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Executive Digest

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Ontario Ombudsman wants police to get better training

A rise in police shootings in Ontario prompts calls for better de-escalation techniques



By Keith Leslie (CP)

TORONTO - Families of people killed by police say they are "hopeful" the Ontario government will act on an ombudsman's report calling for improved training in de-escalation techniques for officers who encounter people in crisis.

The report, issued on Wednesday, calls on the government to mandate better police training in how to interact with people who are dealing with mental health or addiction

issues, without drawing their guns as the first option.

"Ontario officers have plenty of training on how to use their guns, but not enough on how to use their mouths," ombudsman Paul Dube said.

Nineteen people have been killed in police shootings in Ontario since the ombudsman's office opened a special investigation following the shooting death of teenager Sammy Yatim, 18, on a Toronto streetcar in July 2013.



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Various coroner's inquests have shown police respond with their guns in such situations because they are following their training, which focuses on "drawing their weapons and yelling commands," said Dube.

There have been hundreds of recommendations from coroner's juries for better police training so they have more options to deal with dangerous interactions than just their weapons, so it's time for the government to make it a priority, he added.

"It is time for the ministry to direct police services on how to de-escalate situations of conflict before they result in the use of lethal force against people in crisis," said Dube.

"It is not just a matter of long-overdue leadership, but of saving lives."

Nabil Yatim, Sammy's father, said he believes his son would still be alive if the officer who shot him would have had better de-escalation training.

"I'm almost positive he would be," he said. The ombudsman's recommendations are "a start," but more must be done, added Yatim. "It's the culture that has to be changed," he said.

The government is "committed to implementing these recommendations" and things need to change, said Community Safety Minister David Orazietti.

"The use of force model certainly needs to be redefined," he said. "We know that there is ample research and evidence from other jurisdictions that have different models, and I think we can learn from them."

Joanne MacIsaac, whose brother Michael was killed in the street by Toronto police in 2013 after he ran out of the house naked and brandishing a table leg, said she was "cautiously optimistic" the government would finally act to improve police training.

Michael was shot dead within eight seconds of the police opening their car doors, and "they didn't ask him a thing," added MacIsaac.

"I think also the attitude and the culture

has to change, and the recruitment," she said.

However, MacIsaac wasn't impressed with the way Orazietti ducked questions about taking responsibility for the deaths that followed years of government inaction on the calls for better police training to deal with disturbed and potentially dangerous people.

"They didn't want to look back. Well I want to look back and I think they should address that," she said. "By admitting there's problems that need changes, then perhaps they're responsible for what's happened in the past.

Dube says there is "ample evidence" the government needs to make the issue a priority and mandate more instruction time in de-escalation techniques, including well over 100 coroner's jury recommendations calling for improved police training.

The government watchdog says Ontario's basic police training course is among the shortest in Canada, and is more focused on how to use weapons than on finding alternatives.

Dube stressed he was not being critical of police, but of their "inadequate training" for when they face difficult and potentially dangerous situations, and said the shootings are traumatic for everyone, including the officers.

"We don't need another study or consultation to determine that police training on de-escalation is inadequate," he said.

THURSDAY JUNE 23, 2016

Jun 23 2016

TORONTO - Toronto's police chief says officers have raided several marijuana dispensaries in the city.

Mark Saunders says he believes search warrants were executed at four dispensaries on Thursday and police would be releasing more information on Friday.

The raids come a month after police, accompanied by city municipal licensing and standards officials, carried out search warrants at 43 locations and arrested 90 people, including shop owners and employees.

Saunders says the dispensaries are operating illegally and police will continue to conduct such raids until they stop selling marijuana.

"This investigation has nothing to do with personal use," he said. "The people are entering into this with the sole purpose of making money."

Customers use it under the guise of medical marijuana, Saunders said, but "people go in and basically say 'what's the strongest stuff that you got.'"

Saunders said the investigation will continue.

"If you have dispensaries and they're open, your chances of going to court and being charged and being convicted are very high," he said.

Jun 23 2016

EDMONTON - A retired veteran Edmonton police officer tearfully apologized in court Thursday after admitting he had repeatedly sold anabolic steroids to fellow officers.

Darren French, 50, pleaded guilty to two counts of trafficking in a controlled substance, consisting of Stanozolol and Methyl-1-Testosterone.

The Crown asked for a \$1,500 fine and a lengthy period of probation with 240 hours of community service, while French is seeking a conditional discharge. A sentencing decision is slated for Aug. 3.

French, a 25-year constable who retired in April 2015 to avoid a police disciplinary hearing, cried as he read out a statement in which he apologized to his wife, friends and former colleagues.

"I unconditionally take responsibility for my actions regarding these charges. They were my mistakes and my mistakes only," said French, adding he hopes people will forgive him and he is given an opportunity to "atone" for what he did.

According to an agreed statement of facts, the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) began an investigation into the drug-dealing activities of French in May 2014 and interviewed several EPS members; six admitted having bought anabolic steroids from French on seven occasions between 2005 and 2011.

(Edmonton Journal)

Jun 23 2016

CALGARY - The first woman to be appointed chair of the Calgary police commission is being remembered for her passionate service to the community and to policing.

Sandy Durrant died at Rockyview General Hospital on Sunday at the age of 69, with her husband of 31 years, Hunter Wight, and other family members at her side.

Durrant was appointed police commission head in 2004, the first female to chair the post and the only woman on the civilian oversight body at the time.

"I'm not an advocate of placing women anywhere for sake of gender equality," she said at the time of her appointment. "I'm a firm believer in equality when it's deserved and earned."

Craig Burrows, one of two city councillors on the commission in 2004, remembered Durrant as someone "very passionate about the community, very passionate about policing and oversight."

Burrows said Durrant was involved with the Constable Rick Sonnenberg Memorial Society, established in memory of the officer who was killed in the line of duty in 1993. Funds raised through the society helped the Calgary Police Service buy its first HAWCS helicopter.

He credited Durrant with helping get a second HAWCS police helicopter, much of it financed through a lottery and not out of taxpayers' pockets.



