Chief Algar bids farewell to long career in policing

By Howard Mozel SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

Although the crowd that bid farewell to retiring Police Chief Ean Algar last week was a large one, it still only touched on the breadth of respect with which he's regarded clear across Halton and beyond.

After all, even though there were police officers, politicians, representatives from non-profit agencies, spokespeople for faith and multicultural groups, senior citizens and teenagers, it was obvious Algar's impact on his community couldn't be encapsulated in an hour's worth of heartfelt presentations - but they certainly tried.

"You are loved and cherished in this community," Laila Eiriksson, speaking for the Halton Multicultural Council and the Bahá'ís of Oakville, told a visibly-moved Algar.

During this event — held at regional headquarters on Algar's last day as chief after 38 years in policing — the word most often repeated was "leadership," made in reference to both his style of discharging his duties as well as the substance.

"We're sad we're losing a great champion," said Francis Cordero de Bolanos of the Spanish Speaking Association, who gave Algar an authentic Mexican sculpture. "Your work and leadership have really made a difference in this community."

Veronica Tyrrell of the Canadian Caribbean Association went one step further and told Algar that he provided a "gold standard of leadership" while in office, a term that was a "real model of inclusion and partnerships."

"Now you are leaving a harmonious community," she added.

This theme of leaving Halton better than Algar found it was a recurring one throughout the hour. This, said Abdul Qayyum Mufti of Al Falah Mosque, was based in large part on the relationships he cultivated with a wide spectrum of constituencies.

That, said Sansar Singh Rai of the Halton Gurdwara, was proven no better than by the "vital role" Algar played in ensuring tolerance in the post-9/11 era. This legacy, he maintained, "made a real difference."

"You laid a peaceful foundation for Halton," he said. "The people of Halton will always look up to you."

Algar was also lauded for his tireless efforts in making Halton as safe as possible for its most vulnerable citizens, as voiced by Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Services (SAVIS) executive director Jacqueline Benn-John and Janette Mitchell of the Halton Violence Prevention Council.

Jean Clipsham of the Halton Organization for Pride and Education (HOPE) echoed these sentiments.

"Chief Algar, you are a champion of human rights," she said.

Representing the local Portuguese community, Theresa

Rodrigues also thanked Algar for making her community safe — then promised him some port wine.

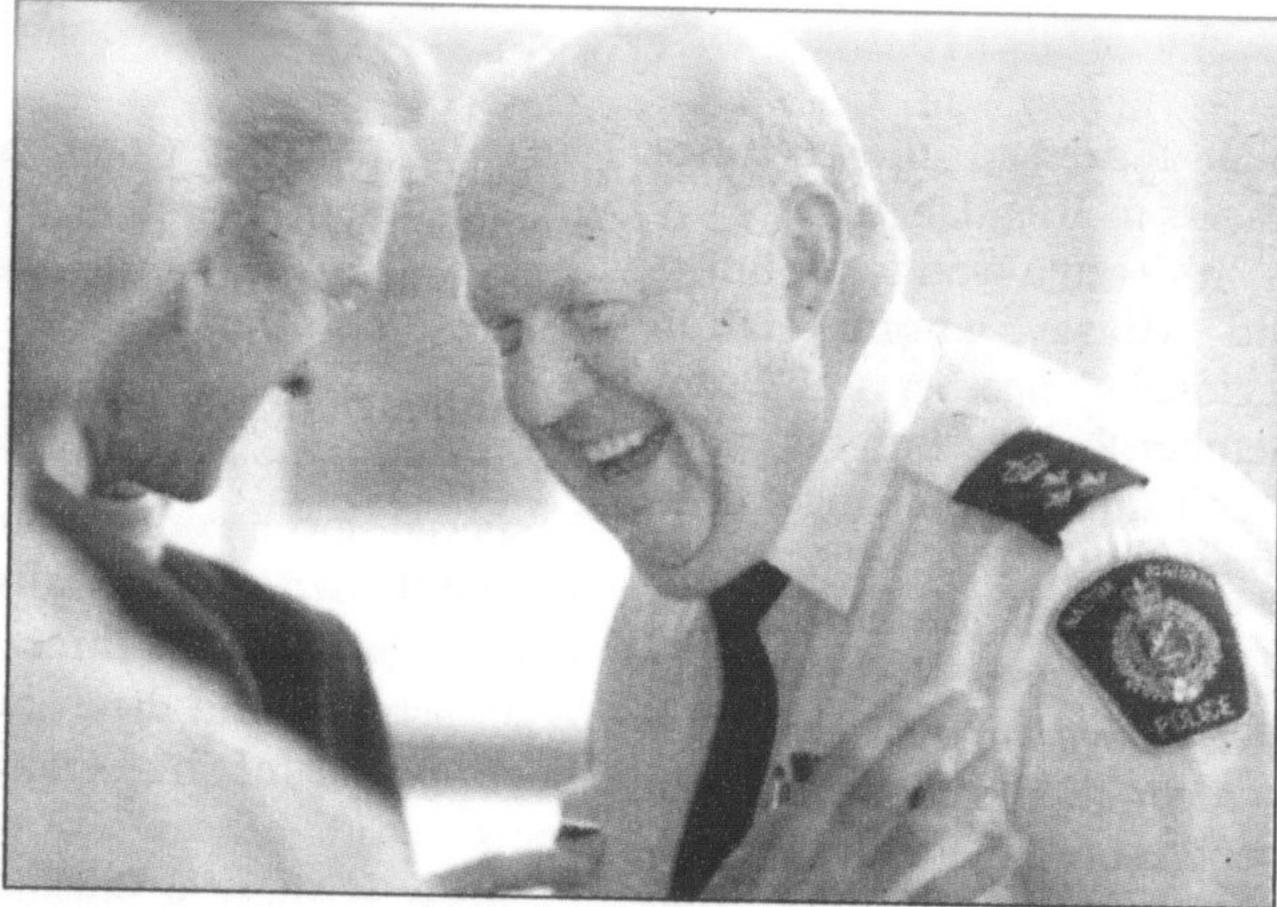
Siddiq Burney of the Halton Muslim Association struck a chord with Algar when he told the chief that he didn't take positions on issues for reasons political or otherwise, but because they were the right things to do. He then saluted Algar.

When it was time for the chief to speak, he was clearly overwhelmed by emotion and said he was "humbled by your comments today."

"It's been an emotional day. It's been a great day," said Algar, the first Halton chief of police to rise entirely through the local ranks. (He joined the old Oakville Police Force in 1968.) "I should be standing up here thanking you."

He then did thank everyone on hand for their "tremen-see ALGAR on page A4

Happy Anniversary Happy Anniversary Happy Anniversary Happy Anniversary



Retiring Police Chief Ean Algar shares a laugh with a guest.



