

**Police Week**

# Community work is 1981 theme

Stories and photos by Linda Kirby

Police working in the community is the theme behind this year's annual Police Week in Halton Region.

Exhibits, films and posters covering all aspects of police work are featured in malls and city centres throughout the region this week.

A secondary aspect of this year's theme is multiculturalism.

"We are promoting police working with different groups of people," explained Sergeant Peter Whittaker, Oakville Crime Prevention officer.

New Canadians are growing in number in the area, he said, and there is a need for police to make contact with the various nationalities.

With that in mind, Halton Regional Police will be conducting several speaking engagements at the Multiculturalism Centre on Chisholm St. in Oakville in the coming weeks.

"A lot of new Canadians are not familiar with the laws and customs of this country. They come from a country with a whole different attitude towards police.

"We want to let them know police are their friends and they don't need to live in fear of them," explained Sergeant Whittaker.

Milton Mall was the showcase for

various police displays and films Monday, Tuesday and today.

For many, the highlight of the week was the presentation of civilian awards to those citizens of this region who have performed outstanding deeds.

Last evening at Burlington City Hall, Carol Morrison of 766 Frobisher Blvd., Milton received commendation for her role in assisting with an accident victim last January.

A registered nurse, Mrs. Morrison administered first aid to a badly injured woman until an ambulance arrived.

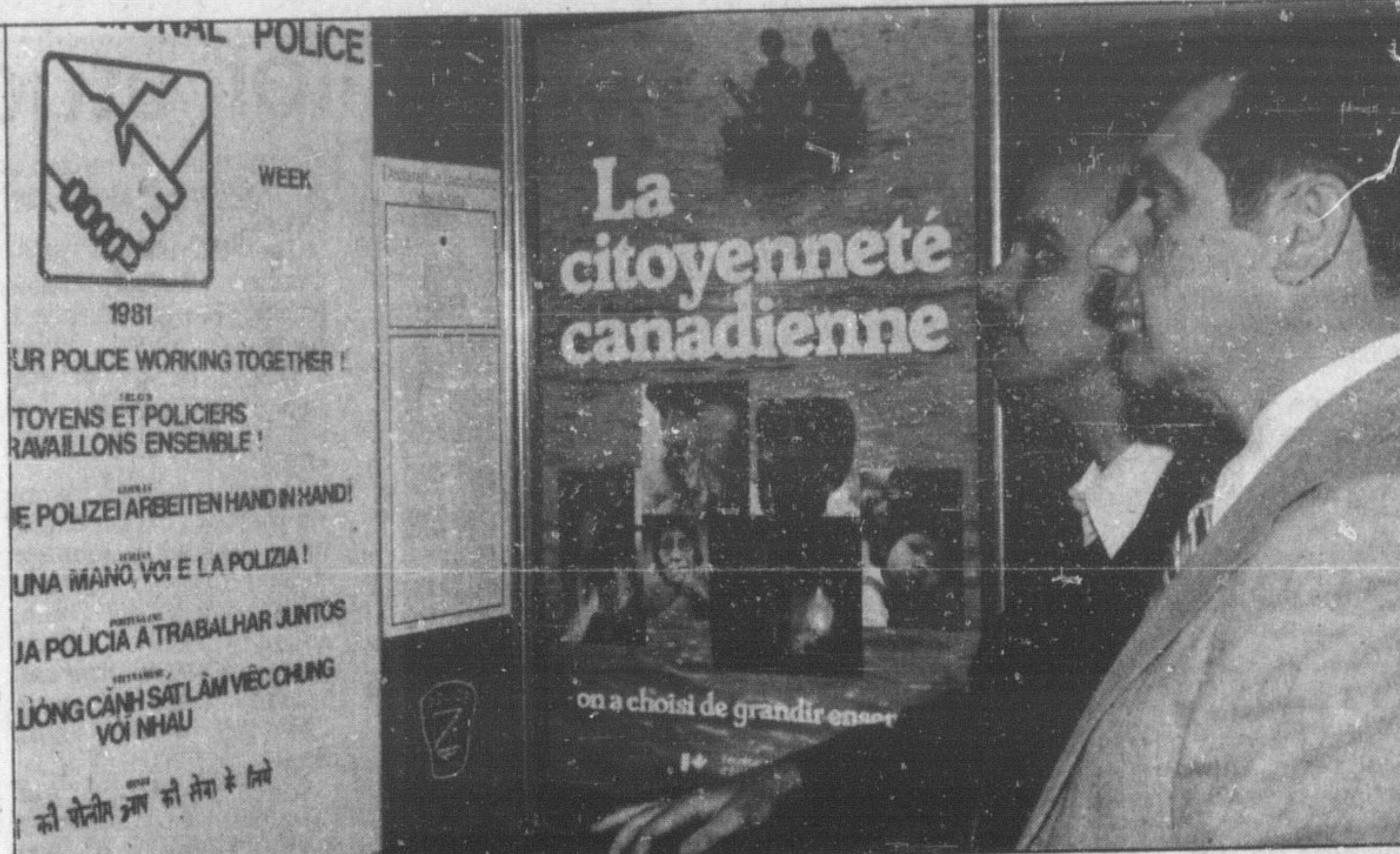
She was one of 12 people to receive the civilian awards.

