

Sergeant Bill Puskas . . .

. . . Officer of the Month

'Stop that man', and he did



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A shopping trip to Burlington Mall last January for Bill Puskas became more exciting than he had expected when he ended up wrestling an armed robber to the ground in the middle of the Mall.

A member of the Halton Regional Police force, the Burlington sergeant had stopped to chat with another off-duty officer a short distance from Mappins Jewellers when he heard the cry of "stop that man!"

Minutes earlier a man had apparently walked into the jewelry shop and requested to view some diamond rings. When store employee Alfred Kling had displayed a selection, the man pulled out a small handgun and ordered him to put the ring into a small bag.

He became upset when the employee didn't move quickly enough and threatened Mr. Kling with his life.

At this point he stuffed the 10 diamond rings into the bag and the robber dashed out of the store.

In hot pursuit however, were Mr. Kling and a second employee requesting help to stop the fleeing man.

"I saw a male party running out of the store and then I think somebody from the crowd must have slugged him because all of a sudden he just spun around and went down," recalls the police sergeant.

Seconds later he had pinned the man down and started asking some pertinent questions.

"I had to know what he had done. . . you do have to protect their rights," he explained. He got his answer moments later when the store employee showed him the 10 rings he had just scooped off the ground, lost in the robber's scramble from the store.

The 19-year old Weston youth later pleaded guilty to a charge of armed robbery.

Though out of uniform and unarmed, the 25-year police veteran said he never considered hesitating for a moment, despite the fact he was dealing with an armed person.

"The gun was in his pocket and it turned out to be a starter's pistol," he said.

He has however had a more serious brush with an armed robber during his police career.

In 1967, he responded to a bank alarm on Brant St. in Burlington just in time to catch a bullet in the leg from a fleeing robber.

Born and raised in Hamilton, he joined the local force 25 years ago when Burlington operated its own town police department.

Most of his policing has been done in this city, though he did spend 14 months in the communications department (radio room) at police headquarters in Oakville a few years ago.

Under former police chief Ken Skerrett, he was also involved in a special pro-active police team in Burlington.

A resident of Burlington, he is married with two daughters, Jill 14, and Kim 16 years. His wife Joan is a former swimming competitor and the whole family continues to spend much of their spare time in this sport.

Sergeant Puskas frequently assists with officiating duties at local swim meets.



Christmas Chocolate

A very large crowd turned out Saturday for the annual St. Paul's United Church Christmas Bazaar and Craft Sale held in Graham Hall. And Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without tawsssty chocolates. Erin Walsh, 3½, left, and Amanda Wedgewood, 3½ show Mrs. Sandra Wedgewood how much they enjoy chocolate.

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The answer to waxy buildup on your kitchen floor was the high-traffic areas only. No need to repeatedly wax under furniture or in corners.

Solution of ½ cup vinegar in a quart of water will unclog a shower head. If the head is metal, boil in solution 15 minutes. For plastic, just soak overnight.

It's not hard to remove old contact paper if you first run a warm iron over it.

Holiday recipes call for pies or sweet potato casseroles "dotted" with butter. The easy way use a vegetable peeler to shave thin curls off a cold stick of butter.

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