

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

A CHRONICLE OF NEWS FOR THE CANADIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY

June 14, 2013 – Vol. 18 No. 24

Executive Digest

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OTTAWA - The Supreme Court of Canada grappled Thursday with the constitutionality of Canada’s prostitution law, as demonstrators from both sides of the issue aired their views with colourful flair on its outdoor steps.

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RCMP academy enrolment in ‘shocking’ decline



Jun 12 2013

Enrolment in the RCMP’s six-month basic-training academy has plummeted in recent years.

Figures recently tabled by the federal government show that 1,783 cadets enrolled at the RCMP Depot in Regina during the 2008-09 fiscal year. That number fell to 395 in 2012-13.

Liberal Sen. Colin Kenny, whose repeated questioning of the government prompted the release of the numbers, said the decline is “shocking” and that only one conclusion can be reached: The force is shrinking.

“I’m concerned about it. I’m concerned the RCMP is going down, not up,” he said. “That creates problems with backup, with morale.”

A spokesman for the force said the declining

enrolment does not reflect a lack of interest in becoming a Mountie.

“The RCMP recruits new cadets based on organizational affordability, attrition, the resourcing demands identified by our municipal and provincial partners and our federal policing requirements,” Cpl. David Falls said in an email.

“Most recently, internal restructuring led to existing RCMP police officers being available internally to fill the vacancies in the field, therefore requiring (fewer) applicants.”

Falls said the RCMP recently converted “several hundred” positions in operational support and administration that had been held by regular members into civilian positions.

“This enabled the RCMP to fill vacancies

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GARRETT STYLES
1405
MEMORIAL BASEBALL TOURNAMENT

with the members who previously held those jobs rather than new hires,” Falls said.

Still, figures provided by the force show that the total number of regular members has fallen from 19,347 in 2010 to 18,881 this year.

Since 2010, the numbers have fallen below 600, even though the training academy has a current maximum capacity of 1,100 at any given time.

The force’s attrition rate has remained relatively flat. It has lost an average of about 640 members each year over the past decade.

BY THE NUMBERS

Year Cadets enrolled

2002-03 1,004
2003-04 1,012
2004-05 968
2005-06 1,222
2006-07 1,508
2007-08 1,417
2008-09 1,783
2009-10 1,021
2010-11 581
2011-12 575
2012-13 395

(Ottawa Citizen)

THURSDAY
JUNE 6, 2013

Jun 06 2013

EDMONTON - An Alberta MP has been found not guilty of failing to provide a breath sample during a police checkstop.

A provincial court judge ruled Peter Goldring didn’t intend to avoid take a test, but was simply asking questions any person in his situation would have asked.

Goldring, 68, admitted he had had wine at

a Christmas party and a quick beer before police pulled him over in Edmonton in December 2011.

Officers testified at Goldring’s trial that he was snarky and refused to co-operate when he was pulled over, forcing them to arrest and handcuff him.

Goldring’s lawyer Dino Bottos argued the officers botched the arrest and refused to answer his client’s reasonable questions.

Judge Larry Anderson, in a written decision, took pains to emphasize that the police did nothing wrong.

He said he concluded that Goldring’s decision not to blow wasn’t conscious or wilful.

Goldring, who represented Edmonton East for the Conservatives, has long been a critic of roadside breath checks.

He has been sitting as an Independent since leaving the Tory caucus over the charge.

At the trial, arresting officer Trevor Shelrud described how he stopped Goldring’s vehicle shortly after midnight as it was pulling away from a north-side bar. Goldring admitted to having had a couple of drinks, but Shelrud said he noticed a strong smell of alcohol coming from the vehicle.

Shelrud testified that Goldring, after an initial conversation, refused to roll down his window for the breath test. The officer said Goldring refused to answer questions and sat behind the locked door of his vehicle and stared straight ahead.

Shelrud notified his supervisor. When that officer arrived, the two both tried to get Goldring to take the test, but he still refused, Shelrud said.

The officers decided to arrest Goldring. The supervisor stuck his hand through the partly open window and unlocked the door, so Shelrud could take Goldring’s arm, pull him out and slap him in handcuffs.

Goldring testified that the officer immediately told him he was under arrest. Goldring said he then agreed to a breath test, but was told to wait 15 minutes because he had just had alcohol.

Goldring testified the officer waited only five minutes and was concerned it was too soon to blow into the machine. He said the officer repeatedly refused his request to call a lawyer.

Jun 06 2013

TRURO, N.S. - A third review into the death of a Nova Scotia woman of a stroke following her incarceration by police, has determined the medical evidence doesn’t support charges in the case.

Victoria Rose Paul, of Indian Brook, died in hospital days after she was left lying unattended in the Truro police lockup after being arrested for public drunkenness in August 2009.

The case was referred in February to the province’s Public Prosecution Service to see

if criminal charges should be laid and a report was released Thursday.

Truro Police chief David MacNeil said he hoped the findings of all three reports would bring some closure to the Paul family.