Also cited for their efforts were: Mrs. Edith Mowat, Cesman Yumerof, Nick Bernath, Nigel Wong, James Belford, Mario Cialini, Ronald Scott, Julie Slinger, Peter Ifody, Pat Whaley and Wayne Thomas.

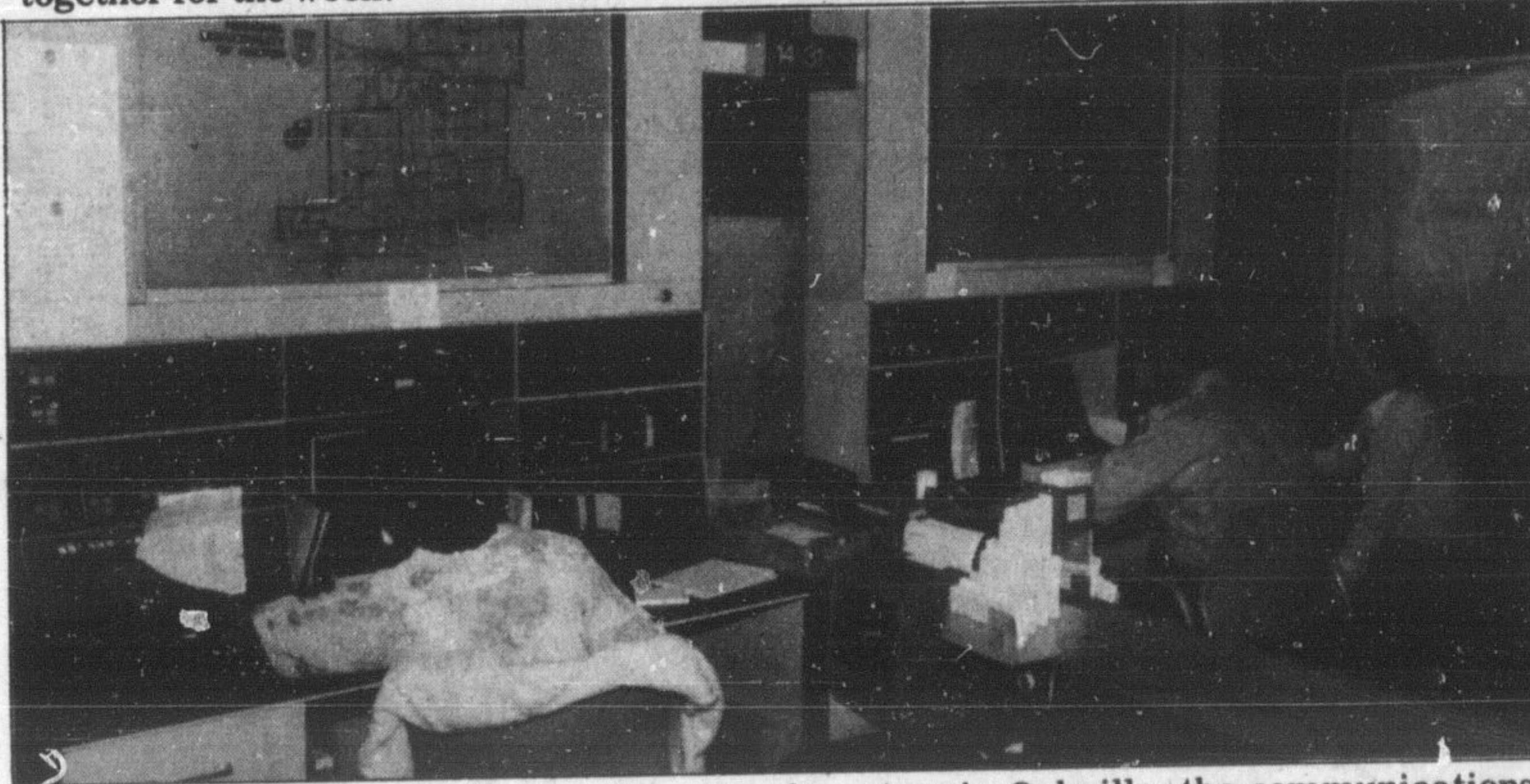
Police long service awards were given to Staff Sergeant Robert Alferink and Constable Jack Petrarca for 25 years of service.

