

CRIME: Police criticized for taking mailbox vandalism lightly

Police should 'do job'

FROM PAGE 1

would call back within 72 hours. I called three times and no one called back. I ran into a police officer at a variety store and explained the situation. He said it was because of a full moon. If the police can't catch a bunch of punk kids, how do they expect to catch real criminals? While the vandals do leave some mailboxes on the post, they are badly smashed. And, some are never

touch. There's no logic to it," Hudson said.
York Regional Police Sergeant John Sheldon said unless the culprits are caught red-handed, "there is very little anyone can do." However, Sheldon is suggesting people remember Crime Stoppers. People can report crime without having to be identified.
"If they have any information they can call 1-800-222-TIPS," Sheldon said. The Bethesda Road residents are

talking to each other in the hopes of coming up with a way to address the problem.

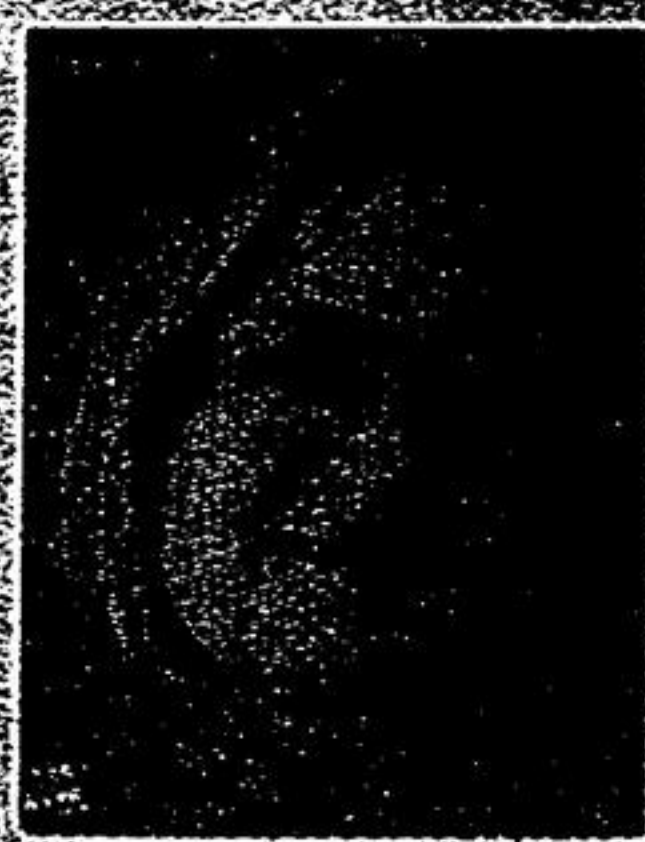
If the police can't catch a bunch of punk kids, how do they expect to catch real criminals?

As well, the residents compare notes on mailboxes in the hopes of finding one that can withstand a beating by a baseball bat. "We talk about different ways to reinforce them. It's all so foolish," Dissette said.

Regina Fisher doesn't know what kind of mailbox to buy next after being subjected to vandalism which spanned a month. "I've had three different ones and they've all been destroyed," Fischer said. "I don't know what to do now. Also, it makes me feel uneasy."

Canada Post takes an interest if there's nowhere to leave the mail, federal agency spokesman Chris Bartsch said. "We're concerned about this type of damage. Arrangements have to be made to make sure people get their mail," Bartsch said.

Some of the Bethesda Road residents live in fear, wondering if the vandals will go beyond targeting mailboxes. Some residents are afraid to take issue in case the vandals seek revenge, Hudson said. "But, we can't sit back and do nothing. We can't let these punks take over our homes. The police know what the problem is. There's an answer — the police should do their job."



Joan Ransberry

Airport fight returns for second round

The Pickering airport is out of its coma. Here's my take on it: Been there. Done it. Got the t-shirt.

When it comes to airports, dumps and Go Trains, I've gone well beyond the call of duty. In the interest of sanity, namely mine, I should avoid writing about runways, landfill sites or trains, especially our beloved GO.

My first taste of journalism involved People or Planes (POP). While I was insecure and as green as grass at my craft, the people of Pickering had wonderful self-esteem. They took on the mighty feds with a vengeance. They never let up and they never let go.