Following a review by Halifax Regional Police, Justice Minister Ross Landry ordered an independent review, which indicated police didn’t properly monitor Paul’s health while in custody.

The review noted Paul wasn’t medically assessed or taken to hospital until 10 hours after she was placed in cells.

(Truro News)

Jun 06 2013

WINNIPEG - The Manitoba Court of Appeal has reinstated a guilty verdict in a controversial drunk-driving case that some say could set a new precedent.

In 2009, Rhys Mitchell was driving with three friends when they were pulled over for having a broken headlight.

The police officer noticed a smell of alcohol coming from inside the car and had Mitchell take an alcohol screening test, which he failed.

Mitchell fought his arrest on the grounds his Charter rights were violated because the arresting officer didn’t have sufficient grounds to make the roadside demand.

He lost his case at the provincial court level but he was set free after a Queen’s Bench judge overturned that verdict.

Now the appeal court has ruled the arresting officer did have sufficient cause to administer the alcohol screening test.

“The facts remain that the accused was driving at night, on a busy thoroughfare, without lights, that there was an odour of alcohol emanating from the car and the accused, in answer to a legitimate question in the circumstances, acknowledged that he had consumed alcohol,” Justice Michel Monnin wrote in the 21-page decision.

Justice Barbara Hamilton had previously said the case involved an area of the law that affects the administration of justice on a daily basis.

She said the appeal would provide an opportunity for the court to provide guidance on what constitutes a reasonable suspicion for alcohol screening to be administered.

(Winnipeg Free Press)

Jun 06 2013

WINNIPEG - Businesses in downtown Winnipeg have agreed to help fund police cadet patrols.

The businesses, under the umbrella of Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, will pay \$100,000 this year plus annual increases as part of a 10-year agreement.

In return, the police department will provide 10 cadets to exclusively patrol downtown.

Stefano Grande, executive director of Downtown BIZ, said the negotiations took

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK
ISSN 1704-3913
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Published weekly by Blue Line Magazine, Inc. as an executive news briefing service to Canada’s top level law enforcement personnel.

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months but he's pleased with the final result.

Talks dragged out because the business group was adamant it didn't want to be locked into an agreement with no end date.

At one point, the city even threatened to just claw back a portion of its funding to the group.

FRIDAY JUNE 7, 2013

Jun 07 2013

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. - Ontario's police watchdog has been called in to investigate after a 45-year-old man was fatally shot during an incident involving police Friday in Hamilton.

The Special Investigations Unit says Hamilton police were called at about 9:20 a.m. with reports that a man was walking on the parkway against traffic.

The agency says officers commanded the man to get off the road, which he did, but he then headed into a wooded area with the officers following behind.

It says there was then an "interaction" between police and the man and the man sustained multiple gunshot wounds.

Hamilton police say only that there was a "confrontation" and that the Special Investigations Unit has been called in.

Jun 07 2013

TORONTO - An Ontario Court is ordering the province's police watchdog to re-examine a complaint about the instructions Toronto's top cops gave to officers during the G20 protests three years ago.

The complaint comes from Jason Wall, a Toronto man whose arrest in June 2010 was deemed unlawful after he brought his case before the Independent Police Review Director.

Wall had asked the IPRD to further investigate the role Toronto police Chief Bill Blair and other senior officers played in his arrest.

The Ontario Divisional Court has issued a ruling saying the IPRD's failure to do so was "unreasonable" and "violates principles of procedural fairness and natural justice."

Wall had been walking home on June 27, 2010 when he was arrested by police looking for those responsible for vandalism during the G20 protests.

He was held for 28 hours before he was released without being charged.

Jun 07 2013

TORONTO - Toronto police say four men are facing drug charges after more than 60 kilograms of cocaine was seized, among other drugs.

Organized crime and drug squad investigators arrested three of the men on May 6, and then seized about 33 kilograms of cocaine

during a search of two vehicles associated with the three.

More search warrants were executed in the Toronto area, resulting in the arrest of a fourth man and the seizure of another 29 kilograms of cocaine.

Also seized were three kilograms of crystal methamphetamine and a small quantity of liquid GHB - also known as liquid ecstasy.

Cst. Wendy Drummond says although the arrests were made last month, the investigation was ongoing and police did not release information until now in order not to jeopardize the investigation.

Philipos Kollaros, 33, of Vancouver, Ritesh Thakur, 40, of Mississauga, Gursharan Singh, 29, of Mississauga, and Dimitri Alexiou, 36, of Quebec, all face multiple charges including trafficking in cocaine.

Jun 07 2013

TORONTO - The Crown is appealing a decision to allow into the community a man who was found not criminally responsible for killing a Toronto police officer with a snowplow.

Richard Kachkar is being detained in the Ontario Shores psychiatric hospital in Whitby, Ont., following a decision by the Ontario Review Board.

The board manages the cases of people found not criminally responsible and at annual hearings decides what level of supervision they need.

