

CSOs playing key role in area crime prevention

by Gordon E. Smith,
M.P.P. Simcoe East

Each day, members of our police force are called upon to perform the difficult and often sensitive task of safeguarding our communities from criminal activities.

Shown to be an effective means of reducing crime, the drive toward crime prevention has taken on an expanded role in communities across the province.

Continued success of such a program will require the ongoing active cooperation of all members of the community.

Five years ago, the Ontario government implemented a program with the Ontario Provincial Police in order to expand awareness of the individual's key role in crime prevention.

The program reveals the direct ability of individual citizens to deter the physical and emotional cost of crime in the home and workplace.

A community service officer is posted at each O.P.P. district office in Ontario...Const. Murray Cooper in the Midland area and Const. Bruce McIntosh for the Orillia area.

This officer's duty is to assess criminal occurrences in the community and gather and present for school groups, associations, service clubs and concerned citizens, resource information which addresses these crimes directly. In other words, the crime prevention program is tailored to meet the individual needs of our local communities.

Through a comprehensive series of prevention programs aimed at reducing opportunities and risks, the Ontario Provincial Police are working methodically toward the reduction of crime.

A number of operational programs have been introduced to the public which cover a wide range of subjects including assaults, auto-

theft, babysitting, counterfeiting, drugs, fraud, hitchhiking, home and property protection, robbery, thefts, vandalism, youth and the law, and senior citizens.

Developing a cooperative relationship between the police and the public is paramount to the success of the program.

Encouragement of this essential rapport begins with our youngest citizens.

Working with elementary school children, the officer is currently introducing classes to a program of farm safety.

While the community service officer is relaying valuable technical information and explaining the hazards of equipment found around the barn, he is also fostering a relationship built on trust and cooperation.

In the area of home protection, the individual is encouraged to use his own resources and common sense.

Advice is given on securing one's home through the effective use of proper locks and home protection devices. To further insure expensive appliances, serial numbers should be recorded and items clearly identified with a marking pen.

The latter technique, particularly useful for farming and gardening implements, has proven most effective in deterring the action of a potential thief.

The crime prevention program demonstrates the extent to which community resources can be practically used to enhance services offered by the police force. For example, a neighbour who is familiar with a community is equally equipped to keep a watchful eye over property and livestock.

In case of any question, neighbours are encouraged to advise the police.

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The crime prevention program is a positive example of the progress

we can make as a community through shared responsibility.

