Police view media passes as helpful to both parties

procedure is scheduled to be imple-

By HOWARD MOZEL Special to The Champion

New press passes and background checks on members of the media are not invasions of privacy, contend Halton Regional Police, but simply ways of improving access and securi-

According to Sgt. Joe Martin, a committee comprised of media officers from 17 Ontario police forces sat down and devised the implemen-

tation of press passes for exclusive use by working reporters and photographers. Only those who deal with police on a day-to-day basis will qualify — white for fulltime, bright yellow for freelancers.

"Everyone would have the same pass, same rules," said Sgt. Martin, explaining that too many people are passing themselves off as media these days. "There won't be (a pass) for fashion magazines."

Each three-by-five inch pass — the

mented in January - will feature the individual's picture and a serial number that belongs solely to that person. Sgt. Martin said the cards will allow the media faster access to crime and accident scenes by expediting the process by which officers on site decide who is legitimate and who is not. Many police officers, especially younger ones, are often wary of the media and err on the side of caution, leaving media with deadlines to meet in the cold.

To qualify for credentials, members of the media must also give police consent to run a background check for criminal activity. The idea, Sgt. Martin explained, is to determedia are often given access to situa- review committee.

'There is nothing untoward about the (background) checks. They are not an invasion of privacy' **************

Sgt. Joe Martin **Halton Regional Police**

tions where the public is not allowed. Only extreme cases, such as treason or handgun offences would be grounds for disqualification, said Sgt. Martin. A convicted pedophile would not be welcome at a police-related they are. After all, members of the Anyone turned down can appeal to a

"There is nothing untoward about the checks. They are not an invasion a of privacy," said Sgt. Martin. explaining members of the media were part of his committee and asked for the passes. "So far the response has been very positive."

Those applying for a pass must a view a specially prepared video outlining how the police expect the media to act at a crime scene and vice-versa.

"It's a double-edged way to resolve ; problems," said Sgt. Main. "We are hoping a lot of good will come of this and will stop the nonsense."

The passes, which used to be handed out for free, will now cost \$25 to cover administration expenses and mine if someone is who they say activity in a school, for example. the videos. The fee may also help weed out those on the periphery of the police beat.

Police officer steps in on drug discovery

About \$3,800 worth of hashish was found in the soles of a Maplehurst Correctional Centre inmate's shoes Nov. 8, Halton Regional Police say:

A Peel escort officer found the drug after returning the inmate to the jail following his bail hearing.

A 45-year-old inmate, originally from Rexdale, is charged with possession of a narcotic for the purpose of trafficking.

Man charged in assaults

Police were called to a Prince Street residence Saturday following an altercation that involved two men and a woman.

Prince Street woman and then got old Guelph Line man.

Police Blotter

into a fight with her 39-year-old boyfriend at 10:40 p.m., police say.

He grabbed her boyfriend by the hair and kneed him in the face, breaking his nose, police report. He then smashed a window of the male victim's car as he left.

The next day, the same man allegedly threatened to hurt his 36year-old ex-wife at Campbellville address.

Charged with threatening bodily harm and two counts each of assault A man punched a 35-year-old and breach of probation is a 27-year-

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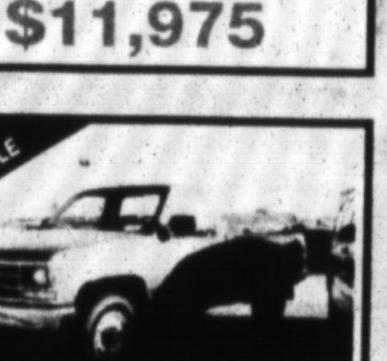
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