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**ARMAND LA BARGE:** New York Regional Police chief sworn in Thursday.

## More crime prevention: new chief

BY ROGER VARLEY  
Staff Writer

With pomp and light-heartedness, Armand Paul La Barge, 48, was sworn in Thursday as the new chief of York Regional Police.

York Region council chamber was overflowing as Justice Denise Belamy, a longtime friend of Chief La Barge, administered the oath of office amid a barrage of media camera flashes.

Justice Belamy recalled her late husband, who was a police officer, predicted Mr. La Barge would be chief one day. "It's been a long time coming," said

the new chief after the ceremony, "but I was determined that one day this would come."

Among those attending the ceremony were his wife, Staff Sgt. Denise La Barge, and other family, York Region mayors and councillors, members of the police services board, community leaders and representatives of numerous police services, including Toronto Police Chief and former York chief Julian Fantino and OPP Commissioner Gwen Boniface.

Chief La Barge gave a hint of where the force will go under his direction, adding the most significant change will be in crime prevention.

"We're going to give officers the time they need to get into crime prevention, we're going to give them the tools and training," he said. "We're going to cut down the paperwork with technology."

He also promised greater efforts to tackle bad drivers.

"We need more charity among drivers," he said. "We've got to eliminate the need for those small crosses you see at the sides of roads that mark fatal accidents."

Chief La Barge was critical of moves in Ottawa to decriminalize marijuana possession, saying they send the "wrong messages to young people."

The ceremony began with Chief La Barge and other dignitaries being led into the council chamber by a colour guard and piper Peter Fleming, who played the York Regional Police Pipe Band March, the first time the tune has been heard in public.

Police services board chairperson and Regional Councillor David Barrow, acting as master of ceremonies, said Chief La Barge's appointment signalled to every cadet and officer that reaching the top is possible. Calling the new chief "truly a community man", Mr. Barrow said he offered "inspired leadership for changing times".

John Miskiw, president of the York Regional Police Association, said 99 per cent of uniformed officers are in favour of the new chief's promotion.

"The biggest thing is, he's coming from within," Mr. Miskiw said, predicting Chief La Barge will continue Chief Middaugh's legacy of bringing stability to a force often in turmoil under previous administrations. "We know even in disciplinary situations, he'll treat people fairly and with respect."

During his career with York police, Chief La Barge served in uniform patrol, criminal investigation, intelligence, investigative services and information services. He was promoted to deputy chief in January 1999, overseeing the administration branch.

He holds a bachelor of arts honours from York University and is completing his master's at Trent University in the field of Canadian and native studies. He also is a graduate of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Va.

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### CORRECTION NOTICE

In our December 11th to 17th flyer, on page #13, a pricing error has occurred.

- The Sony TV (KV34XBR800) sku #10019573 has been advertised at the incorrect price of \$3199.99 save \$300. It should be advertised at \$3699.99 save \$300.

We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused our valued customers.