Kachkar, 46, was found not criminally responsible earlier this year in the January 2011 death of Sgt. Ryan Russell, 35, who was killed when Kachkar hit him with a stolen snowplow.

Kachkar's lawyer and the Crown had jointly recommended that Kachkar be allowed to walk the grounds of the hospital while escorted by staff, and the board went a step further and said he should be able to enter the community while escorted.

Decisions of the review board can be appealed to the Court of Appeal for Ontario.

SUNDAY JUNE 9, 2013

Jun 09 2013

OSHAWA, Ont. - Three teens are under arrest after police say a vehicle struck three pedestrians in Oshawa, east of Toronto, early this morning.

Police say they were looking into reports of erratic driving just before 3 a.m. when they spotted the vehicle.

They say it sped away and officers were giving chase when the vehicle struck three people.

All three - a 39-year-old man, a 28-year-old man and a 32-year-old woman - were rushed to hospital with serious injuries.

Police say the car's three occupants, all between 13 and 15 years old and from nearby Whitby, were taken into custody. There's no word on charges.

MONDAY JUNE 10, 2013

Jun 10 2013

VANCOUVER - In the coming months, the Vancouver Police Department will welcome into their ranks a group of "special municipal constables" as part of a \$6-million pilot project by the force to start using unarmed peace officers for a wide range of day-to-day duties.

The first group of 20 trainees will be hired in July as full-time employees and another 22 part-time positions will be created by the VPD by late August.

The decision to have unarmed peace officers helping the gun-toting VPD members fight crime was made more than a year ago after a review of similar programs in other cities in Canada, the U.S. and the U.K.

According to VPD spokesman Cst. Brian Montague, the "special municipal constable" uniforms will be different from the regular police officer's uniforms.

"They are unarmed peace officers and they will be wearing a uniform similar to our traffic authority and our jail guards," said Montague of the recruits who have been in training for almost a year.

The special constables will wear light-blue shirts, while the regular patrol cops will continue to wear the dark blue shirt.

Montague points out the force is always under budgetary limitations and the hiring of special constables will help free up patrol officers for emergencies.

"We are hoping it will allow more officers to be ready for priority or in progress emergency calls," said Montague.

During periods of high demand, VPD patrol officers are often unable to attend non-emergency calls such as noise, parking or bylaw complaints or reports of a break-in. The special constables are expected to take on some of those types of duties.

The rate of pay for a VPD special constable is \$20.81 an hour. They are hired under the guidelines set out in Section 35 of the B.C. Police Act.

Surrey, Langley and Maple Ridge also fund community safety officer programs, while most B.C.'s RCMP detachments have services using unpaid auxiliary constables who have peace-officer status while on duty.

The unarmed peace officers will not be issued handguns, but will be given other safety equipment such as ballistic vests and handcuffs.

They will also be trained and certified in the use of pepper spray and batons.

Police are hoping the addition of the community safety members will reduce that wait time by half.

(The Province)

Jun 10 2013

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE, Man. - A British Columbia man is facing several charges, including attempted murder of a police officer in Manitoba.

Last week, Mounties in Portage la Prairie, Man., got a call about a man assaulting a homeowner after the man tried to steal a dog from a farm property.

Police determined the vehicle the suspect had fled in had been stolen in Saskatchewan, and had stolen Manitoba plates.

Officers found the truck, but when they tried to arrest him, he allegedly rammed the police cruiser, knocking it into the ditch, and then tried to drive over it.

A police dog and dog handler found the man and were assaulted.

Police had to use a Taser to arrest the man.

Jun 10 2013

OTTAWA - The federal privacy watchdog says she will look into any implications for Canada posed by possible U.S. government snooping on a wide scale.



The issue of data privacy is generating intense debate following revelations the U.S. National Security Agency has been tapping into the information banks of American Internet giants.

Britain's Guardian newspaper, quoting leaked NSA documents, says a top-secret data-mining program known as Prism has given the U.S. government access to a huge volume of emails, chat logs and other information from Internet companies including Google, Microsoft and Apple.

The office of privacy commissioner Jennifer Stoddart said Monday the scope of information reportedly being collected raises "significant concerns."

The major Internet companies have denied participation in Prism, and Stoddart said it is difficult to assess the merit of the allegations. However, she plans to confer with the watchdog that oversees the Communications Security Establishment - the Canadian counterpart

to the NSA - "to determine how the personal information of Canadians may be affected."

Stoddart also said she plans to contact fellow international data-protection authorities, who may share similar concerns about the information of their citizens, to discuss combining fact-finding efforts.

The CSE, with headquarters in a plain-looking building in Ottawa's south end, monitors foreign computer, satellite, radio and telephone traffic. It is a key component of the intelligence-sharing network known as the Five Eyes - Canada, the United States, Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

Britain's Government Communications Headquarters, which works closely with the NSA and CSE, has had access to the Prism system for at least three years and generated 197 intelligence reports from it last year, the Guardian reported.

Canada's CSE has had no similar access to Prism, Defence Minister Peter MacKay said Monday in the House of Commons.

