

Probation officer puts youths back on track

BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

Despite recent cries that crime increases involving young people point to major flaws in the Young Offenders Act, a local probation officer with the Ministry of Community and Social Service believes things haven't really changed in the 21 years he's been on the job.

Wayne Mumford, of Main St. East in Steffville, doesn't think it's time to press the panic button.

"I don't know if there's really more of that kind of thing today, or if it's just that more is being made of it," he says.

Mr. Mumford notes that while there may be an increase in youth crime in the southern part

of York Region, it would appear to have simply kept pace with population growth.

"Our case loads have remained relatively stable in York Region," he says.

Mr. Mumford, who logged five years in the army and served as a policeman in Orillia before moving to Steffville 20 years ago, also believes the Young Offenders Act is, on the whole, a good piece of legislation.

"It (the act) has done away with a lot of abuses. In the past, it was easy to have a kid put away for 'bad behavior,'" he says. "Now, the focus is on what the youth actually did, just like in adult court."

He feels, however, that part of the reason for the difficulties sur-

rounding the act is the fact that the government was not ready for it when it was passed.

"They weren't prepared for the Young Offenders Act. It had been in the works for 20 years, and they really weren't expecting it to be passed," he notes.

Foremost among the needs he sees as being top priority in the area of dealing with young offenders involves bettering the conditions of those who must administer the direct rehabilitation of young people.

"I'd like to see the people working at the front lines — the child care workers in group homes, for instance — given more training, benefits, and security," he says. "The government has been playing catch-up, I feel. We need more services."

Mr. Mumford's own responsibilities involve writing predispositions for convicted young offenders, as well as supervising those on probation.

"We supervise mostly by home visits," he says. "Most young offenders are put on probation. We work with the kids to make sure they're doing their community service work. We visit schools and deal with problems as they arise."

Are kids different today? "I don't think they have changed

that much. They are more aware of their rights; they question what we give them, they are not willing to accept their treatment, custody or charges," he notes. "That's both good and bad. I feel."

And while new trends come and go, he sees the same old problems cropping up year after year. "Take drug use, for example. People are making such a big thing about all the drugs that are around today," he says. "There was more of a drug problem in the 1960s and '70s. Then, it was heroin and glue sniffing. Today, crack has become the drug of the day."

Mr. Mumford claims most of the young offenders he deals with get back on track after their first brush with the law.

"The majority of my case load of kids straighten out, go on to get married, get a job and have kids. (But) there are some repeaters," he explains. "I think it's almost a 'there but for the grace of God' kind of thing in that we all make mistakes when we are young."

"A lot of people blow this kind of thing out of proportion. If you hold up a variety store a few times, people want you strung up," he continues. "But what about all the white collar crime that goes undetected all the time?"



Photo/BRUCE STAPLEY

Wayne Mumford, a local probation officer with the Ministry of Community and Social Service, believes things haven't really changed in the 21 years he's been on the job. Despite outcries against the Young Offenders Act, he doesn't think it's time to press the panic button.

Jigs make for successful fishing trips

If you ask the so called experts what is the most universal artificial lure in use today, most of them, without blinking an eye, will answer the lead head jig.

Originally a saltwater fishing innovation, it became a freshwater angling revolution in the late 1950s and early 1960s when it was discovered that the jig would also take inland sport fish, especially walleyes and bass.

Further discussion with those same pros would also reveal that if they were ever limited to one fishing lure, their choice would invariably be the jig.

Yet while this artificial angling device has been around for a long time, it's surprising to find many present day anglers either don't know how to use it or shun it altogether. That's unfortunate in more ways than one.

Probably the most obvious reason even occasional anglers should include jiggling in their bag of finny tricks is the fact that jigs really catch fish. On days when others are coming in empty handed, the hot rodders using jigs will be spinning their reels.

And like a lot of fishermen, they won't be divulging their secret, whatever the season.

The prime reason that jigs are so successful is that they allow the angler complete control over the depth and speed at which they are presented. In some ways jig fishing can be compared to fly fishing, where the fisherman applies his or her personal touch to the art of outfoxing the fish.

You, for example, provide the jig's action by moving your rod tip to bounce, stop, or swim the jig along the bottom at the rate of retrieve you desire. And like fly fishing too, jig fishing is a genuine sport whose effectiveness can be increased not only with practice, but by gaining the knowledge of the feeding habits of your quarry.

Here is where the versatility of the jig comes to the fore. If, for instance, walleyes are foraging for bait fish near the bottom, a plain undressed jig hook can have a minnow added. Similarly a worm or other live bait can be tried as the circumstances dictate.

At other times jigs dressed

with hair, feathers, or a plastic grub can be used to imitate the natural foods on which the fish are feeding. By choosing the correct weight (light for shallow water and a heavy model for deep places), an angler can fish successfully at any desired depth.

While there are dozens of different shapes of jigs available, the simple uncomplicated Round Head design is a good all purpose model as are others like the Banana jig featuring an upturned nose that helps it to ride over snags, and the Bullet Head, which is ideal for verticle jiggling as in ice fishing because half the weight is forward of the line attachment.

Quite likely the best jig for walleyes when using live minnows is the Standup jig, designed so that the bend of the hook points upward with the minnow off the bottom when at rest.

This model, when so rigged, calls for a really slow retrieve. A good rule of thumb for choosing a jig size is 1/8 oz. for water up to 10 feet deep, 1/4 oz. or 3/8 oz. in depths of 30 feet or so, and 1/2 oz.

for any deeper water.

Next time you're going walleye fishing take some jigs along. After catching your first keeper fish, check its stomach contents and match that crayfish, shiner, dragonfly nymph, or whatever's there with a comparable size and coloured jig.

When you start catching fish regularly, you'll have found the key to the fine art of jiggling, which by the way is often as not a simple and patient slow retrieve.

TIPS & CLIPS: Changing the water in your birdbath every few days will keep the mosquito larvae from hatching... You don't need to color your hummingbird sugar/water solution. In fact evidence points to a kidney problem in the tiny birds when food coloring is added.

Jennifer Hicke is pleased to announce that Pauline Ho B.Sc.P.T. M.C.P.A. Physiotherapist has joined the staff of the

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