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Howard Burns, Calgary police union boss, said many current and former police officers took to Facebook to remember Durrant, particularly in her role as chair of the Calgary Police Service Blue Ribbon campaign, in which she helped raise money for community policing initiatives.

He said some of the funds raised helped bring police dogs to the force.

"It's rare that someone has had that kind of impact on the community, in particular, on my members," Burns said. "You can tell she was an exceptional community advocate."

Durrant stepped down in 2005 due to unspecified health reasons.

(Calgary Herald)

FRIDAY JUNE 24, 2016

Jun 24 2016

PORT HAWKESBURY, N.S. - A Nova Scotia RCMP officer facing perjury and obstruction of justice charges in Newfoundland has been acquitted of both counts.

Police say 36-year-old Constable Shawn Greene was charged in connection with a complaint filed in May 2013 and was suspended with pay.

An independent investigation was done by the Halifax Regional Police, while the RCMP also did an internal investigation.

Greene's work was investigated while he was stationed in Newfoundland.

Greene, whose case opened in court in April 2014, has been an officer in Nova Scotia's Richmond County since 2012.

He was also charged with uttering threats, mischief and a pair of breaches following an incident in Richmond County in September.

He entered guilty pleas to the mischief count and one of his breaches, and received a conditional discharge in May.

His other charges were withdrawn.
(CIGO)

Jun 24 2016

HALIFAX - A Nova Scotia man will face trial for swearing in public.

Joseph Currie was arrested during a Halifax protest against the Conservatives' anti-terrorism legislation, Bill C-51, last year, and charged with "unlawfully (causing) a disturbance ... by swearing."

The 26-year-old's lawyer said his client, who is alleged to have shouted obscenities into a megaphone, has no criminal record and will defend his "right to criticize the government publicly."

Gordon Allen said the use of foul language has become so commonplace that in some ways the F-word was an "appropriate" expression of his client's contempt for the former Harper government's policy.

Halifax police Staff Sgt. Mark Hobeck would not comment on the specifics of the case, but said their response to a profanity-laden protest would depend on where it is,

who is being affected, and if there are complaints.

Jun 24 2016

TORONTO - Three senior Toronto police officers have launched what legal observers are calling an extraordinarily rare lawsuit against Ontario's attorney general — a move the officers say they are making to restore their reputations, claiming they were wrongly condemned in court for police brutality.

In a statement of claim filed in Ontario Superior Court on Wednesday, Sgt. Jamie Clark and Det. Sgts. Steven Watts and Donald Belanger allege negligence on the part of Crown attorneys, the same prosecutors they worked alongside on a 2009 armed robbery case.

Instead of successful convictions in a brutal gunpoint robbery, the case produced two scathing rebukes from judges about the officers' conduct.

The Court of Appeal tossed the convictions against one of the accused and called the officers' behaviour akin to torture - comments that prompted an immediate defence from then police chief Bill Blair.

The claims of abuse were found to be unsubstantiated by an investigation by Toronto police professional standards, findings that were upheld by an OPP probe of that internal investigation.

The Special Investigations Unit also began investigating the injuries suffered by the man alleged to have been more seriously injured, but the watchdog found he had not suffered a serious injury during his interaction with the officers.

In their statement of claim, Clark, Watts and Belanger allege the judges never could have found that they beat and tortured the men if the Crown prosecutors had conducted a "reasonable and lawful prosecution."

They allege that by the time the case arrived at the Court of Appeal, the Crown knew there was "compelling evidence" that assault allegations against the officers were a "complete lie and fabrication," yet took no action.

If it weren't for negligence by the Crowns, "the resulting irreparable damage to the officers' livelihood and reputation never would have occurred," write Michael Lacy and Lorne Honickman, the officers' lawyers.

"I feel I have been forced to file this claim," Clark, who now works undercover with a major crime unit, said in an interview. "I want the judges to know that they were duped."

The officers, who were members of the hold-up squad at the time, are asking for \$1.25 million in damages and a declaration that the officers did not assault the two accused, Randy Maharaj or Neil Singh.

The allegations in the statement of claim have not been proven in court. A statement of defence has not yet been filed.

(Toronto Star)

SATURDAY JUNE 25, 2016

Jun 25 2016

EDMONTON - The number of people Edmonton city police have taken for mental health assessments has jumped by 25 per cent in the past year.

Bed closures at Alberta Hospital have only amplified the problem, Chief Rod Knecht told a legislative committee meeting recently, leaving officers with just four sites to which they can take someone.

"This is as ridiculous as it is cumbersome and requires police to move people all over the city and then wait in line for hours," Knecht told Postmedia in an email.

He said tweaking the law would avoid clogging emergency rooms and free up police resources and time.

Knecht wants his officers to be able to take people who need an assessment to any physician, and for physicians to be allowed travel to cell blocks or arrest locations.

"We see this as a very, very easy fix that would reduce the burden on the system and allow more proficiency, both for health care workers and the police," he told the committee.

About 30 per cent of calls police receive have some mental health component to them; in Edmonton, Knecht said, there has been a "huge increase" in officers' contact with and arrest of people with mental health issues.

Not for the first time, Knecht also continued the push for the establishment of a Wellness Centre - a kind of one-stop shop where the city's vulnerable can get everything from a health card and psychological counselling to housing, and where warrants and justice issues are tended to on site.

He said such a centre would help break "the cycle of despair," in which officers arrest someone over and over again because of a lack of supports. Knecht estimates it would save "thousands" of hours of police time.

"It is a positive and progressive alternative to jail or being processed through the criminal justice system for nuisance crimes, assessed and released by the hospital and giving them a criminal record," he said.

In an emailed statement, Health Minister Sarah Hoffman said Alberta Health Services is working with police in Edmonton and Calgary to "create stronger links between mental health workers and law enforcement."

"The goal is to find a solution that works for safety and care of patients and addresses the wait time concern for police," she said.

(Edmonton Journal)

MONDAY
JUNE 27, 2016

Jun 27 2016

VANCOUVER - A three week trial is expected next year for the RCMP's former chief spokesman in British Columbia charged with a single count of sexual assault.

