

Police presence up, crime down in Nassagaweya

By **ROBIN DOWNTON-POIRIER**

Special to *The Champion*

Halton Regional Police are crediting a recent decline in crime in Nassagaweya to an increased police presence in the area.

"Since the new station (Emergency Response Centre) opened last June, it keeps our presence in the community known," said Constable Pat Martin, one of four officers assigned to the Nassagaweya community. "Having us out there and the visibility of the (police) cruiser is a great deterrent. We are not sure of the exact figures, but crime has decreased a significant amount."

A 13-year member of the Halton Regional Police Service, Const. Martin has been assigned to Nassagaweya for the past 18 months. His partner, Const. Chris Gruber, has been with Halton Regional Police for approximately three years, the past four months spent in the rural area. The officers work in two-man teams on a rotating schedule doing foot and car patrols, spot checks and general policing to ensure the community is safe.

"We have some freedom to initiate new programs to help the community," said Const. Martin. "My partner and I are planning some new programs when the weather improves. We held a truck inspection program not long ago and it was very successful. We will be doing more things like that in the community. The patrols, the spot checks, the programs — they all seem to be working to keep the crime down."

While admitting the recent cold weather has factored into the recent reduction in crime, Const. Martin said that's only part of it.

"Traffic accidents and traffic-related calls are the most frequent for us," said Const. Martin. "As well, we receive some calls for Mohawk Casino, the conservation areas, and anything else going on in our area."

The community plays a strong part in the effectiveness of the police force and reduction in crime. Its assistance with programs such as Rural Watch and aiding at accident sites is greatly appreciated by the officers.

"The general friendliness of the people in the community is great," said Const. Martin. "There is a very strong sense of community here and it makes our job that much easier. It is really nice when people drop by the Emergency Response Centre to welcome us and introduce themselves. The connection between the police and the community is vital."

Development and BSE scare take severe toil on Milton cattle farming

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The farmers remains diversified with pork and some cash crops — the economical hit has been noticeable, but not quite so severe.

"I don't believe in putting all my eggs in one basket so to speak," said Mr. Merry. "I'm in a position of scaling down a bit, so it hasn't affected me as much as others."

Due in large part to development, the number of dairy and beef cattle farms in Halton has plummeted from 200 in 1964 to around 30 today.

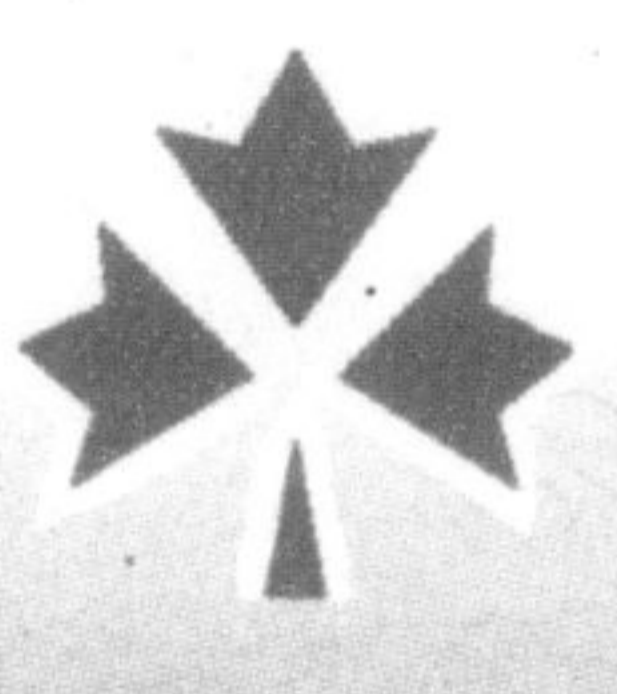
And as the issue of mad cow disease continues, the future of local beef farming remains uncertain.

"Many farms are disappearing. Thousands and thousands of beef farmers will get out of the industry. The

uncertainty of both the situation and the industry isn't worth the aggravation and mental anguish," remarked Mr. Gardhouse.