By making constructive use of the knowledge and ex-

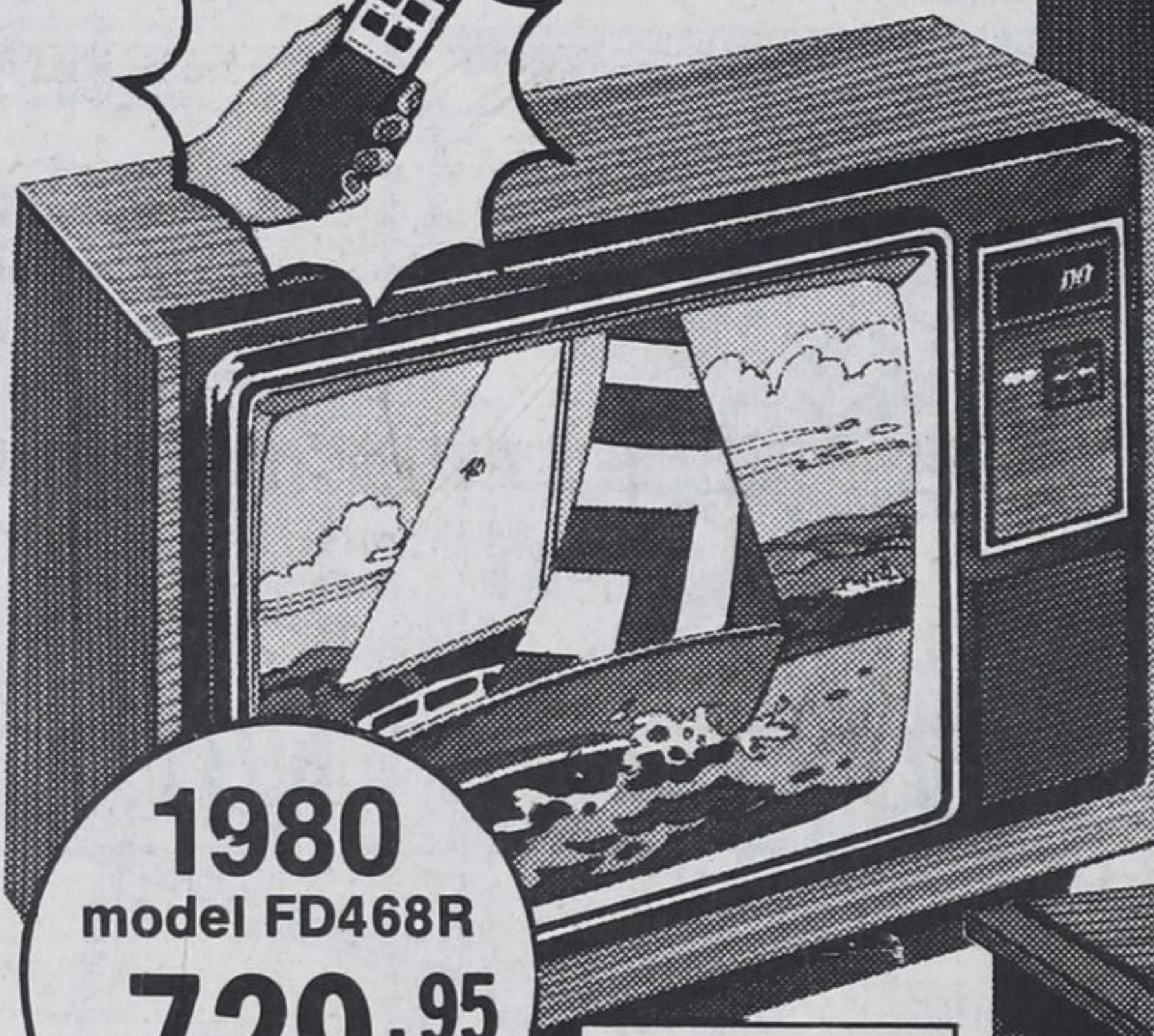
perience of our Ontario Provincial Police, each of us is helping to secure the foundations of a safe and peaceful community.