"The answer is no," MacKay said bluntly during question period.

The Guardian has also reported that the NSA has been handed access to phone records from Verizon Communications, which has almost 100 million wireless customers, for a three-month period. The order gave the U.S. spy agency not the content of the calls but the metadata - including phone numbers, locations and time of contact.

MacKay was peppered with questions about the CSE's metadata program, which has been in place since 2005, and he stressed that the eavesdropping service was operating within the law.

"This program is specifically prohibited from looking at the information of Canadians," MacKay said.

Robert Decary, the retired judge who keeps an eye on the CSE, first examined how the spy outfit uses metadata in 2006 - and his office says he continues to monitor the efforts.

In December 2011, the CSE advised Decary that MacKay had approved seven new directives to the spy service, including one on the use of metadata gleaned through foreign intelligence gathering.

The directive updated one implemented eight years earlier, though it is not clear why the tweak was deemed necessary.

The document, obtained by The Canadian Press under the Access to Information Act, says the CSE's use of metadata "will be subject to strict conditions to protect the privacy of Canadians, consistent with these standards governing CSE's other programs."

It lists five steps the CSE must take to protect Canadian privacy, though the details were deleted from the version released under the access law.

Stoddart's office recently said in a position paper that when it comes to the CSE's metadata program, "we know very little specific

information at this point, but we want to find out more."

The CSE has a staff of more than 2,000 - including skilled mathematicians and computer whizzes - and an annual budget of about \$400 million.

Jun 10 2013

TORONTO - A Toronto police officer accused of using excessive force while arresting a man at a G20 protest three years ago broke down in court Monday as he recalled one of the most challenging days of his career.

Cst. Babak Andalib-Goortani, who has pleaded not guilty to assault causing bodily harm during the arrest of Toronto man Adam Nobody, repeatedly said his actions were well within the parameters of the instructions he had received over the years.

"The application (of force) I used was in strict compliance with my training," the 33-year-old officer said on the witness stand.

"With what I observed and what was going on in that exact moment, the way I was trained and what I felt at that time, it complied with everything that I was trained with."

Nobody, a 30-year-old stage hand, has testified he was tackled at a protest at the Ontario legislature on June 26, 2010, and was hit several times as several officers piled on top of him.

A photo of his bruised right side has been put into evidence.

Both sides agree that Nobody's arrest was lawful, but the central question is whether the force Andalib-Goortani used was lawful.

Jun 10 2013

VANCOUVER - One of the four Mounties who confronted Robert Dziekanski the night the Polish immigrant was stunned with a Taser, leaving him to die on the floor of the Vancouver airport, says the fatal confrontation was "the most traumatic" thing that had ever happened to him.

Cst. Bill Bentley broke down in tears Monday as he described what happened in the hours after Dziekanski died - part of a pre-trial hearing to determine what evidence should be admitted at his trial for perjury. He is accused of lying at a public inquiry.

Bentley said he was busy taking statements from witnesses when his superior - another one of the officers facing perjury charges - told him Dziekanski had died. Shortly after, he was told to leave the airport and return to the RCMP's detachment near the airport to wait for homicide investigators.

"I was a mess, I was just really upset about the whole incident," said Bentley.

"I describe it as basically the most traumatic thing in my life."

Shortly after a series of questions about his emotional state, Bentley's lawyer changed

the topic, but Bentley choked up as tears ran down his face. The emotional breakdown prompted the judge to stand the hearing down while Bentley regained his composure.

Bentley is accused of lying six times during his testimony at the public inquiry, primarily when he attempted to explain apparent discrepancies between his police notes and an amateur video of the incident. The indictment read out on Monday also alleges Bentley lied when he said he couldn't remember what he said to the other three officers about the incident.

Jun 10 2013

VANCOUVER - The RCMP says a Mountie who helped investigate one of British Columbia's bloodiest gang killings but was later charged with several criminal offences himself has resigned from the force.

The force confirmed in an email Monday evening that Cpl. Paul Johnston has voluntarily submitted his discharge papers, and that they've been accepted.

Johnston was one of four officers who investigated the deaths of six people gunned down in a high-rise apartment building in Surrey, B.C., in October 2007.

But in early 2011, the province's Criminal Justice Branch announced a special prosecutor was looking into allegations that an officer involved in the investigation had an inappropriate relationship with a witness.

Following an investigation by the Ontario Provincial Police, the special prosecutor approved 20 charges in June 2011 against Johnston, Sgt. Derek Brassington, Staff Sgt. David Attew and Cpl. Danny Michaud.

Johnston was charged with four counts related to breach of trust and obstruction of justice.

**TUESDAY
JUNE 11, 2013**

Jun 11 2013

PORT AUX BASQUES, N.L. - A Newfoundland man made it easier for police to arrest him for impaired driving.

Members of the Port Aux Basques RCMP say they saw a man sitting in his car in the detachment's parking lot at about 6 p.m. Monday.

They say that when they approached the vehicle, they found open liquor inside and the driver was showing signs of impairment.