Crown lawyer Michelle Booker told a provincial court judge she plans to call about eight witnesses, including four police officers, in the case against former inspector Tim Shields.

Shields did not appear in court, but his lawyer said he will plead not guilty.

The sexual assault charge stems from a police investigation into allegations of misconduct during Shields' time as an RCMP officer and is alleged to have occurred between 2009 and 2010 at RCMP headquarters in B.C.

The allegations, which have not been tested in court, involve a civilian employee who worked in co-ordination with the communications unit which was directed by Shields.

Shields was suspended with pay in May last year and submitted his resignation in December.

Jun 27 2016

TORONTO - Ontario Provincial Police say a fiery multi-vehicle crash on a north Toronto highway that left four people dead was "absolutely preventable."

Sgt. Kerry Schmidt says investigators are still trying to identify some of those killed in the 11-vehicle collision Friday night on Highway 400 - but one is believed to be a four-year-old girl.

The crash occurred in the highway's southbound lanes shortly before 10 p.m. ET and involved three transport trucks along with several other vehicles and one of the trailers and two vehicles caught fire.

Schmidt says the highway surface had to be ground down because molten metal from the fire was protruding from the asphalt.

Schmidt adds that a rise in the road and construction on that section of the highway cause traffic to slow and require a driver's full attention.

He says the OPP is looking into the actions of the driver of one of the transport trucks involved in the crash.

Jun 27 2016

PETERBOROUGH, Ont. - A special constable with the Peterborough Police Service has been charged with trafficking cocaine and magic mushrooms.

Police say Michael Moncrief, 37, has been charged with two counts each of possession for the purpose of trafficking.

Moncrief, a civilian member of the police force assigned to security tasks in Peterborough's courts, has been suspended from duty without pay pending an investigation. (CKRU)

Jun 27 2016

BRAMPTON - Peel Regional Police senior officers have formally called for the resignation of the man who oversees them, board chair Amrik Ahluwalia, accusing him of "insulting" the force.

A letter to fellow police obtained by the Star, written by the Peel Police Senior Officers Association - which represents senior ranks between inspector and staff superintendent as well as some civilian managers — states that these are "tumultuous times" as the board pushes for changes within the force.

"We have seen the Chair of the Police Services Board continue to make demeaning and insulting comments directed towards Chief (Jennifer) Evans and this organiza-

tion," states the letter dated June 24 and sent to "all members" of the force.

The letter also tells lower-ranking officers that senior staff passed a motion at an association meeting on June 23 "calling for the resignation of the Chair of the Police Services Board."

The letter, signed by senior officers association president Randy Patrick, doesn't provide details of the alleged insulting comments by Ahluwalia. Patrick didn't respond to a request for comment.

The two most powerful people on the police board say Ahluwalia, who has pushed for sweeping reforms, isn't going anywhere.

"Chair Ahluwalia has the full support of the board to press for modernization and new reforms," said Bonnie Crombie,



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Mississauga's mayor and a member of the board.

"Chair Ahluwalia continues to have my full support and confidence as well as that of the entire Police Services Board," said Linda Jeffrey, Brampton mayor and a fellow board member.

Ahluwalia became chair after a board vote in January and has quickly led some bold moves, starting with the termination of the board's long-time executive director Fred Biro, a close ally of Chief Evans.

Ahluwalia recently supported a sweeping equity and diversity audit of the force, despite initial resistance from Evans, who now says she will co-operate with the independent audit.

Backing for such moves by the mayors, who both enjoy strong support in their cities, according to recent polls, has built tensions between the board and Evans. The relationship had already begun to sour when the chief refused the board's request last year to stop street checks.

Evans didn't respond to questions Monday about whether or not she supports the association's call for the chair's resignation.

However, she did say in her response that she was not a member of the association and that, "I remain committed to working with the board."

Ahluwalia told the Star in an email that "change can be difficult."

"As we strive to engage our community, there are bound to be growing pains," he said.

"We expect that not everything the community tells us will be complimentary. We need to hear their stories, uncomfortable at times that they may be - in order to improve." (Toronto Star)

Jun 27 2016

The dangers of being an RCMP officer in the North are being revealed in an unlikely place: public complaints into the conduct of Mounties.

Complaints made in the last five years to the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP about N.W.T. officers were obtained by the CBC through an access to information request. The Commission is an independent oversight body created to investigate public complaints about the RCMP's conduct.

The majority of the complaints filed were for alleged "excessive use of force" by officers, which were most often during an arrest. However, investigations into many of those incidents revealed that RCMP officers had been physically assaulted by the complainants.

In an excessive force complaint investigation in 2014, an intoxicated person punched an officer in the side of the head while the officer was trying to remove the person's shoes prior to putting them in a cell.

While the officer was trying to handcuff the person, the individual grabbed the male officer's testicles, squeezed and twisted them. The officer then punched the person to get them to release his testicles. The individual then bit the officer on the leg.

There were a number of other complaints

where it was revealed - through eye witness accounts, dash-cam footage and holding cell video - that the complainants "tried to fight" officers who were arresting them.

One person threw his feces at officers.

The Commission's investigations also found that in several instances RCMP officers and their families were threatened.

One person being apprehended by police told an officer "I'm going to f--king kill you and I'm going to f--king kill your family."

It's not clear how often officers in the N.W.T. are assaulted in the line of duty - CBC's request for an interview with the RCMP went unanswered.

Over the last five years, the Commission has never found that N.W.T. officers used excessive force when arresting an individual.

(CBC News)

Jun 27 2016

The personal details of 112,000 French police officers have been uploaded to Google Drive in a security breach just a fortnight after two officers were murdered at their home by a jihadist.



A mutual organisation which provides extra health and other insurance benefits for police says the details were uploaded by a disgruntled worker.

It has said the files are protected by a password and there is no reason to believe details have been accessed. The files include postal addresses.

The security breach comes two weeks after a police commander and his partner were stabbed to death at their home near Paris.

Their young child survived the attack by Larossi Abballa, who said he was acting on a call from so-called Islamic State (IS) to "kill infidels".

