



Oh the weather outside is . . .

March is almost here so residents are out there enjoying the snows. Hers, Doug Armita, of Milton, and son Justin, 7, takes a run down the slopes of Kelso Conservation area. Photo by JOHN BORGSTROM

## Police videotaping meets expectations

By LISA TALLYN  
Champion Reporter

The videotaping by police of accused persons making statements could be commonplace throughout Halton Region within two years.

The outcome depends on the success of Project Taped Interviewing Procedure (T.I.P.). The Halton police force is six months into the experiment and preliminary reports indicate that the endeavour has been working.

The Burlington detachment of the Halton Regional Police force has been taping accused statements since July. T.I.P. was created in conjunction with the Law Reform Commission of Canada and up to January, 243 interviews have been recorded on tape, with a confession rate of 71 per cent.

"Few problems have arisen with the project," said Sgt. Norman Ryall, project co-ordinator. "To this point things are going just about as we expected."

Police were concerned that getting suspects to be open on camera would be a problem, but quite the opposite

has proven true. Of 61 cases concluded in court, only five accused persons refused to be videotaped.

"It's too early to tell why persons accused of crimes open up on camera even after they have been told that they may exercise their right to remain silent," said Law Reform Commission President, Mr. Justice Allen M. Linden. "Some say it may be because there is a bit of ham in all of us. But I rather suspect that it is because the accused persons trust the camera."

Videotaping is a relatively new aspect of police work. "We are charging off into virgin territory and there are no real ground rules to follow," said Sgt. Ryall. The project co-ordinators had no way of anticipating what the court requirements would be. To date, defence counsel have not contested the admissibility of tapes.

The videotaping of statements is

only being done in Burlington. Officers at Milton, Georgetown and Oakville continue to take statements the traditional way with a notebook and pen.

"Videotaping is the absolute best way of recording statements taken in the police station," said Sgt. Ryall. "Having to rely on an officer's notes and recollections is not as reliable, especially when he is asked to recall something that took place six months to a year earlier."

Along with the taping of accused statements, victim and witness accounts have also been captured on film. Police have found this to be beneficial because victims, particularly those who have suffered sexual or child abuse, do not have to offer their statements more than once.

The next report on T.I.P. is due in June, the first anniversary of the project.

## Rape crisis phone line is set to go

By LISA TALLYN  
Champion Reporter

By June, women in Halton who have been the victims of rape will be able to pick up the phone and connect with someone who will provide them with support, empathy and information about their options.

That is the date set for the Rape Crisis Line, being run in conjunction with Halton Women's Place, to be in operation. The number is 878-8555.

The first round of volunteer call-takers will begin training in mid-March, but callers can use the service now. They will be connected with experts until the Halton line is fully manned.

In 1984, Halton Regional Police investigated 92 sexual assaults. Although statistics haven't been tabulated for 1985, there has not likely been a decrease.

"It is estimated that only one in eight sexual assaults are ever reported," said Marilyn Green, a director on the board for Halton

Women's Place, and a co-ordinator of the crisis line. "That puts the actual number of assaults somewhere in the region of 700 per year."

In the past Halton rape victims have had to call Hamilton, Toronto or Guelph for the crisis service. Halton is modeling its service on The Hamilton Crisis Line. The new service will be operational 24 hours, and manned by highly trained volunteers.

"The basic requirements of volunteers is that they be empathetic and interested. They should also have a feminist outlook, and recognize that rape is not a crime of passion but one of violence," said Ms Green. Volunteers should also be non-judgmental.

"Sexual assaults are hard on relationships, it has to do with the myths surrounding rape. The volunteers will be trained to understand the emotions and provide support for the woman."

The 12 women set to begin crisis intervention training next month will learn to deal with three different

types of callers; women who have been sexually assaulted or victims of incest a long time ago; those who have been assaulted recently; and those who are in the middle of the crisis.

"By the end of the nine-week training the volunteers will be well versed in the medical and legal aspects of rape and the different levels of sexuality, so that they won't be shocked on their end of the line."

When a victim calls, the volunteer will gently solicit information about the assault. The two may agree to meet or the caller might be more comfortable using the phone. The volunteer will lay out the procedure for pressing charges, and be available to accompany the victim to the hospital for an examination.

"It is important that the volunteer remain unbiased, and not lead the victim into something that she doesn't want to go through."

If a woman decides to press charges, she must be examined at a hospital. The doctor uses the procedure laid out in the Ministry of the Solicitor General's Sexual Assault Kits. The examination is gruelling. Forty different samples are required from the victim.

Volunteers will describe to the victims all the procedures. They will also describe what the woman could face when she goes to court.

The Rape Crisis Line received its initial funding from a Georgetown Kiwanis Club donation. Organizers will explore other avenues once the line is operating. Eventually they hope to be running two volunteer training sessions a year. Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer can call Halton Women's Place at 878-8555.

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