Police say samples of his breath indicated that his blood alcohol level was nearly four times the legal limit.

The 55-year-old Port Aux Basques man was released to appear in court in September to answer to charges of operating a motor vehicle while impaired.

Jun 11 2013

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. - Ontario's police watchdog has cleared a Chatham-Kent police officer in connection with the death of a 30-year-old man who was hit by a train in Chatham last month.

The Special Investigations Unit says the incident happened May 17 when the officer responded to calls about two people who were spotted going through vehicles.

The officer located a male and female suspect being questioned and placed under arrest by another officer, but the SIU says the male suspect ran away while the subject officer was walking back to his cruiser.

The watchdog agency says the officer yelled at the man to stop, but the man continued to flee and ran up an embankment toward railway tracks.

The officer caught up to the man and grabbed one of his pant legs but the man kicked free, causing the officer to slip, then ran across the tracks where he either slipped or tripped on the rail bed stones and was hit by a VIA Rail passenger train.

SIU Director Ian Scott says while the man's death was a "tragic event," the officer was not criminally responsible for his death.

Jun 11 2013

VANCOUVER - Two years after a riot in Vancouver made international headlines, charges have been approved against 229 people while 56 accused rioters are still waiting to learn if they'll be charged.

B.C.'s Criminal Justice Branch says that so far, police have recommended charges against a total of 325 people and that charges were not approved against 40 of them.

To date, 149 people suspected of participating in the riot have entered guilty pleas and 102 of them have received sentences ranging from discharges to more than a year in jail.

Only one person, a 26-year-old man, has been convicted after online video footage showed him using a street barricade to smash a storefront window during a rampage in the June 2011 riot.

Trials are currently scheduled for 15 people accused in the riot that saw people setting cars on fire, smashing windows and looting stores after the Vancouver Canucks lost the Stanley Cup to the Boston Bruins.

In March, the B.C. Court of Appeal rejected a bid by the Crown to get tougher sentences for two men - one of whom was handed a 60-day jail sentence and 18 months probation and while the other received a 90-day sentence to be served on weekends.

Jun 11 2013

SYDNEY, N.S. - A Nova Scotia judge is warning the public to be cautious of a 78-year-old woman known as the Black Widow, even as he sentenced

her to prison for drugging her newly-wed husband.

Melissa Ann Shepard was sentenced to two years and nine months in prison for administering a noxious substance and failing to provide the necessities of life to 76-year-old Fred Weeks.

Provincial Supreme Court Judge Joseph Kennedy says people who have contact with Shepard should be careful because of her criminal past.

Shepard declined to address the court and Weeks offered no comment after she was sentenced.

Court heard that she spiked his coffee with tranquilizers while they were on their honeymoon last fall, days after their wedding.

The Crown says prosecutors suspect Shepard had a financial motive behind her actions.

But her defence lawyer says he doesn't believe there was an intent to harm Weeks, adding that she was - quote - a charming lady.

Her marriage to Weeks was later declared invalid by the province after it said it received incorrect information on the marriage certificate.

Jun 11 2013

TORONTO - Ontario ombudsman Andre Marin on Tuesday released a report on brutality by guards against inmates in the province's jails. Among his 45 recommendations to the provincial government:

- Make clear enforcing or obeying the guards' code of silence is a disciplinary offence.
- Give new recruits instruction on use of force.
- Forbid guards from sharing incident reports with each other or their union before sending them to management.
- Bar guards from being present when an injured inmate is questioned or photographed.
- Enhance surveillance video so guard-inmate interactions are recorded.
- Improve guard training, especially in dealing with special-needs inmates.

Jun 11 2013

HALIFAX - Halifax Regional Police say they have referred an alleged fraud involving a police fund to the RCMP for investigation.

The police force says the Dedication to Duty fund is an independent employee social account that does not contain taxpayers money.

Police say the fund was co-managed by members of the force and an unidentified outside person not employed by the force.

In a news release, police say a number of factors have led to the belief that monies may have been misappropriated.

No members of the force are believed to be involved.

In addition to the RCMP investigation, police say a financial audit of the fund will be conducted and controls will also be tightened.

LAVAL, Que. - Police in Quebec say they have rounded up more than 40 people after carrying out warrants on private residences in and around the Montreal area.

Nearly 400 officers conducted raids today in Montreal, nearby Laval and other municipalities in the area.

Laval police sgt. Frederic Jean says at least 42 arrests were carried out, while more than a dozen weapons and some 600,000 synthetic drug pills were seized.

He says 36 warrants were executed, with almost all involving private residences.

One of the homes in the Laurentians allegedly served as a warehouse where drugs were transferred from powder to pill form.

Jean says the network was a very well-structured group that had ties with the Italian Mob, the Hells Angels and street gangs.

Those arrested ranged in age from 21 all the way up to their 60s.

They will be arraigned Wednesday on several charges including drug possession, drug trafficking and possession with the intent to traffic.