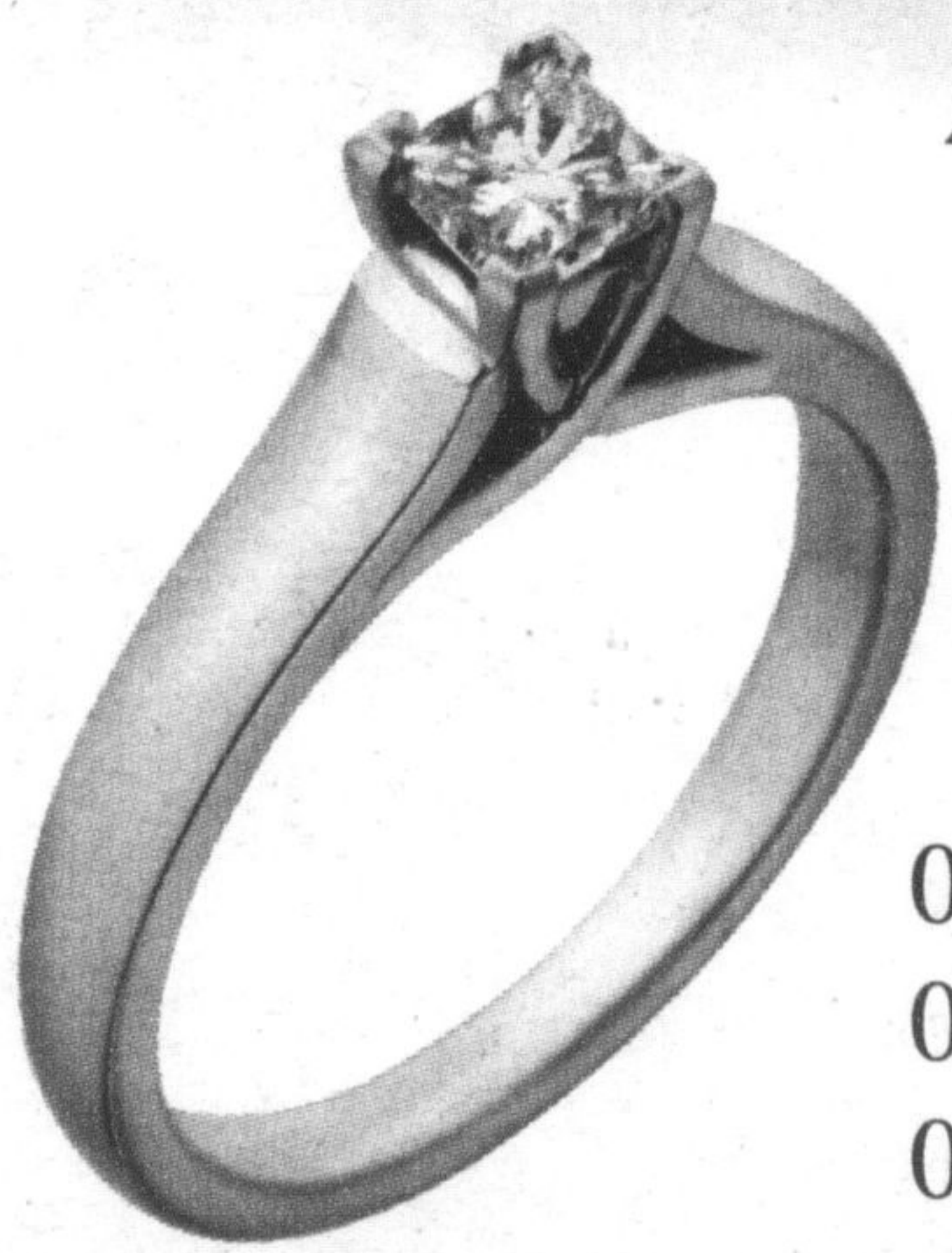
Added Mr. Stewart, "Nobody knows how long the mad cow disease issue will continue, but until the Canadian and US governments can reach an agreement, things will remain the same. It's just unfortunate that this happened."

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