Tomorrow afternoon (Thursday) police officials and dignitaries will be present for the ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the official opening of the new Georgetown police station.

An open house for the public is planned for later that afternoon



Police Week motto. Police working in the community and with different ethnic groups is the theme behind this year's annual event. Halton Regional Police Chief James Harding (foreground) and Sergeant Peter Whittaker examine one of the many displays put together for the week.



The "pressure pot". Located in police headquarters in Oakville, the communications room is the beehive of activity. From here all police dispatch calls are made, averaging more than 300 per day.

**Communications**

## Pressure pot

Halton Regional Police Staff Sergeant Larry Reid knows what it is like to be under pressure.

As the head of the communications room, considered the beehive of Halton Regional Police activities, he oversees all incoming calls and the dispatch of officers to the scenes of crime, accidents, suicide calls and anything else an officer may have to attend.

The situation can often become tense, depending upon the nature of the call and how quickly it must be handled.

On any given day, there are likely to be more than 300 dispatch calls, and an even larger number as the warmer weather arrives and criminal activity increases.

"It can be a real pressure pot in here," admitted the staff sergeant.

As soon as a call comes in, a central switchboard operator checks if it is a general inquiry or a complaint.

A complaint is immediately transferred to communications where the information is recorded and passed on to a dispatcher.

There are two police dispatchers, one to look after Oakville, Milton and Halton Hills and a second to look after Burlington.

According to Staff Sergeant Reid, 47 per cent of the work load is located

in Burlington.

The region is basically divided into three districts with Milton, Georgetown and Acton as District One; Oakville, District Two; and Burlington as District Three.

Each district is assigned a radio channel providing radio contact between approximately 80 patrol units and headquarters in Oakville.

In addition to the radio channels provided for Halton Regional Police communication, the relatively new system includes a fourth channel for communication with other police forces and a fifth channel for marine officers in Lake Ontario.

Although North Halton is yet to have a major bank hold-up or hostage taking incident, provision has been made for it.

A sixth radio station, named the "tactical" channel, allows any police unit in Halton region to immediately signal for assistance.

An enormous board with a detailed map of the area shows where each cruiser is located and whether or not the officer is available for a call.

Operators are trained by an experienced dispatcher during a 10-week training period, before being launched on their own.

But according to senior officers, it takes approx-

imately six months to learn the ropes completely.

The obvious stress and rigors of the job make it a line of work that is not suitable for everyone and there is an admitted high turnover of communications personnel.

In a recent survey conducted by Staff Sergeant Reid, a total of 4,436 calls were logged for the entire region of Halton in the first 21 days of March.

