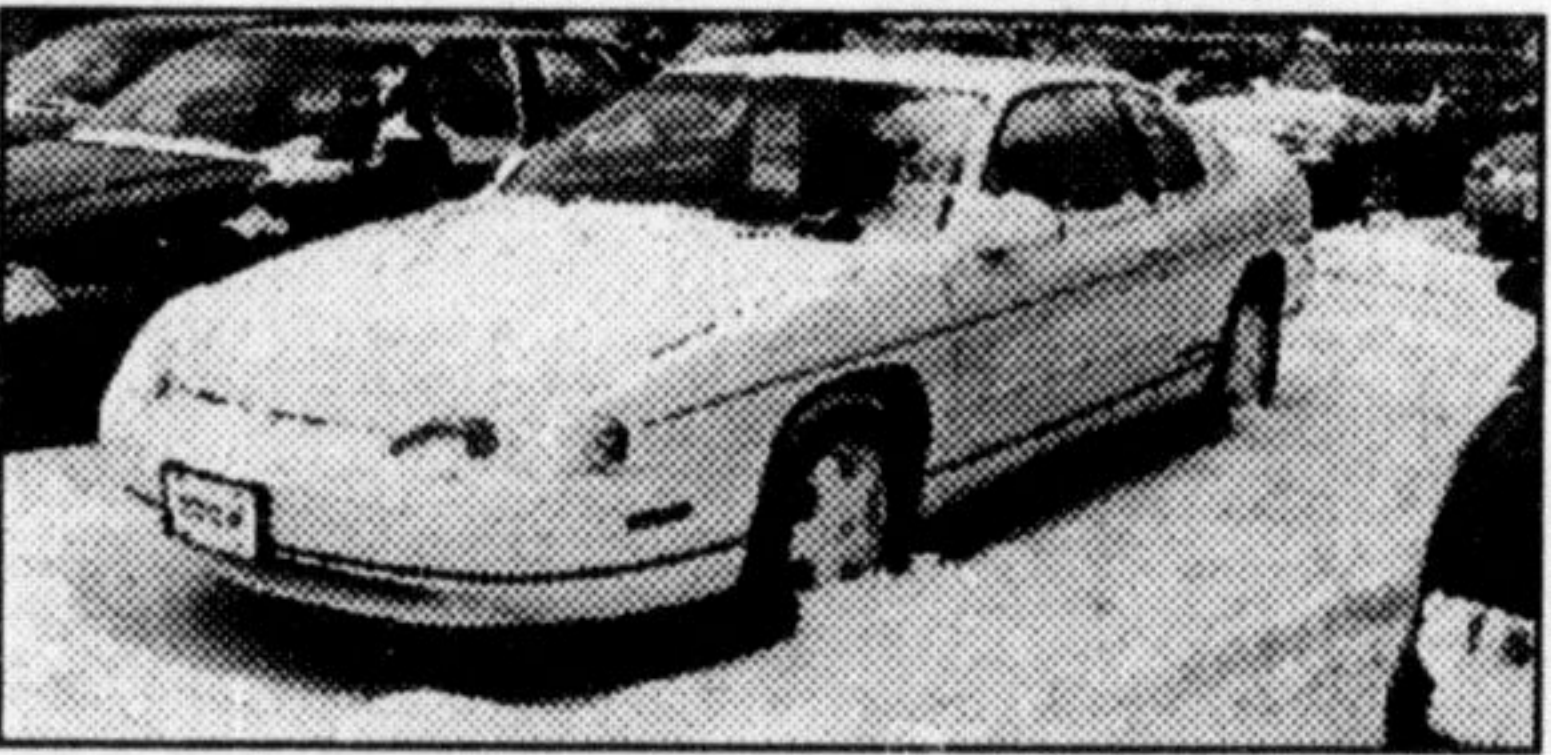
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