

Terrace Bay - Schreiber

NEWS

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Making your kids Streetproof

By Dave Chmara

We may not live in one of the most crime infested areas of the country, but that doesn't mean parents shouldn't do all they can to ensure the safety of their children.

With this in mind, the Schreiber Women's Drop-in Centre held a seminar on "Streetproofing Your Kids" Monday, March 20.

A group of about 20 women and children attended the session which was conducted by Schreiber OPP Community Services Officer Bert Logan.

He said, "it couldn't happen in Schreiber, not here," is the attitude which many people have in this area.

He then told of a man who, in

the past year, had sexually assaulted four young girls aged 3, 8, 10, and 11. This man had moved into Schreiber, gained the trust of a number of families, and while babysitting on various occasions, had sexually assaulted the girls.

After a number of sexual assaults, the man was arrested and a Show Cause was issued against the individual. This means the police had to show cause as to why he should be off the street. Constable Logan said the judge hearing the case in Thunder Bay was not persuaded of the danger this man posed and subsequently released the man. A couple of months later the man sexually assaulted another girl and was arrested again.

This time, police were successful in Showing Cause and the man was confined to Thunder Bay.

Logan said this wasn't a reasonable situation as the man had the opportunity to do the same thing in Thunder Bay as he had in Schreiber.

Logan said the man pled guilty to the sexual assault charges and is now in jail. But Logan said he used this example to show that parents shouldn't let a person of the opposite sex babysit their children, if they are not a family member.

He explained further that parents can call the OPP to have a possible babysitter checked out to determine if that person has a police record.

The attitude which many people have, that Schreiber and Terrace Bay are small towns, closely knit and everybody is friendly, is not necessarily the case.

Logan said if he were to pull over five people, two would probably have criminal records.

"That's not to say they're all bad people," he explained. People sometimes have criminal records from having made foolish mistakes in their younger days. But Logan did say that one-in-ten would have a criminal record for a serious offence such as assault, break and enter, or sexual assault.

"It may be safer here than in Thunder Bay to walk home at night, but just how safe is it?" said Logan.

"We think we're isolated, having only one road in (to town) and one road out. But we're not really that isolated," he said.

There are all sorts of ways for criminals to get in and out of town without using the highway - and thus avoiding detection. Boats, 4x4s and the trains are just some of the modes of travel criminals can use.

There are many travellers through town, especially in the summer and few people, if any, know them and what they are like.

"Don't let your kids bike to White Sand Lake alone," said Logan.

Logan said he is looking forward to a Neighborhood Watch Program or a Block Parent Program being formed in Schreiber. He said he would prefer a Neighborhood Watch as it makes the neighborhood safer for children (instead of only giving them a safe shelter to go to). It also improves police-community relations and as a result improves the police's clearance rate of crimes.

"It puts a responsibility on people to help other people, to help their neighbors," said Logan.

A Block Parent program requires a very supportive committee as it is a much more demanding program which requires a lot of work. People have to be home and must be checked out by the police to determine if they have criminal records.

One lady said if nothing happens for a while, some Block Parents tend to get lazy. They may leave signs up when they are not at home, or forget to put signs up when they are home.

Another program which Logan would like to establish is the CAP (community against pushers) program.

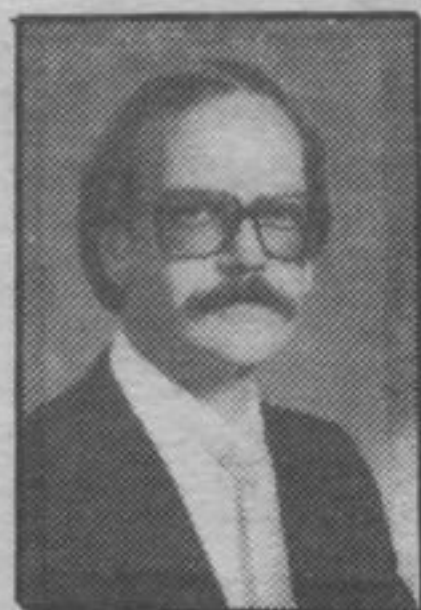
This is a program similar to Crime Stoppers in which people can anonymously make a phone call informing police about a drug situation. Police can't arrest people based on this information, but by analyzing and compiling the information they receive, they can possibly make arrests.

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The Schreiber Mixed Darts League wrapped up its season last week. The League's Playoffs are being held this Friday and Saturday, March 31 and April 1, at the Schreiber Legion. It's an individual tournament with all members playing each other. For the final standings for the men's and women's leagues, turn to page 9 of this issue.

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