

**In the line of duty**

# Halton police recruiting auxiliary volunteers

By **KAREN SMITH**

*The Champion*

Just a month after several new recruits were sworn into the Halton Regional Police Auxiliary Unit, the search is on for others.

The unit is looking to expand by 20 officers to meet increasing demands for policing, especially in north Halton, says Sgt. Ray Hendry.

"We're looking for mature, community-minded individuals to volunteer some time toward an interesting and rewarding calling," he said.

The job comes highly recommended by Grant Taylor, a Halton police auxiliary officer in

Milton for the last 10 years.

"It's very rewarding," said the 49-year-old high school teacher and father of five sons, two of whom are now Toronto police officers.

"You really feel like you're helping out your community and finding out a lot about it, too."

Mr. Taylor, who like all recruits underwent a physical examination and written test during the application process, serves about 12 hours a month, mostly helping out with traffic control at special events like the Milton Santa Claus Parade.

Many other officers donate more time, but it's

up to the individual, Mr. Taylor said.

The job also includes ride-alongs, in which auxiliary members join regular officers on the road. On patrol, auxiliary officers mainly serve as assistants, providing back-up to officers, he said.

However, auxiliary officers, who don't carry guns or pepper spray, are trained to deal with the more pressing situations that may arise in the line of duty.

The work of auxiliary officers is totally voluntary. No pay or allowances are provided.

Interested citizens can learn more about the

role of auxiliary officers during information sessions scheduled in September.

Sessions will take place Thursday, Sept. 9 at the Georgetown police station, 217 Guelph St., and Tuesday, Sept. 14 in Acton. The Acton location has yet to be determined.

Held in open-house format, both sessions will run from 7 to 8 p.m.

"We encourage the public to attend and see what auxiliary policing with one of the most progressive police services in Ontario is all about," Sgt. Hendry said.

## Diverse interests make up auxiliary

By **HOWARD MOZEL**

*Special to The Champion*

It was obvious from the start of the recent swearing-in of Halton Regional Police Auxiliary Unit recruits that the officers' sweeping experience was matched only by their enthusiasm.

After all, included in the graduating class were engineers, blue collar workers and educators whose interests range from ice dancing and Bible studies to antique collecting and martial arts.

"The unit has been blessed with extraordinary people," said Auxiliary Inspector Jim James, who officially handed over command of the unit to Inspector Len McGahey after 35 years as an auxiliary officer and special constable.

Auxiliary officers are all civilian volunteers who engage in much of the same training as sworn police officers and are empowered under the Police Services Act to be used for such duties as crowd control and traffic functions.

Rhonda Diplock, an accounting supervisor in Mississauga, was among those impressed by her classmates' breadth of backgrounds and experience and said such feelings among her peers are mutual.

"We're in awe of what each other does," she said.

Ms Diplock has lived in Oakville for 22 years and is a graduate of Sheridan College's Business Administration program. A mother of two who is married to a police officer, Ms Diplock said she selected the Auxiliary Unit to satisfy a long-held interest in police work. Although happy with her career, Ms Diplock says she wanted to find a way to help others while fulfilling her desire for volunteer work.

Ms Diplock — who characterized her training as fun, hard and very intensive — said she enjoyed everything from use of force preparation to (by all accounts) some wild driver training.

"Where else do you get to drive like that?" said Ms Diplock, who relished testing her limits. "You surprise yourself."

Ms Diplock also said that the last aspect of training were some trips to the firing range. Although Auxiliary officers don't carry firearms, an emergency situation may arise where their use is called upon.

"You never know what might happen," said Ms Diplock, whose mother traveled from Saskatchewan for the ceremony.

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