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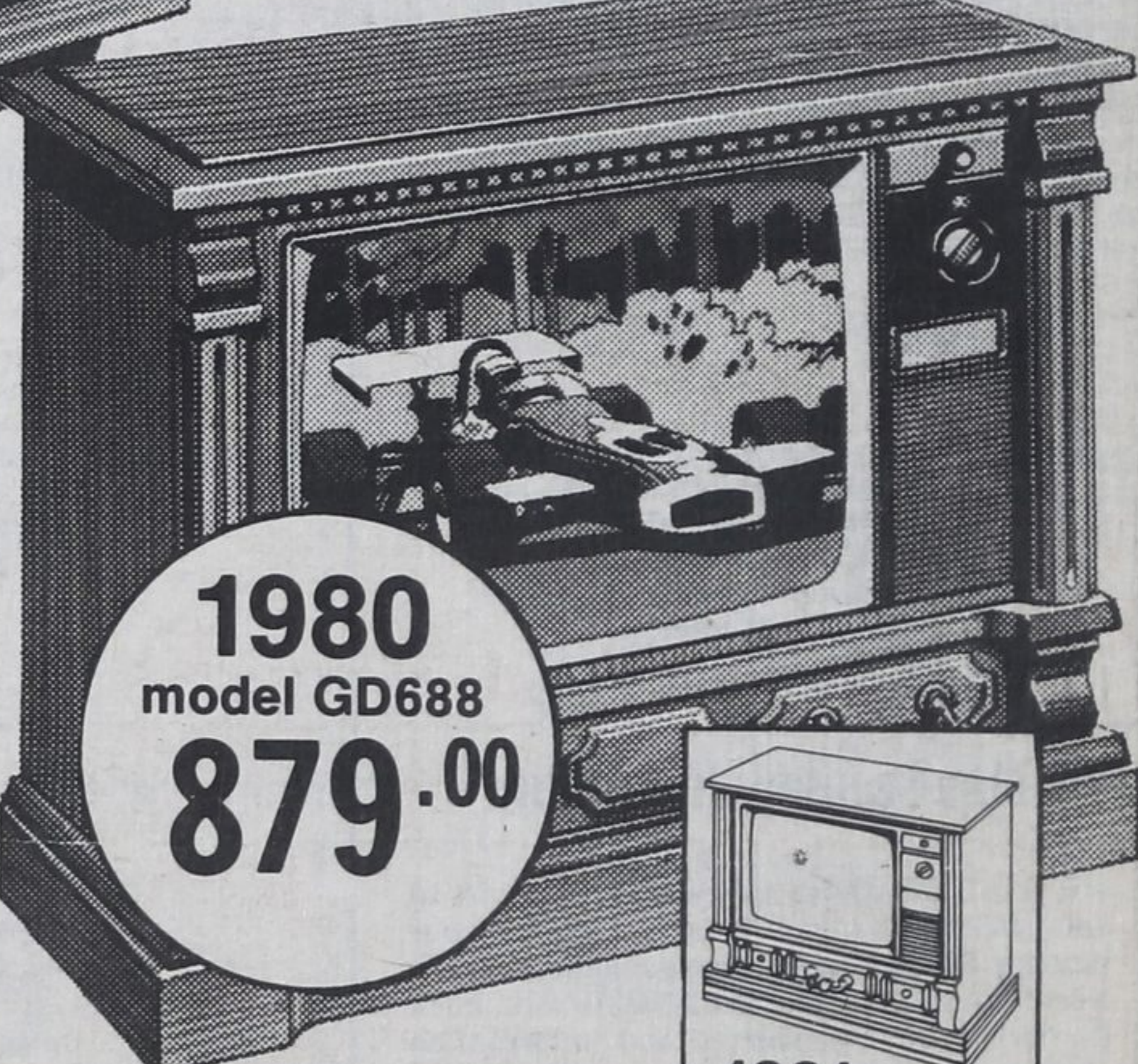
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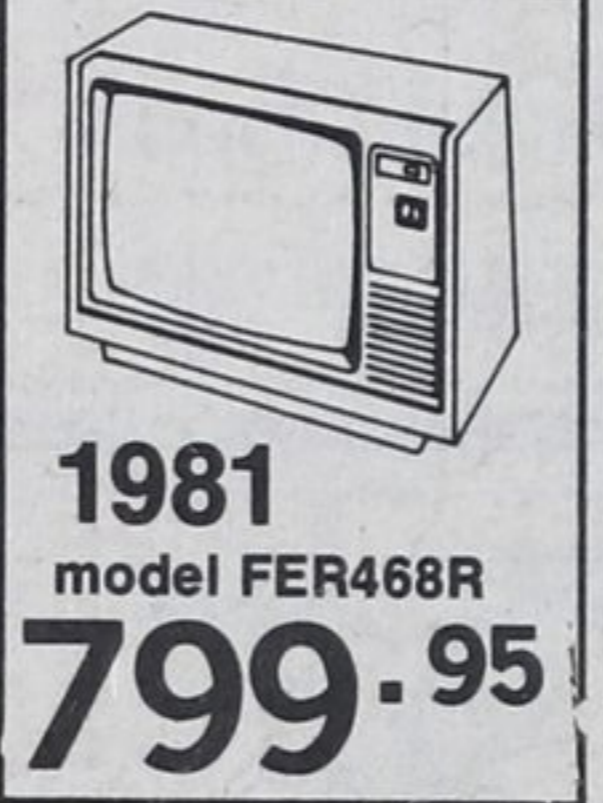
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