## Algar will be missed, hard to replace, say colleagues

By JASON MISNER

Special to The Champion

Colleagues and admirers say that when Halton police Chief Ean Algar retires next year, after a career spanning nearly four decades, the policing community — locally and across Ontario — will lose one of the great professionals to don a uniform to serve and protect.

Police chiefs from across Ontario, politicians and law enforcement associations praised Chief Algar's uncanny ability to forge partnerships, his admirable dedication to his craft only surpassed by his commitment to his family, his unrelenting defence of Halton, and a sense of humour that made so many feel at ease during the most tense of situations.

He will prove difficult to replace.

Seven-year Owen Sound police Chief Tom Kaye said he spoke to his friend of 15 years a couple of weeks ago and Chief Algar revealed he was toying with the idea of retiring.

"I tried to talk him into staying," Chief Kaye told The Champion Friday after learning his friend was officially leaving the service.

"He's one of those guys you're going to miss. He's a guy who spent a lot of his life in policing.

What struck Chief Kaye about Chief Algar is his "natural way" of dealing with the officers in the police service and the fact he treated everyone fairly.

"He has built a huge rapport in his community," he said. "He says what he means and does what he says, and in this business, that goes a long way for credibility, which he has got a ton of."

Chief Algar always placed an emphasis on openness and communication with Halton politicians and that was appreciated and respected, Burlington Mayor Rob MacIssac said. He noted Chief Algar never worked independently.

"That's never been Ean's style," Mr. MacIsaac said, adding he hopes the new Halton police chief will exemplify similar characteristics. "He has always worked collaboratively with the region. I will definitely miss him."

"His retirement will no doubt be a loss to policing, not just in Halton Region but Ontario," said 11-year Midland police Chief Paul Hamelin.

Having known Chief Algar for about a decade, Chief Hamelin said Chief Algar was so dedicated to policing. Between serving as Halton police chief, president of the Ontario Chiefs of Police Association and chairing the Criminal Intelligence Service of Ontario (CISO), Chief Hamelin said: "that, in itself, shows the kind of character Ean has and his commitment to police work."

Halton police Det. Sgt. Mike Eacrett of the CISO has known Chief Algar since the late 1970s when they were partners in the drug squad of the Oakville Police Service.

"Ean taught me some fundamentals about policing that have stayed with me my entire career," Det. Sgt. Eacrett said. "Ean has always been completely dedicated to policing. It wore off on the people who worked with him. He gave 110 per cent all the time."

Shortly after moving to the CISO, Det. Sgt. Eacrett found himself once again working with Chief Algar, who became chair of the organization in 2003 and has served as such until the present.

"The only thing Ean wants to see is the right thing being done," he said, adding Chief Algar's compassion and people skills took him far.

The provincial Liberal government announced on Friday that it's putting 1,000 more police officers on Ontario streets — 34 in Halton.

That announcement is due in large part to the foundation laid by Chief Algar two years ago when he was president of the Ontario Chiefs of Police Association, said the association's director of government relations and communications.

Joe Couto said Chief Algar made an indelible mark on the association he led for one year in 2003-04, which included ensuring there was a strong partnership with levels of government.

"Chief Algar played a big part in bringing the needs of policing to government, insisting that (the Ontario) government live up to the promise of 1,000 police officers.

"The chief is, in my estimation, the role model for any police officer in this province. He left a mark on this organization."

## Special meeting called

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As for any regrets of things left undone or missed opportunities, he said he has a couple.

"We are well equipped as a service (but) I'd like to be around to see the entire new computer system," he chuckled.

On a more serious note he said, "If I have any regret it's not being able to spend more time with the rank-and-file (officers). I've been busy elsewhere."

The police services board has called a special private meeting tomorrow to consider the process it will undertake to appoint a new chief for Halton.

Chief Algar earned \$162,000 in salary and almost \$9,000 in benefits in 2004, according to provincial public sector salary disclosure.