Some are also expected to face charges related to weapons possession.

In 2010 and 2011, the Laval drug squad seized an average 40,000 illegal pills per year and another 105,000 in 2012.

Jun 11 2013

OTTAWA - The RCMP is teaming up with the FBI, the Australian Federal Police and the City of London Police in a cross-border effort to combat the bribing of foreign officials.

The newly formed International Foreign Bribery Taskforce will meet annually to discuss trends and challenges related to foreign bribery crimes, as well as to share methodologies and best practices.

The initiative, announced Tuesday, was officially started in May when all of the parties involved signed a memorandum of understanding.

The task force will allow Canada, the U.S., Australia and the U.K. to work together to strengthen investigations into foreign bribery, the RCMP said in a statement.

Such investigations are often difficult to carry out because of the fact that they involve multiple jurisdictions.

"Bribery and corruption are borderless crimes which cross many police jurisdictions," RCMP assistant commissioner Gilles Michaud said in a statement.

"The International Foreign Bribery Taskforce will allow us to work with our law enforcement partners in North America, Australia and the U.K., and focus on these crimes, which cause serious moral and political concerns, undermine good governance and sustainable economic development, and distort the conditions of international competition."

Last month, the Mounties announced the launch of their new National Division, which will specialize in fighting corruption in the federal government and abroad.

The RCMP has taken on several high-profile corruption cases lately, both within Canada and beyond, such as the international bribery case involving SNC-Lavalin Group and the Senate spending scandal.

Jun 11 2013

Law enforcement officials on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border are gearing up for full implementation of the Shiprider Program, a binational program that erases the border on shared waterways.

The Shiprider Program was announced last year. It will be in full swing this summer on the Detroit River.

The joint program in the Windsor-Detroit area will allow law enforcement officers from Canada and the U.S. to ride together on the Detroit River, patrolling the water and chasing down criminals on both sides of the invisible international boundary. The program is also being used in some parts of British Columbia.

Teams of specially trained and designated law enforcement officers from Canada and the U.S. will co-crew ships originating from both countries.

A number of RCMP officers have been designated law enforcement officers in the U.S. Some U.S. Coast Guard officers have the same designation in Canada. They can perform their duties in either country.

"We traditionally police our side of the border and Americans police their side of the border. But that doesn't come without logistical challenges, communications challenges and the ability to move seamlessly and advance investigations of interests to both countries," RCMP Sgt. Peter Koersvelt said. "We would have to stop at the border, call ahead, reach out to our American partners and attempt to have them intercept."

Koersvelt said officers and dispatchers were constantly tracking charts and GPS to ensure law enforcement didn't cross the border.

"It's so important we respect the sovereignty of the other country," Koersvelt said. "[This] allows the shiprider teams to move across the border and transition lead agencies depending on where the bad guys are going."

For example, if a chase on the water leaves Canada and enters the U.S., the American law would kick in but the Canadian officers would have arresting authority on the U.S. side of the river.

Canadian officers undergo a 10-day training course at the USCG Maritime Law Enforcement Academy in Charleston, South Carolina, where they learn U.S. law. Americans are trained in Canadian law.

Koersvelt said both Canadian and U.S.

officers have the authority to go ashore on each other's country if they deem it necessary.

Earlier this year, the Department of Homeland Security announced it will pay up to \$7,000 each for 30 multi-band radios to be used by Canadian first responders in border cities that share U.S. waterways.

The Shiprider Program isn't necessarily debuting. It's been used under "special circumstances" in the past, Koersvelt said.

A joint marine effort employed in Vancouver during the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. A similar program was used in Windsor-Detroit during the 2006 Super Bowl.

Berry said that besides the RCMP and U.S. Coast Guard, the two agencies involved in the Shiprider Program, there are 26 other agencies patrolling the water.

"In the U.S., if you can name a law enforcement agency, they have a boat and they're out there," Barry said.

(CBC News)

Jun 11 2013

Almost 300 current and former female Mounties have come forward to join a class-action lawsuit alleging harassment within the ranks of the RCMP.

Documents filed in B.C. Supreme Court Monday in support of class-action certification say the action now includes 282 women from all territories and provinces across Canada, with the exception of P.E.I. The largest provincial contingent of women who joined, 121, are from B.C., while 46 of the women are from Ontario. Another 35 are from Alberta.

The lawyers arguing the lawsuit say 100 of the complainants are still with the force, either as officers, civilian members, or public service employees.

The civil suit was filed last year by Janet Merlo, a former RCMP officer who was based in Nanaimo. Merlo, who alleges she suffered bullying and verbal abuse throughout a career that began in March 1991 and ended in March 2010, says she is overwhelmed by the number of other women who have come forward.

"I'm amazed, actually, that for so many years a lot of us thought we were alone and didn't say anything," she told CBC News Tuesday. "Once we did start talking, we realized that there was quite a group of us... I'm just amazed."