RTL reports that the details of the officers, serving and retired, and their families, were uploaded to the Google Drive storage service on 2 June, where they were protected by a password.

It is unclear whether the person who uploaded the data took any further security measures to protect it.

Security experts say Google Drive does offer two-factor authentication but if it was not used, anybody who knew the password may have been able to access the data.

The mutual organisation concerned, Mutuelle Generale de la Police (MGP), told France TV Info that it had been the victim "of a malicious act on the part of an employee".

A spokesman for the French police union, Nicolas Conte, told RTL that the incident was "extremely worrying". (BBC)

TUESDAY
JUNE 28, 2016

Jun 28 2016

The Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba has concluded no criminal charges should be laid against two Gimli RCMP officers after a man's eye was injured while he was being arrested.

IIU civilian director Zane Tessler said on Tuesday that after a review by Manitoba Prosecution Services and a review of the evidence "he is satisfied" neither of the officers involved needs to be charged.

An RCMP member was monitoring traffic north of Gimli on July 19, 2015, when a vehicle passed by at high speed.

The officer called for backup after a pursuit, and a 37-year-old man was arrested.

The IIU began investigating because, while being arrested, the man suffered an injury to his left eye that was later diagnosed as having a non-displaced fractured orbital bone.

With the man's criminal charges still before the courts, the IIU will not comment further at this time, but the complete report will be released after all the charges have been dealt with.

(Winnipeg Free Press)

Jun 28 2016

CALGARY - Police street checks, while controversial, are an important practice that helps the Calgary Police Service do its job, chief Roger Chaffin told a crowd at a public talk on Monday night.

"It is never random. It is never arbitrary. There has to be a legitimate reason for that stop, that check."

"Police check-up slips," as Calgary police call them, are issued when officers stop people in public places to ask for identification and what they're doing.

While talking to the crowd Chaffin conceded the system isn't perfect.

"There's just no way that you can have as large a city with as many people, as many diverse issues, that there wouldn't be a mistake."

Chaffin says he is looking at the policies, regulations, rules, and the province's laws to make sure the police service has the right model going forward for making checks.

He says he wants address any problems so they don't become a pattern in the service. (CBC News)

Jun 28 2016

ST. ALBERT, Alta. - An RCMP officer who was shot and killed outside an Edmonton-area casino is being honoured with a memorial in a quiet corner of a park.

Const. David Wynn was 42 when he died four days after being shot during a struggle with a suspected car thief in St. Albert in January 2015.

He was hit in the head and never regained consciousness before he died.

St. Albert Mayor Nolan Crouse says the memorial near Lacombe Park Lake will give people a quiet spot to remember Wynn and his service to the community.

The memorial itself - plaques fastened to a large rock near a river - is expected to be completed by October and will tell the story of Wynn and the qualities he embodied.

An endowment fund is also being set up for annual awards to students hoping to become police officers or paramedics.

"This memorial site will be a way for all of us to reflect on happy memories of Dave," Shelly Wynn, the Mountie's widow, said Tuesday.

"And with the endowment fund we will be able to keep his spirit and dedication to the community, especially for the children of St. Albert, alive for many years to come."

Jun 28 2016

CALGARY - A former Calgary police officer who was fired from his job over a high-speed chase is fighting his dismissal.

Anthony Braile was let go in February after engaging in a pursuit in December 2008 that sent an innocent bystander to hospital.

Braile's lawyer told before the Law Enforcement Review Board that the former sergeant was on anti-depressants the night of the chase.

James Shymka said the drugs triggered a hypo-manic state and Braile should never have been on the street.

The review board was told that Braile was hospitalized for depression and suicidal tendencies, and it was recommended that once he returned to work he remain on administrative duties.

But the medical advice wasn't followed and he was placed in a more tactical role - something Braile never questioned.

Lawyers for the Calgary Police Service were expected to make some comments on the matter later on Tuesday.

(CTV Calgary)

Jun 28 2016

A P.E.I. RCMP officer won't be charged after an investigation into allegations he sexually assaulted a woman twice.

The director of Nova Scotia's Serious Incident Response Team (SIRT) released his report today after investigating two alleged incidents dating back to 2013 and 2014.

That report said in one case it was clear the woman consented to sexual contact with the officer.

There were significant issues raised with the reliability of the woman's evidence in relation to the second allegation, the report said.

SIRT started its investigation March 11 after a request from P.E.I.'s Justice Department and the RCMP.

The woman and the RCMP officer aren't identified in the report.

(Charlottetown Guardian)

Jun 28 2016

HALIFAX - The Board of Police Commissioners will meet with Halifax's police chief this week to discuss the problem of missing evidence.

Halifax Regional Police say they have now located some of the missing exhibits, but are unable to say exactly how many.

As police continue to search for the remainder, the Board of Police Commissioners would like to know why they weren't informed earlier.

"There's something wrong with that," said Halifax councillor and commission member Stephen Adams.

The board's chairman, Councillor Russell Walker, says he was informed during a meeting with the chief the day before the audit was released publicly.

"I'm not too sure the process is clear right now, so going forward, maybe the process should be spelled a little bit differently than it is today," he said.

Halifax Police declined to comment on what will be discussed with the board until after the chief meets with them Thursday.

"I see my role as a police commissioner to be one of oversight and civilian governance, it's hard to do that job effectively and proactively without the information," said commissioner and lawyer Jeff Mitchell.

Councillor Adams says the fact that the commission wasn't informed about the missing evidence earlier raises a larger issue. He says he has concerns about overall governance.

"Why aren't we like the rest of the country?"

Almost every other police force in Canada has the police chief directly reporting to the Police Commission."

Documents obtained by CTV News reveal quotes from an officer's interview during the audit, including the following:

- "We handle money with just one person. I feel exposed when it comes to weights and cash counts."
- "Exhibits destroyed prior to completion of judicial process, changes plea and goes to trial, evidence no longer available."

"Those are troubling quotes as they're written there," said Halifax Regional Police Supt. Jim Perrin. "Unfortunately, we don't have any context to who those quotes came from or what they were specifically pertaining to, like for instance a specific case."