POP had the protest game down to a fine art. POP was the champion of causes. To suggest that POP knew how to attract attention would be an understatement — miles and miles of newsprint was dedicated to the Pickering airport story. Television and radio newscasters often made POP stories the top item. The fight included outdoor rallies and meeting after meeting after meeting.

Every angle of the proposed airport was covered. Local newspapers carried stories about fourth generation farmers facing expropriation; we wrote that jet noise would affect agriculture — hens would stop laying, cows would dry up and pigs would have three-headed piglets. Meanwhile, all living things would go deaf.

People were warned: Property value would take a nose dive, local businesses would go bankrupt and pollution would choke us in our sleep.

Believe me: Everybody got a kick at the can. Then Ontario Riding MP Norm Cafik made a name for himself simply by saying, "An airport if necessary. But, not necessarily an airport."

People on the other side of the issue called POP supporters pinkos.

It was a long dragged out affair. Finally, the feds, realizing that public pressure would not go away, did the right thing — they backed down.

We then wrote "Pop Goes The Airport" headlines. In the interest of accuracy, news hounds of the day pointed out that the Pickering airport plan wasn't killed outright. Instead, it was put on the back-burner. It could come back to haunt.

It did.
Last week, while on route to work in the wee hours, I was stopped by a member of Voters Organized to Cancel Airport Lands (VOCAL). I was given a pamphlet. I read the handout: Pickering Airport will open in 2007, my property value will go down, this regional airport will land 737s and 727s in my backyard 24 hours a day.

I don't think much of the handout. Its scare-tactic approach is silly, it's poorly written and I expect could be challenged regarding its accuracy.

Still, my hat goes off to VOCAL. Its members, representing 26 communities and hamlets, appear to be as active, as organized and as committed as POP was.

Here's my bottom line: When it comes to building anything, including an airport, need must be clearly demonstrated. Need for an airport was not demonstrated more than 20 years ago and I don't see it being demonstrated today.



STAFF PHOTO/JOAN RANSBERRY

Roman Hudson shows how vandals destroyed his mailbox — his sixth in the past few months. Police are no help, saying the crime just isn't a high priority.

Four businesses target of theft

Thieves steal safe from GO station, cash register, windows, and frames

Thieves managed to cart away a safe containing \$1,500 from the Stouffville train station Saturday afternoon.



Chamber manager Barb St. John shows damage to the door where thieves entered train station over the weekend.

Police said the suspects knocked off the door knob to gain access, rummaged through four offices inside and removed the safe.

Theft value is estimated at about \$2,000 and damage is pegged at \$1,500. Anyone who may have seen something unusual that afternoon is asked to call police at 881-1221 or CrimeStoppers at 222-TIPS.

Liquor and cash taken

Thieves used a roof vent to enter Angie's Eatery Saturday night about 10 p.m.

After prying open the vent and letting themselves in, the suspects took liquor and cash from the eatery.

But it wasn't enough. They then punched out the wall to the next unit, Boyd's Sports, looking for more booty.

Boyd's motion alarm sounded and the thugs fled without removing anything from the second unit.

Damage is estimated at about \$600,

the theft value is still being determined.

Windows smashed, stolen

More than \$2,000 worth of stained glass windows and frames were stolen Friday night from Stouffville Furniture on Main Street.

Thieves smashed the glass front doors of the store to gain access and removed the windows and frames about 9 p.m.

Damage is estimated at \$200.



STAFF PHOTOS/JOAN RANSBERRY

Train station thieves emptied GO safe and dumped it in the creek

Flyer Inserts For Tuesday, October 20, 1998

Shoppers Drug Mart
Eatons

Dr. Ingles
Lansing Buildall

White Rose
Toys R Us

Pro Hardware

MARKHAM
ECONOMIST & SUN • Stouffville Tribune

WE'RE FIRST IN DISTRIBUTION

We've delivered 49,238,669 flyers door-to-door, so far this year.

For further information on how we can deliver your flyers, call your local advertising sales representative at:

Markham (905) 294-8244

Stouffville (905) 640-2100