

*Sheppard murder*

# Man says confessor worked in Alberta at time of shooting

The investigation into Gene Hopkins' murder confession is heading west, according to an article in the Toronto Star.

Investigators now want to know if the 32-year-old inmate of Warkworth Penitentiary — who's claiming responsibility for the 1995 shooting death of Milton's Fred Sheppard — had been working in Calgary at the time of the slaying.

"He worked for me for about three months in '95, right at the time all this was supposed to be happening in Ontario," said Paul Liddy, owner of Calgary-based Suncurrent Industries.

### Looking for documents

According to The Star report, Mr. Liddy is arranging to have records removed from storage so he can confirm his recollections.

He said the convict — currently serving time for other crimes — was working for him as a framer when Mr. Sheppard, 77, was killed.

Mr. Hopkins insists this is a mistake. While confirming that he worked for several Calgary construction companies, he said he wasn't working for any in March of 1995, when Mr. Sheppard was killed.

### Hopkins says he has proof

The confessor — who said he left Calgary only days before he shot the local senior — insists he has bank statements that will prove he worked for Mr. Liddy in January and April of '96.

News of this employment discrepancy came exactly one week after Mr. Hopkins' confession was first made public.

Keith Madeley, 26, was convicted last year of the murder and is now serving a life sentence with no hope of parole for 25 years.

# Portable clean-ups cost more than \$4 million

By DENNIS SMITH  
Special to The Champion

The Halton District School Board will seek provincial relief for costs of portable clean-ups, which have escalated to \$4.1 million.

Education director Dusty Papke said he will continue discussing the issue with neighbouring school boards for a possible joint lobbying effort.

"I have already been speaking with other directors," he said. "The Peel board is facing a whopping bill and you're looking at phenomenal costs across the GTA (Greater Toronto Area)."

Mr. Papke said he'll also be speaking very soon about the matter with education ministry officials.

"We have to believe that the government needs to deal with this across the province of Ontario. We've had no direction from the province on portable mould remediation, re-inspection or financing."

Mr. Papke said the \$4.1 million total announced earlier this week is the final cost for Halton's public board, which cleaned up (remediated) 131 portables.

Board staff originally estimated the clean-up would cost \$1.75 million and revised that forecast to \$2.7 million last December.

Mr. Papke said unlike a regular capital

project, workers had to do clean-ups on a component-by-component basis, discovering the problems as they went along.

"It was a different kind of project. It was not finite," he said. "We didn't know what we'd find or have to do."

Mr. Papke noted that besides mould clean-up, work on anchor tie-downs, gable grates and adherence to building codes had to be considered.

He said portable clean-up costs in Oakville were higher because of the town's stricter inspection requirements. But this was not a major factor in the increased overall cost, Mr. Papke added.

The education director said the extra cost will be covered through capital reserves and the board's 1999-2000 operating budget.

"It will all be paid out by the next budget," said Mr. Papke.

The \$4.1 million will be paid out from facility/school renewal programs in budgets from the 1998 short year (\$480,000), 1998-99 (\$800,000), 1999-2000 (\$2.14 million) and through board reserves for other capital (\$700,000).

Clean-ups were required after a potentially toxic fungus called stachybotrys atra was found in board portables in 1997. It may cause or amplify allergic reactions or asthma in some children and possibly induce flu-like symptoms like nausea and headaches.



Dusty Papke

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