Supt. Perrin maintains no court cases have been impacted at this point.

(CTV News)

Jun 28 2016

MONTREAL - The composition of the newly opened Bureau of Independent Investigations is coming under fire, as groups opposed to police brutality argue there should be fewer former police officers in the unit.

The new unit has been three years in the making, replacing the way Quebec police forces are investigated whenever a death or injury occurs during a police operation.

Another police force used to handle that investigation, but now that falls to the new independent body.

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Critics wonder how objective the unit really is. Of the 18 people who make up the new investigative office, 11 are former police officers.

The Bureau of Independent Investigations said former police officers are needed for their investigative expertise and that no former officer will be asked to investigate a police force where he worked.

The majority of the members are white males and the argument is that that kind of composition doesn't accurately reflect the face of Montreal.

(CTV News)

Jun 28 2016

MONCTON - Property crime and reports of fraud have increased, according to an annual report from the New Brunswick RCMP.

The report, RCMP in New Brunswick Annual Report 2015 released Monday says property crime rose by 15.4 per cent.

In 2014, there were 16,880 reports of property crime, which includes arson, break and enter, fraud, possession of property obtained by crime, theft \$5,000 and under and theft \$5,000 and over and theft of motor vehicle.

A year later, the number of reports grew by 2,610 to 19,490.

But the most startling statistic in the report was that showing a 50 per cent increase in reports of fraud.

"This is a significant increase, and one the RCMP takes very seriously," the reports states.

Cst. Jullie Rogers-Marsh, media relations officer, says the increase in fraud is due in part by the calls from people claiming to be with the Canadian Revenue Agency. "Many people are now reporting this as a crime to police. It doesn't necessarily mean people were defrauded, it's that we've received reports of this type of fraud that's happening."

Other statistics show a 20.5 per cent increase in break and enters and 19 per cent increase in theft under \$5,000.

(CBC News)

Jun 28 2016

TORONTO - A Toronto man who says he was denied a police ride-along for being randomly stopped and carded has filed a complaint with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

George Knia Singh, a law school graduate, said that when he was a student, he was denied a ride-along with Toronto police that he had requested as part of his criminal law class.

Singh, who says he was turned away despite having no criminal record, is alleging police discrimination in his application with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

In an interview with CTV News Channel on Tuesday, Singh described the incident, in which he was told in an email that he would not be allowed to do a ride-along with police.

"It was upsetting when I got the email stating that I was denied the ride-along," said Singh, who now works as a student-at-law at a firm in southern Ontario.

Singh said he was given the option to

phone the police, which he did "right away."

"We started speaking about allegations and I said, 'Those are totally false, you can see in the notes they are false.'"

Singh said the cops then brought previous "driving contacts" with police, to which Singh said that police target and stop him "all the time" because "I'm black."

"Anytime I challenged their reason, they ended up giving me another reason," Singh said. "Until I finally complained."

Singh said his professors at Osgoode Hall law school asked to speak with police but were denied that request as well.

Singh said when he finally reached the unit commander, he was told that he was denied the ride-along "because I associate with criminals, which is totally inaccurate."

The incident Singh thinks police are referring to dates back to 2008, when he was stopped by police after leaving a recording studio with some youths he was working with at the time.

Singh said the youth he was driving had previous run-ins with police.

"Years later now, when this (police) check is going forward, they would see that I was stopped in the company of other people and those people may have had criminal records," Singh said. "That seems to be the basis of their denial."

Toronto police spokesperson Meaghan Gray said she can't comment on specific cases but says when ride-along requests come in, police divisions do criminal record checks.

"Results that include one or more com-



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munity engagements would not preclude someone from a ride-along," she said in an email to CTVNews.ca.

"However, someone with past or current criminal involvement with the police and/or someone who has past or current association to persons known to police would be reasons why a request would be denied."
(CTV News)

Jun 28 2016

CALGARY - Mounties are searching for a special RCMP teepee canvas that went missing from a reserve east of Calgary last week.



The teepee had been set up Wednesday for the Siksika First Nation Law Day celebration, held at the courthouse on the reserve about 90 kilometres east of Calgary.

The teepee's canvas - adorned with RCMP logos and blue, white, yellow and red stripes - disappeared sometime between Wednesday night and early Thursday.

"This is one we put on display frequently," said RCMP spokeswoman Cpl. Sharon Franks. "It's meant to go to the Calgary Stampede, so we need to have it back."

Police issued a plea on Facebook, urging the return of the canvas to the nearest RCMP detachment, "no questions asked."

(CBC News)

Jun 28 2016

CALGARY - The Calgary Police Service is tackling gender inequity in the force, tabling a report on Tuesday about progress they've made in changing HR practices and institutional culture.

The report, authored by Nina Vaughan, superintendent of the CPS Employee Services Division, outlined three years of work on understanding the specific issues that women faced in the police force. Much of the report involved soliciting feedback from different parts of the force to actually understand what the issues were.

"A lot of the work we've done so far is around our HR practises and professionalizing them," said Vaughan. "The biggest piece of work is understanding what the issues are around gender in the workplace."

The CPS worked with the University of Calgary's gender studies program, using gender perception surveys and follow up sessions to understand and address some of the barriers and male-dominated institutional culture that was holding back equity in the workplace.

"You can't really fix what you don't understand," Vaughan said.

Almost all of the issues in the report revolved around improving HR processes and

better educating officers about institutional culture that can affect women disproportionately. Some of the actions included establishing a "Leave Co-ordinator" to assist employees returning from maternity leave, and setting up programs such as unconscious bias training to address some of the institutional barriers that affect women within the police force.

The Calgary police commission received the report and asked to hear again on Vaughan's progress in six months. Vaughan noted that issues such as gender equity are a long game.

"When you're trying to change something that big, you're not going to do it in just six months," said Vaughan. "When you look at women's underrepresentation in the executive level in every business, that's not something that's going to change overnight. These are complex issues with complex causes and it takes time to understand them."

For now, Vaughan's report does show that change is taking place and that the CPS is moving in the right direction. The percentage of women in the CPS has increased slowly but surely over the past four years, having gone from 14 per cent in 2012, to 18 per cent in 2016.