Chair Bird expects a smooth transition for Chief Algar's replacement. However, the parameters of that process will be decided by the board, he said.

"You look internally and externally. That's been the pattern in the past (in Halton). There are pluses and minuses on either side. Internally, there's a comfort level with your own personnel. Externally, there's almost a fiduciary responsibility to (try to) have the best person at that point in time in the (top) position.

"There are a lot of quality people out there. It's going to be a tough decision," said Mr. Bird.

If the board looks from within, candidates might include longtime Deputy Chief Gary Crowell or relatively new deputy Mike Kingston. The service also has four veteran superintendents.

In 1998, Chief Algar beat out five male and female candidates, three external and two others from within Halton's ranks.

The chief selection protocol back then took five months, from hiring a consultant to accepting resumes to conducting the final interviews. It was done for less than half of the \$30,000 budgeted.

Mr. Bird said he wasn't surprised by Chief Algar's decision. "I'm disappointed — for selfish interests. Having served with him (on the board) when he was an inspector and then as a deputy, I've enjoyed working with him," said the 12-year board member.

"We are a happy and safe community and Ean has earned the respect of fellow officers. We've been vindicated in the trust the previous board put in him" in hiring him.

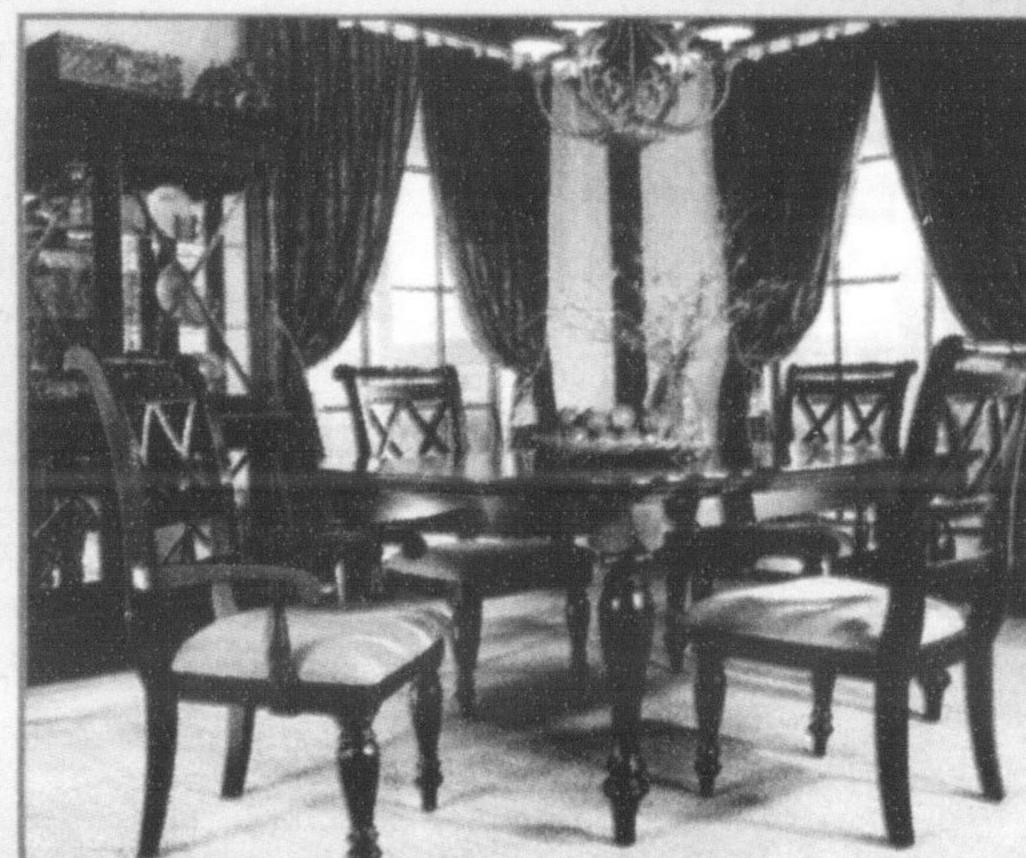
Mr. Bird said Chief Algar has a personality that endears him to people. "He's very personable. You will see him laugh and smile. I've never run into anybody who doesn't like him."