A month later, that number increased by nearly 1,000 totalling 5,295.

**MDHS promotions**

Promotions for two Milton District High School teachers were recently approved by Halton's Board of Education.

Donna Grebenc was

appointed acting head of creative arts until June 26 and Jan Penick was appointed acting associate head of student services until next January.

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**Correctional Workers**

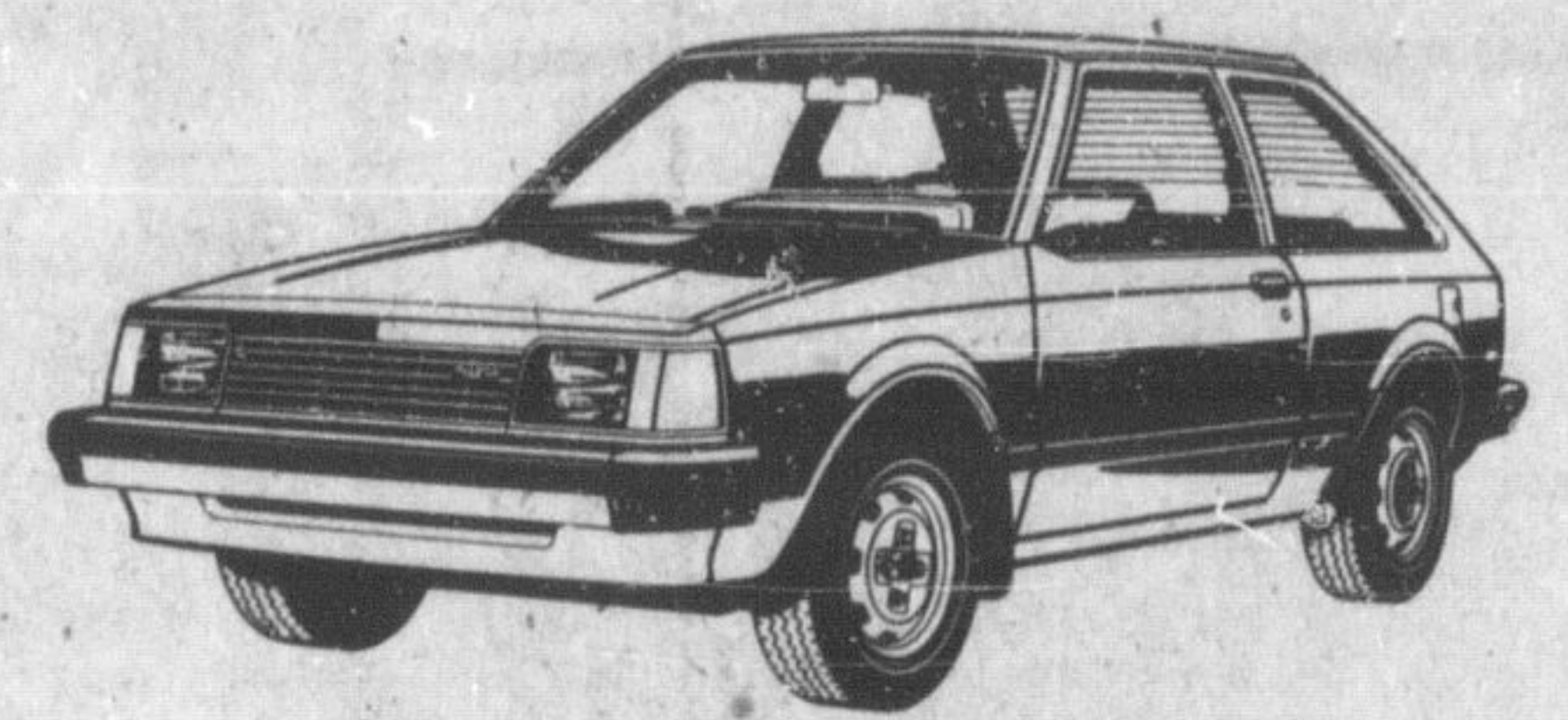
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