(Calgary Herald)

Jun 28 2016

EDMONTON - Edmonton police made the largest methamphetamine bust in their history during a traffic stop last Wednesday.



"There's a lot more drugs out there where these came from," said Insp. Dwayne Lakusta, the Edmonton police officer in charge of the organized crime branch.

Members of the Edmonton Drug and Gang Enforcement (EDGE) unit began tailing a suspected drug operation last spring and a suspect already known to police.

After observing what was believed to be drug activity, officers pulled over and stopped a vehicle June 22, seizing three kilograms of cocaine from inside the car.

Investigators then secured a search warrant for a home and seized another four kilograms of cocaine and more than 9-1/2 kilograms of methamphetamine.

While this is the single largest methamphetamine bust in Edmonton history, Lakusta said it isn't likely to make much of an impact on Edmonton's larger meth trade, with the illegal drug showing up on city streets "in abundance," over the past few months.

"We are scratching the surface, but any time we get an opportunity to take this level of dealer out, it does have an impact on that

particular group," said Lakusta. "I would be naive to think that it will have a larger impact on Edmonton."

Ho Tran, 47, is charged with three counts of possession for the purpose of trafficking.
(Edmonton Journal)

Jun 28 2016

OTTAWA - The overall violent victimization rate among aboriginals in 2014 was more than double the rate for non-aboriginals, according to a new StatsCan report.

According to the report, released on Tuesday, the overall violent victimization rate - which includes sexual assault, robbery and physical assault - was 163 incidents per 1,000 people for aboriginals. By comparison, the rate among non-aboriginals was 74 incidents per 1,000 people.

The report, which contains data from the 2014 General Social Survey on Victimization, also found that 28 per cent of aboriginal people aged 15 and older reported that they or their household had been a victim of at least one of eight different crimes in the last 12 months. By comparison, 18 per cent of non-aboriginal people reported the same.

However, the proportion of aboriginals who reported having been victimized decreased from 38 per cent in 2009 to 28 per cent in 2014 in the provinces, and from 36 per cent to 28 per cent in the territories, according to the report.

Here are other findings from the report:

- The rates for almost all types of violent crime were higher for aboriginals than for non-aboriginals. Specifically, the sexual assault rate among aboriginals was nearly three times that of non-aboriginals (58 incidents per 1,000 people compared to 20 per 1,000), and the aboriginal physical assault rate was nearly double that of non-aboriginal people (90 per 1,000 compared to 47 per 1,000).
- Aboriginals were more likely to experience spousal violence than non-aboriginals, particularly aboriginal women who were approximately three times more likely to report spousal violence than non-aboriginal women.
- Spousal violence involving aboriginal victims was more likely to come to the attention of police than spousal violence involving non-aboriginal victims (50 per cent compared to 28 per cent).
- Most non-spousal violent incidents were not reported to police for both aboriginal and non-victims (77 per cent and 66 per cent). As well, most aboriginal and non-aboriginal victims reported not seeking support or help from various support centres after a violent incident (72 per cent and 69 per cent).
- Aboriginal identity on its own was not associated with an increased risk of violence victimization when various risk factors were taken into account. The StatsCan analysis could not account for certain societal factors, such as the impact of residential schools.
- Increased victimization rates among aboriginals were related to other risk factors,

including homelessness, drug use, mental health disorders, and being mistreated in childhood. A higher proportion of aboriginals presented with these risk factors compared with non-aboriginals.

Despite having a higher risk of victimization, 85 per cent of aboriginal people reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their personal safety - this was only slightly lower than non-aboriginals (88 per cent).

(CTV News)

WEDNESDAY JUNE 29, 2016

Jun 29 2016

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. - Some residents displaced by a powerful house explosion west of Toronto that killed one woman and injured at least nine people living nearby were waiting to return home Wednesday as authorities investigated the cause of the blast.



The home at the epicentre of the blast was levelled in the explosion, while two houses on either side of it partially caved in.

Debris from the blast, including tufts of foam insulation, was scattered across the streets and on rooftops around the home.

Authorities said a specialized canine search-and-rescue team was able to go into the rubble of the house that blew up and found no sign of any remaining victims.

Jeff Minten, of the fire marshal's office, said they will be looking at the role gas might have played in the blast.

"We're looking to see what kind of fuels are in there. Gases are predominately going to be our focus," he said. "Right now, we don't know what caused it."

Jun 29 2016

THUNDER BAY - The chief of police in Thunder Bay, Ont., says he's looking forward to partnering with other groups in the community to ensure the city is a safe place for First Nations students.

J.P. Levesque was reacting to the recommendations delivered Tuesday by a coroner's inquest examining the deaths of seven First Nations students who had left their remote communities to attend high school in the city.

"We look forward to the opportunity to ensure the safety of these youth from the northern communities while they're in our community," he said.

About 10 of the 145 recommendations pertain directly to the police and "we certainly acknowledge the recommendations as

something that is positive. A number of them we've completed or already started," Levesque said.

For instance, members of his force now travel with Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service officers to visit Grade 8 students in their home communities before they come to Thunder Bay for school.

As well, "it's probably long overdue," Levesque said of the suggestion that an Indigenous representative be added to the police services board.

"The police service is supposed to reflect the community and we certainly try our best with that and certainly the police services board should be looked at the same way."

Levesque also favours the recommendation to create a working group to establish best practices to follow when a person is reported missing in the city.

"There has been certainly a lot of learning over the years since the last investigation and we've changed things as we went along, as we found problematic areas with investigations," he said.

Over his five years as chief, Levesque said he has been working to build relationships with Aboriginal leaders in Thunder Bay.

(CBC News)

Jun 29 2016

CALGARY - A former candidate for the Alberta Party's top job is one of 10 men police have arrested in a child sexual exploitation case.

Troy Millington, 45, was the sole opponent to eventual winner Greg Clark in the party's September 2013 leadership race. Millington also ran unsuccessfully in an Alberta byelection in 2014.