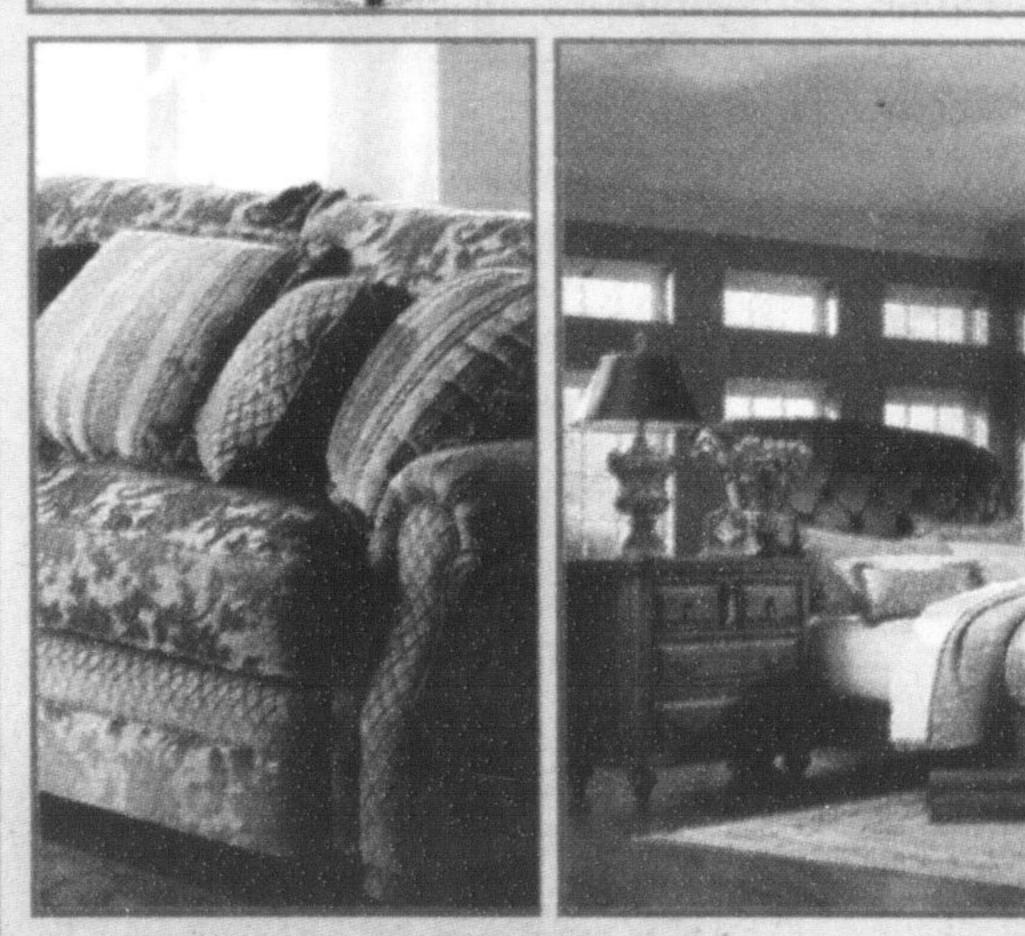
As for Chief Algar's legacy, Mr. Bird said he accomplished much in seven years.

"He's positioned the police department well in terms of growth and diversity. Ean has spent a lot of time with various cultural groups and met head-on that fear factor.

"His legacy is responding to change and seeming to know where we should deploy resources to avoid a problem."













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