

**STREET-LEVEL ACTION**



PHOTOS/BILL ROBERTS

ABOVE: Crowds jammed Main Street during the annual Unionville Antique and Heritage Festival last weekend.

RIGHT: Jim Eddy admires a hot rod on display during the weekend street closure.

BELOW: Rob Livingston and Estrel Rodriguez make off with stacks of books from the recycling depot during the Antique and Heritage Festival.

The weather isn't expected to be as hospitable his weekend.



# Traffic deaths double in York Region

BY ROGER VARLEY  
Staff Writer

York Regional Police Chief Robert Middaugh insists his force's Save-A-Life program is working even though traffic fatalities on the region's roads in 2002 are reaching alarming proportions.

So far this year, 38 people have died in 31 fatal accidents, compared with 18 deaths in 17 accidents in the same period last year.

The latest fatalities came last weekend. A 16-year-old Grade 11 Sutton District High School student died in a fiery crash on The Queensway South at Pasadena Drive in Keswick Friday evening and a 23-year-old Stouffville woman was killed in a crash a week ago Friday at Bayview Avenue and Mulock Drive in Newmarket.

But Chief Middaugh said this week it is wrong to make a one-year comparison.

**BROADER LOOK**

"You have to take a broader look than one year to the next," he said. "We're just slightly over the five-year average, which is about 29 fatal accidents a year."

He admitted, however, the number of fatalities will be over the average when the year closes.

But Chief Middaugh said he will not follow the lead of Toronto Police Chief Julian Fantino, who has decided to adopt a more comprehensive enforcement approach in an attempt to reduce the high number of fatalities on that city's streets.

The chief said York Regional Police will continue the Save-A-Life program begun in January.

"Definitely, there are some things we can do," he said, "but when you look at some (of the accidents) it's just plain bad driving. How do you plan strategies for someone who's driving down the right side of the road and then suddenly swerves into the oncoming lane?"

**STRATEGY IN PLACE**

"Our position is the best approach is to stay focused on our



**ROBERT MIDDAGH:** Bad driving to blame in some cases, York Region police chief says.

traffic strategy," he added. "The strategy flowed out of the fact of fatalities on Hwy. 7 and in preparation for Hwy. 9 being opened to four lanes. We're now getting significant speed compliance in those areas. The traffic strategy is working and being refined."

Sgt. Peter Orlovski, the new coordinator of the traffic safety strategy program, said the traffic fatalities have to be put into perspective.

"Fatality numbers are always those sexy numbers that get headlines, but it's really the luck of the draw," he said. "You have to understand a fatality is a matter of inches or seconds. If you look at collisions overall, they're down and that shows Save-A-Life is working and no one mentions that."

Sgt. Orlovski, however, was not pleased with what he sees on the roads.

**MORE AGGRESSIVE**

"The motoring public now is more aggressive, less polite," he said. "There's a loss of civility. It's ridiculous. They're speeding, discourteous, not wearing seatbelts. However, we now have scientific ways of dealing with traffic enforcement."

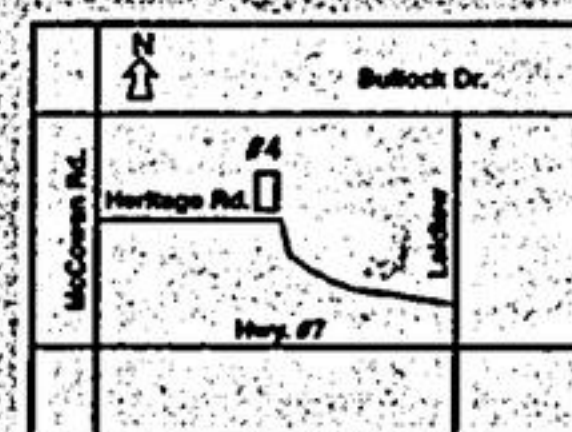
Chief Middaugh said police will holding a review next week to see if the force has the right equipment, including the right radar equipment, for traffic officers.

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