Police say those arrested face charges of possession of child pornography, accessing child pornography and making available child pornography.

The charges were the result of an eight-month investigation by the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team. It is made up of more than 300 municipal police and RCMP officers who work together on drug trafficking, child exploitation and gang violence cases.

"Every day thousands of child sexual abuse images and videos are being traded, viewed, downloaded all across the province," Det. Justin Brookes said Wednesday.

"Simply put, we cannot arrest everyone at once. (We) ...targeted the suspects with the largest collections and some of the most graphic content."

None of the victims is believed to be from Alberta and none of the offences is believed to have taken place in the province.

Investigators executed 30 search warrants across southern Alberta and seized 285 computers, mobile devices and storage drives.

Police say about half the devices were analyzed and almost 50,000 child sexual exploitation images were identified.

"Some of the victims in the images and the videos are estimated to be as young as six months and depict extreme sexual violence,"

said Brookes.

"Every one of those images or videos represents a victim and if you think about that, all around the world right now, there are young, innocent children being abused and being forced to commit despicable, sexual acts."

Five of the accused are from Calgary, three from Medicine Hat and two from Lethbridge.

Jun 29 2016

GRANBY, Que. - Authorities say they have arrested 47 people in anti-drug raids east of Montreal.

About 500 police officers from different forces, including the Ontario Provincial Police, took part in the operation, which was initiated in 2013 to dismantle an alleged regional drug distribution network.

The suspects will appear in court today and Thursday in Sherbrooke, about 150 kilometres east of Montreal.

Police say charges could include drug-trafficking, possession with intent to traffic, committing an offence for the benefit of a criminal organization and trafficking in property obtained via crime.

Authorities also conducted dozens of searches and around Granby, east of Montreal, and one in the Ottawa area.

Jun 29 2016

TORONTO - New details have emerged in the investigation into a Toronto police officer accused of doing nothing to prevent the suicide of a teen back in February.

The SIU has charged Const. Kyle Upjohn with criminal negligence causing death and failing to provide the necessities of life after the teen died by suicide after hanging himself from a tree in High Park.

CityNews spoke with the man who called 911 on the day of the incident and he painted a disturbing picture of a police officer ignoring pleas for help.

The man's wife was walking along one of the remote trails in the park when she came across a young man looping a rope through the branch of a tree. Fearing the worst, she ran up the path to a nearby greenhouse, where she asked staff there for help. After a few minutes of inactivity, she called her husband at their nearby home and asked him to come to the park and help.

When the man arrived at the park, he spotted a police officer and says he twice begged the officer to help. He claims the officer told him he couldn't help, that he was busy on another call, and to call 911. The man says he raced to the tree, where he used a knife to cut the boy down from the tree. He says he desperately tried CPR but he was too late.

CityNews has also learned some details of the Crown's case against Upjohn. The allegation is "that the officer did by criminal negligence, by omitting to fulfill the duties required of him as a police officer, caused the death (of the teen)." As well, "that the officer did fail without lawful excuse, to

provide the necessities of life and did thereby endanger the life of the young man or cause, or likely cause, the health of the teen to be injured permanently.”

CityNews has learned the officer is 22-years-old and has been with the Toronto Police Service for two years. He has been suspended with pay pending the outcome of the case.

(680 News)

Jun 29 2016

TORONTO - After 40 years on the job, serving and protecting the city, Toronto Police Staff-Insp. Greg McLane officially hung up his gun belt Wednesday.



The veteran cop's retirement draws to a close a stellar career that saw him start out in the Mounted Unit in 1976 and rise up through the ranks to ultimately lead the Homicide Unit.

"When I was a cadet, I was shovelling horse manure, then I end up as the unit commander of the largest municipal homicide squad in the country," McLane, 60, said with a chuckle recently. "That's kind of cool."

"When you're young and you start down a path, you just never know where you will end up," he added.

McLane wrestled with the idea of retirement for about a year and said it was one of the toughest decisions he's ever made.

"Being a police officer is such a huge part of my identity and I'm parking that," he said.

McLane spent more than 11 years in 55 Division, policing the city's lower east end and working his way up to the rank of sergeant before moving downtown to rough and tumble 51 Division for a few years.

But it was during his time in Scarborough's 42 Division that he got his first taste of homicide investigation and realized his "true calling."

In the ensuing years McLane served in an assortment of key roles with several divisions as well as the Organized Crime Unit, Professional Standards, the RCMP-led Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit and Sex Crimes Unit.

Then in 2012 he was asked to return to the Homicide Unit and take the reins from current Chief Mark Saunders.

Although McLane considered staying on longer to help with this year's spike in murders and to be part of the service's recently announced transformation, he feels "content" with his decision.

"I've had a fantastic career," McLane said. "But it's just the right time."

"I'm going to miss it though," he added.

McLane jokingly compared his retirement to a joke from the popular 90s TV show Seinfeld.

"I started on a high and I'm leaving on a high," he said with a big smile. "Not everybody gets to do that."

Insp. Bryan Bott, 50, takes over from McLane as the new head of the homicide unit.

(Toronto Sun)

Jun 29 2016

CALGARY - Calgary police have arrested three people and seized two children following two drug raids that netted cocaine, marijuana and a substantial amount of cash.

During one of the raids, police say a pit-bull-type dog inside the home latched on to the left arm of a tactical team officer.

The dog would not let go of the officer, so another officer shot and killed the animal.

The officer was taken to hospital and got up to 12 stitches to close the wound, but police say the long-term damage to his arm has not yet been determined.

Police say more details, including the names of those charged and the amount of seized drugs, will be released at a later date.

Jun 29 2016

EDMONTON - The Edmonton Police Service is warning young people about the dangers of playing with imitation guns in public.

"Fake Gun, Real Danger," a public education campaign launched Wednesday, is attempting to build awareness about imitation

guns and to encourage safe use.

The campaign is to educate youth about how difficult it can be for police to tell the difference between a real and a fake gun in an encounter.

"Whether it's a replica or not, if we see a firearm, especially a firearm pointed at a police officer or anyone else, we have to make that split-second decision and access our firearm," Sgt. Matt LeBlanc said in a video released as a part of the campaign.