In her claim, Merlo describes a number of humiliating incidents that she alleges occurred during the course of her 19 years with the force. The alleged incidents described in Merlo's affidavit range from receiving verbal propositions, to facing gender-based comments challenging her ability to perform her duties, to witnessing differences in how male and female officers were accommodated at her workplace.

The RCMP have applied to have certain

parts of Merlo's claim struck. The plaintiffs' lawyers say they want the application for certification heard as soon as possible.

(CBC News)

WEDNESDAY JUNE 12, 2013

Jun 12 2013

WINNIPEG - Some entrepreneurial Winnipeggers are set to unleash an army of bounty hunters keen on nabbing people who park in disabled parking spots without a permit or in front of a fire hydrant.

All that would be needed is a smartphone and the "spotsquad" app.

Co-founder Chris Johnson says he and his partners haven't yet signed any agreements to give informants a percentage of any ticket fines, but he adds that some private parking lot operators are interested.

He says while many people say they would never snitch on a fellow driver, he expects they would privately jump at the chance to make a couple of bucks while cracking down on inconsiderate parkers.

The app would allow people to snap a picture of a parking violation and send the photo to police, private parking operators or city wardens. A parking warden could then be dispatched to issue a ticket.

If a ticket resulted in a fine, under the plan, informants would get a cut deposited into their bank accounts or could direct the cash to their favourite charities.

"If you can snap a picture and make \$8, who's not going to do that?" Johnson said Tuesday. "Especially when you already wish that guy wasn't getting away with (breaking) the law when you're staying within the lines."

The app isn't unique. Parking Mobility, an organization in Texas, has one which allows deputized, trained volunteers to take photos of people who park illegally in disabled spots. When drivers are fined, part of the proceeds go to charities and a program to educate offenders about the consequences of their parking infractions.

Parking Mobility is doing a trial in Vancouver and Marsh said it's been disappointing. For one thing, unlike in the U.S., parking abuse on private property can't be reported.

"It has to be on-street parking," he said. "While the program is still active there, we have very little generation of anything ... mainly because the citizens are frustrated that their violations can't become anything if they're on private property."

Jun 12 2013

WASHINGTON - Your eyes may be on the road ahead, but if you're on the phone, punching an address into the GPS or using

a voice-activated app to send a text message, there's a disconnect between your eyeballs and your brain.

"Cognitive distraction is something that drivers aren't aware of, so they may go through a red light or a stop sign and be totally unaware they've missed it," said David L. Strayer, whose research team at the University of Utah conducted a two-year study of the problem "They will tell you 'I never saw it' because their brain was focused elsewhere."

The new study's most surprising finding is that technology developed to enhance the safety of text messaging while driving isn't very effective.

When compared with other distractions inside the car, the report said, "We found that interacting with the speech-to-text system was the most cognitively distracting. This clearly suggests that the adoption of voice-based systems in the vehicle may have unintended consequences that adversely affect traffic safety."

The researchers did a series of controlled studies using driving simulators and on-road tests. For two years, groups of test subjects wore a Medusa-like cap of electrode wires to test how their brains reacted to the rapidly increasing number of distractions that sap the ability of drivers to focus on the road. Each distraction-induced change in brain waves was marked by the computer with a squiggly line on a graph.

Sponsored by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, the study was issued Wednesday.

The data was generally consistent with other recent research that can be boiled down to a simple conclusion: the more complicated and absorbing a task, the greater the distraction from the road. The longer it takes to complete — a conversation, a message, setting a GPS destination — the worse it gets.

The study also underscored a problem called "inattention blindness," which translates into layman's terms as "I see it but it doesn't register." Because of a distraction, it takes longer for a driver to connect what he or she sees to an appropriate reaction like braking or swerving to safety.

"It's very, very powerful," said the foundation's president, Peter Kissinger. "The light can register, but the brain is focused on something else."

US Federal data shows that distracted driving was a factor in about 10 percent of the fatal accidents nationwide in 2011. In addition to 3,331 deaths — a slight increase from the previous year — 387,000 people were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver.

(Washington Post)

Jun 12 2013

RICHMOND, B.C. - A group that represents about 2,000 Mounties across Canada has set up a legal aid program

it says will help protect officers from a government bill that gives the RCMP commissioner too much power.

Bill C-42 would give RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson and a revamped complaints body greater powers to dismiss and demote members, including those Paulson has described as bad apples.

Mounted Police Professional Association's national president Rae Banwarie told a news conference in Richmond, B.C., that the bill infringes on Mounties' charter rights, but many members don't have the money to settle disputes in court.

The legal-aid program, which is funded by the association's members, would cover fees for legal advice, lawyers and the costs of formal disciplinary proceedings.

The association claims Bill C-42 forces officers to give incriminating evidence against themselves — something that other Canadian citizens would never have to do.

The bill was tabled last June, several months after the force was hit with a yet-to-be certified class action lawsuit over alleged discrimination and harassment of nearly 300 female members.

Jun 12 2013

TORONTO - Injuries on the torso of a man arrested at a G20 protest were likely not caused by a baton, the trial of a police officer accused of assault heard Wednesday.

