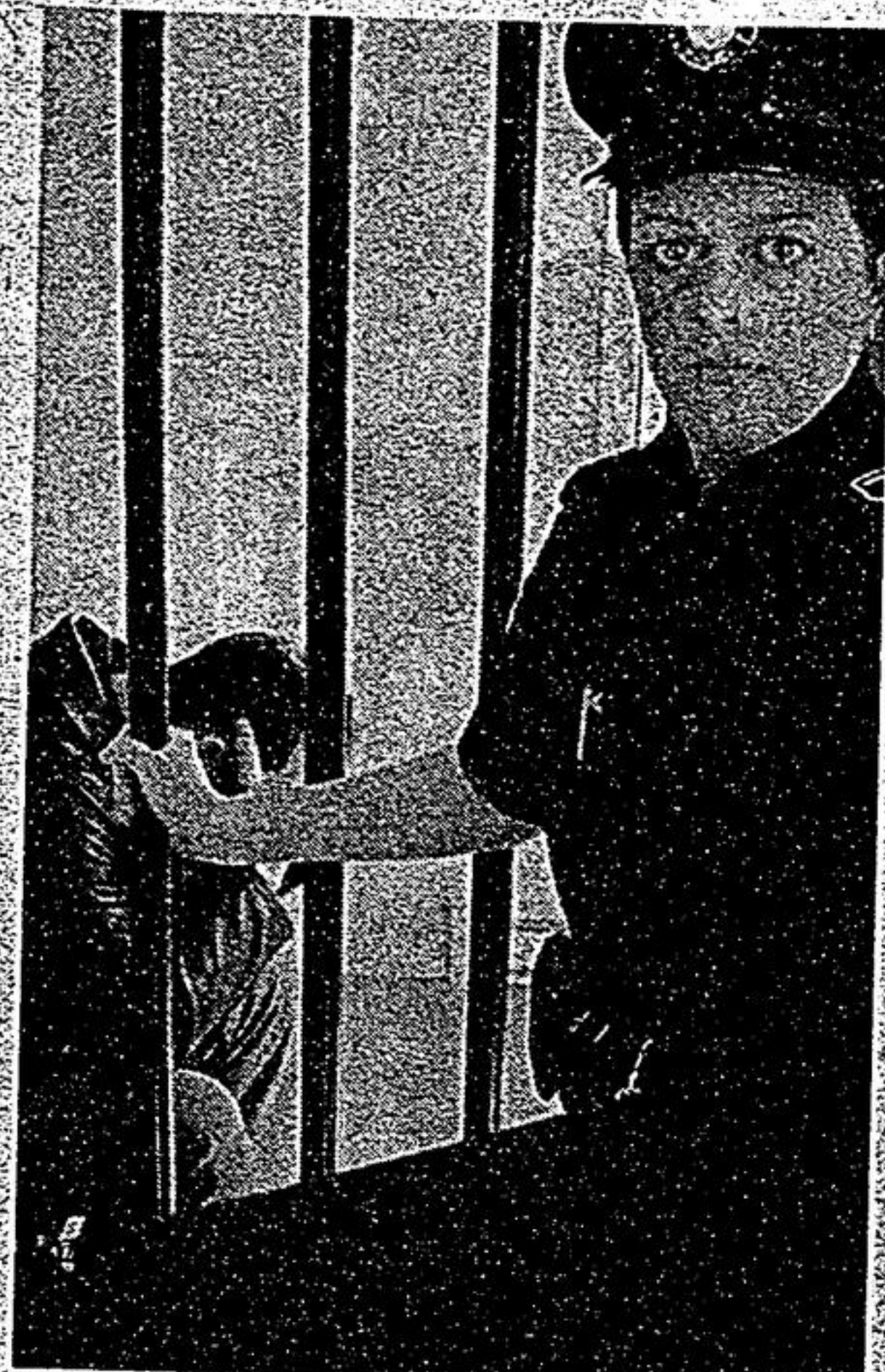


'I didn't know you could go to jail' for that

Unionville students learn facts of life about Internet risks, online bullying at safety village



Const. Marina Orlovski locks up Unionville High School student Michael Ball, posing as a person being jailed for impersonating someone younger on-line.

BY TERESA LATCHFORD
Staff Writer

You watch your children chat with friends online, research for school projects and work the computer like they were born with a mouse in their hands.

Each generation seems to be more computer savvy sooner than the last. That's why York Regional Police and local school boards are offering a workshop targeting younger grades on internet safety and cyberbullying at the Community Safety Village.

Grade 5 students from Unionville Public School were surprised to learn the potential consequences of cyberbullying and other Internet crimes.

"I thought you could maybe be charged if you bully someone through the computer," Andreas Tassios said. "I didn't know you could go to jail."

Penalties for online bullying range from being grounded to being expelled from school to being charged under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

Depending on the degree of bullying, charges could include threatening, criminal harassment, intimidation (making you do something for their own gain) and personation (pretending to be someone else).

"You should see your computer as a

person and treat it with the same type of respect," said York Region Police Const. Marian Orlovski, who led the workshop. "If you wouldn't say it to a person, don't say it on the computer."

The students were also taught how to make a safe e-mail address and screen names that do not provide personal information such as names, age or location, along with other dangers.

'You should see your computer as a person and treat it with the same type of respect. If you wouldn't say it to a person, don't say it on the computer.'

Const. Marian Orlovski
York Region Police

Andreas and his peers acted out a real life scenario of how a predator would coax young children to a meeting place. A man posing as an 11-year-old boy met a young girl at the coffee shop and a course of events eventually saw the man behind bars.

"You can never be sure who you are talking to online," Const. Orlovski

warned. "If someone ever asks you to meet them, don't and discuss it with your parents."

Teacher Eleanor Sequeira sees the value of a course dealing with these issues, admitting she dealt with a

case of cyberbullying just last year.

"At this age they are able to understand but are still young enough to be impressionable," she added.

"That is why a course like this is so important."

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19

Dr. Julie Richter, MD, CGP, CGPP

Physician Psychotherapist

"Coping with the Emotional Distress of Living with Hep C"

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17

Colina Yim, RN, MN, ACNP

Toronto Western Hospital

"Factors Affecting Treatment Response"

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21

Dr. Danny Chen, Infectious Diseases Specialist

York Central Hospital

"Developments in Hepatitis C"

Place: Public Health OFFICE, UNIONVILLE
4261 HWY. #7, EAST

Time: 7:30 PM EVERYONE WELCOME!

For more information, call
(905) 940-1333 or 1-800-461-2135

INTERNET DOS AND DON'TS

The computer is a great piece of technology as long as it is respected and used with caution. Here are tips for children:

- Never give your age, sex or location to anyone and use this rule when creating your e-mail and screen name;
- Even if you are being bullied on the computer at home, tell your parents or your teacher;
- Never send pictures or set up a meeting without discussing it with your parents and;
- Never give out personal information over the Internet.

Tips for parents:

- Keep the computer in a high-traffic area so you can see what your child is up to;
- Ask your child to teach you how to use chatrooms so you know what is involved;
- Set computer use times when you can

- supervise and;
- Take an interest and spark a discussion about what your child is doing online.

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- B. Buy coffee & a paper**
(you will read yesterday's news)
- C. Go to church**
(you will begin to answer the big questions)

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