

Valerie Wagg surveys the boxes and drawers of family keepsakes destroyed when vandals caused an estimated \$40,000 damage to her home by flooding it overnight. In the foreground is a collection of Disney music — her son's favourite — that was destroyed. In her left hand are sodden family photos.

Photo by Graham Paine



\$35,000 damage

Vandals trashed family keepsakes, caused serious damage, upset kids

By KAREN SMITH
The Champion

Damage caused to a Woodward Avenue townhouse flooded by vandals last week is believed to have totalled more than \$35,000.

Police initially estimated damage at \$10,000, but the situation is actually much worse, said a devastated Valerie Wagg, 25, who rents the townhouse with her husband Steve, 31.

"It's awful. I can't even believe it," Mrs. Wagg said Friday.

She was home alone overnight July 10 with her two boys, aged 4 and 2, when the culprits cut a hole through the screen of an open door and inserted a garden hose.

The vandals then turned the water on.

It's believed that the water had been running for six to eight hours before Mrs. Wagg and the children awoke in the morning.

Unaware of what was in store, Mrs. Wagg said she went downstairs at 8 a.m. and heard what "sounded like Niagara Falls." Water was flowing from the main level into the basement. Two inches of water covered the floor.

"We thought the ceiling of the basement was going to cave in," she said.

The damage is covered by insurance; but some property can't be replaced. Family photographs and

other belongings of sentimental value were destroyed.

Mrs. Wagg can no longer operate her private day care service out of her home, resulting in financial loss. Two bicycles were also stolen from the backyard.

The couple is living out of the upstairs of the townhouse while their children are staying with relatives in Mississauga. Property that could be salvaged is piled in a dry area of the house.

Mrs. Wagg said the incident has taken a great toll on her children, who are too young to understand the upheaval in the house and want to come home.

The couple has rented the townhouse, situated at Woodward Avenue and Wilson Drive, from Mrs. Wagg's father for five years.

Mr. Wagg is a Toronto firefighter and was working the night shift when the incident occurred.

The senseless vandalism was the third incident of its kind in the townhouse complex in the last six years, she said.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Halton Regional Police detectives at 878-5511, ext. 2116, or Crime Stoppers at 825-8477. A reward is being offered through Crime Stoppers.

Residents turn in 108 during gun amnesty

By HOWARD MOZEL
Special to The Champion

Although only a third of the way through a three-month firearms amnesty, Halton Regional Police are already calling the program "very successful."

The province-wide scheme — which runs from June 1 to Sept 1 — has netted a total of 108 firearms in Halton so far.

These include 13 registered handguns, 14 unregistered handguns, 28

shotguns, 53 rifles and 13 "near firearms" such as pellet and BB guns.

So far eight prohibited weapons have been turned in. (Prohibited weapons include everything from martial arts implements, switchblades and butterfly knives to stunguns.) Eighteen non-prohibited weapons such as knives have likewise been surrendered.

Six explosive/military devices are out of circulation as are 11,521 rounds of ammunition.

After the first two weeks of Halton's gun amnesty program 14 handguns had been surrendered. Twenty rifles, 12 shotguns and 2,681 rounds of ammunition were also turned in.

The amnesty allows citizens to turn in unwanted, illegal or neglected firearms, ammunition and explosives plus any other illegal weapons without fear of prosecution — provided the weapon has not been used in a crime.

A similar program held in 1992 netted everything from handguns and rifles to grenades and stun guns. There were even Second World War shells used in people's homes as doorstops and paperweights. In all, 700 firearms and 25,000 rounds of ammunition were turned in across Halton. For more information on the program, contact the Halton Regional Police at 878-5511.

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8:00 - 9:00 pm
MONCEF GENOUD TRIO
9:30 - 11:00 pm
JIM GALLOWAYS
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LAKESIDE PARK
12:30 - 1:30 pm
THE RUSS LITTLE QUARTET
2:00 - 3:30 pm
MONCEF GENOUD TRIO

4:00 - 6:00 pm
PETER APPELYARD
QUARTET feat. ED BICKERT

SATURDAY JULY 23
TOWNE SQUARE
1:00 - 3:00 pm
THE RHYTHM AND
TRUTH BRASS BAND
3:30 - 5:30 pm
AURA WITH THE
RON RULLY TRIO
6:00 - 8:00 pm
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SUNDAY JULY 24
LAKESIDE PARK
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