"It could be a lethal encounter."

Imitation gun files typically rise over the summer months especially in July.

Cases are increasing dramatically. In 2015 alone, EPS dealt with 1,598 files involving imitation guns - a 38-per-cent increase from the 1,160 files in 2014.

Four of 23 officer-involved shootings in Alberta investigated by the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team in 2014 and 2015 were linked to imitation guns. The shootings resulted in two deaths and two serious injuries.

Police are encouraging people not to show off imitation guns in public.

EPS Const. Christopher Marshall, who helped develop the safety campaign, said that there is a "general lack of awareness" of the dangers posed by imitation guns.

"We want the public to know that police can't always tell if a gun is real or fake, so to avoid a potential confrontation, we ask that you don't show imitation guns in public," said Marshall in a release.

Const. Chapman Lee once responded to two incidents in one week involving fake guns and noted that this spring, a community college was locked down after a man was

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to increase readability, and a click, hold and drag action lets you move the page in any direction when zoomed-in.

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10

BLUE LINE NEWS WEEK

seen carrying a pellet gun with a scope.

"Police take firearms complaints very seriously due to the threat to public and officer safety, and will respond with appropriate resources, tactics and level of force," said Lee.

"Sometimes people make mistakes, but if it looks like a gun, it's treated like a gun by police."

The campaign was developed through talks between EPS, RCMP, school boards, retailers, parents and the Airsoft community. Airsoft is a game similar to paintball in which the players shoot each other with small non-metallic pellets fired by replica firearms.

Ben Holliday, an instructor with Capital Airsoft Indoor Battleground, said that this is "an opportunity to partner with police to make the sport of Airsoft safer."

"We take the extra time to talk to our customers about the safe and responsible use of Airsoft guns and these materials will help us get the message across, especially with young adults tempted to play with their guns in nearby neighbourhoods or parks," Holliday said in the police news release.

EPS has launched a series of multimedia materials to inform the public, including videos and a dedicated website — <http://www.edmontonpolice.ca/fakegunrealdanger>.

Jun 29 2016

SURREY - Surrey's top police officer has been named the B.C. RCMP's new Lower Mainland District Commander.

Assistant Commissioner Bill Fordy, who will oversee 13 detachments serving 29 communities, will continue to lead Surrey RCMP while the city of Surrey and RCMP start the process of selecting a new officer in charge of the Surrey detachment.

"I am excited to take on this new position with the B.C. RCMP where I can continue to enhance public safety and expand the RCMP's role in community engagement throughout the Lower Mainland District," said Fordy, in a statement. "Surrey will always have a special place in my heart and I assure the citizens of Surrey that, during this period of transition, I am committed to ensuring there is continuity and strong leadership at Surrey detachment."

Fordy, who will lead over 2,500 RCMP officers and 900 support staff, will oversee integrated units including the Emergency Response Team (ERT), Integrated Forensic Identification Section (IFIS), Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT), and Integrated Collision Analyst and Reconstruction Services (ICARS).

A release stated that since being appointed Surrey's top officer in June 2012, he has placed a strong focus on community engagement as well as crime reduction. Under his leadership, the Surrey detachment increased its community presence with the Neighbourhood Safety Campaign, Community Engagement Teams, Bike Unit, and Community Response Unit.

"I look forward to working with him as we build upon the integrated and collaborative efforts underway within the Lower Main-

land, while also expanding our initiatives to address the borderless crimes within the region," said Deputy Commissioner Craig Calens, commanding officer of the B.C. RCMP.

As head of the Surrey detachment, Fordy expanded the detachment's diversity unit, domestic violence unit, and youth unit. He also brought an additional 100 new police officers to Surrey over the past year.

"Bill Fordy's promotion ... is well deserved and well earned," said Mayor Linda Hepner. "Many of the issues that Surrey faces are regional in scope and having Bill in charge of the Lower Mainland District is not only welcome, but advantageous."
(Vancouver Sun)

THURSDAY **JUNE 30, 2016**

Jun 30 2016

OTTAWA - The federal government is launching a task force to study the legalization and regulation marijuana use.

Ottawa has committed to introducing legislation on the legalization of pot in the spring of 2017.

The task force is made up of experts in public health, substance abuse, law enforcement and justice.

It will be chaired by former Liberal public safety minister Anne McLellan.

The group plans to meet with provincial, territorial and municipal governments over the coming weeks and months.

The government will also hold a online public consultation that will be open until the end of August.

Jun 30 2016

OTTAWA - Canada's highest court has overturned drug trafficking charges against an Alberta man because he had to wait too long for his trial.

The Supreme Court ruled Thursday that Shane Vassell had his constitutional right to a speedy trial compromised after he had to wait three years for a three-day trial.

Two lower court judges had dismissed Vassell's request to quash his conviction over unreasonable delays in getting his case to trial.

The decision comes weeks after Alberta judges raised concerns about long trial delays arising from a shortage of federally-appointed judges, which had defence lawyers arguing that Charter rights were being violated.

Justice Michael Moldaver's decision included a warning to trial judges to "not to miss the forest for the trees" when an accused raises concerns about delays.

"The forest in this case is plain as day," Moldaver wrote. "At every opportunity, Mr. Vassell attempted to move his case to trial."

Vassell was convicted in 2014 of possession of cocaine for the purpose of trafficking, almost three years to the day after he was arrested and initially charged.

He tried throughout the three years to have his case move forward quickly, but was stymied by his six co-accused who were the source of the delay, the court ruled.

In the end, Vassell was the only one who stood trial out of the seven people originally charged.

Moldaver wrote that the Crown and the system should have done more to avoid delays in Vassell's case, delays for which Vassell "had no control and for which he bore no responsibility." The court ruled that delay was unacceptable.

"In fulfilling its obligation to bring all accused to trial within a reasonable time, the Crown cannot close its eyes to the circumstances of an accused who has done everything possible to move the matter along, only to be held hostage by his or her co-accused and the inability of the system to provide earlier dates," Moldaver wrote.

"That, unfortunately, is what occurred here."

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