Cst. Babak Andalib-Goortani can be seen on video thrusting his baton at 30-year-old Adam Nobody after he was tackled to the ground by several officers at a G20 demonstration June 26, 2010, at the Ontario legislature.

The officer has testified that he did so because Nobody was resisting arrest, which Nobody denies.

The lawfulness of Nobody's arrest is not in question, rather the judge must decide if the force Andalib-Goortani used was excessive. He has pleaded not guilty to assault with a weapon.

A photo of Nobody's torso taken not long after the protest shows three bruises on his right side — two near the bottom of his rib cage and one on his hip. Forensic pathologist Dr. Christopher Milroy testified Wednesday that they are not consistent with bruises he would expect to see from baton jabs.

"You may get a sort of donut appearance... where you have a ring of bruising with an area of pallor," Milroy said. "These are oval shaped and they appear to me to be much larger than the end of the asp (baton)."

The bruises don't show "any typical features" of being caused by a baton, Milroy said. They could have been caused by hard punches, or knee strikes, or "more likely" by kicks, he said.

The bruises could have even been caused when Nobody fell to the ground when he

was tackled, Milroy said. There is bone - ribs or the hip - under each of the areas where a bruise is seen, so the bruising may have been caused by the ground crushing the skin against the bone, he said.

Milroy agreed under cross-examination by Crown Attorney Philip Perlmutter that it's "possible" a baton caused the injuries, but "less likely."

All of the evidence has now been heard in the case and Ontario Court Judge Louise Bontham will hear closing arguments on Friday.

Two Toronto police officers also testified Wednesday that they saw Nobody trying to incite the crowd at G20 protests hours before his arrest.

When Nobody testified earlier in the trial he portrayed himself as a bystander, mostly at the protest to observe, and said before his arrest he only interacted with police to question them about why they were arresting people in what he thought was a designated protest zone. He also dropped his water bottle behind a police line and said he argued with them for several minutes in an attempt to get it back.

The two officers testified that they saw Nobody shouting profanity at the police lines, yelling at the crowd that they didn't have to obey police and threatening to kick officers in the head.

Police had already tried to arrest Nobody several times that day but he had slipped away, the officers said.

Jun 12 2013

WILDWOOD, N.J. - Wearing your pants too low in one New Jersey shore resort town is about to get expensive.

Wildwood has passed a law banning overly saggy pants, providing for fines of between \$25 and \$200 for violators.

The law was passed Wednesday. It prohibits pants that droop 3 inches below the waist, exposing skin or underwear.

Mayor Ernest Troiano says many longtime visitors to the popular shore town have complained about having to look at people's rear ends "hanging out" while walking the boardwalk.

Visitor Frank Krueger says he wants a "family atmosphere" in Wildwood. His wife, Denise, says saggy pants are "disgusting."

The ban takes effect July 2 and applies only to the boardwalk.

THURSDAY
JUNE 13, 2013

Jun 13 2013

MONTREAL - A showdown is looming between the federal government and Quebec over the province's controversial right-to-die legislation.

The landmark bill was tabled in the national assembly yesterday.

The legislation would allow a Quebec doctor, who gets a patient's repeated consent, to administer medication that causes death.

Federal Justice Minister Rob Nicholson pointed out in a statement last night that assisted suicide and euthanasia are illegal in Canada.

Quebec argues delivery of health-care services is a provincial jurisdiction and maintains it is on firm legal ground with the bill.

Nicholson adds that the Supreme Court has upheld existing laws and Parliament voted against any changes in 2010.

Jun 13 2013

SAN FRANCISCO - Top prosecutors in San Francisco and New York are set to announce the formation of a nationwide initiative and coalition of police, prosecutors and other officials in an attempt to stop a surge in smartphone thefts.

Officials say San Francisco District Attorney George Gascon and New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman plan to announce the Save Our Smartphones Initiative in New York on Thursday.

The announcement comes on the same day Gascon and Schneiderman are scheduled to co-host a "Smartphone Summit" with representatives from Apple Inc., Samsung Electronics Co., Google Inc. and Microsoft Corp.

Among the moves the prosecutors seek is the industry-wide introduction of a "kill switch" to render stolen phones worthless.

Apple has said such a feature would be part of its iOS7 smartphone software released in the fall.

Jun 13 2013

OTTAWA - The Supreme Court of Canada will hear arguments today on the constitutionality of Canada's prostitution law.

The hearing follows last year's Ontario Court of Appeal decision striking down the Criminal Code ban on bawdy houses on the grounds that the law puts sex workers in danger by forcing them to work outside.

Osgoode Hall law professor Alan Young will be leading the court challenge.

He is representing three women at the centre of the case: retired dominatrix Terri-Jean Bedford, former prostitute Valerie Scott and Vancouver sex worker Amy Lebovitch.

Lawyers for the federal government and the province of Ontario will be arguing against any decriminalization.

In all, the court has set aside five and a half hours to hear from more than a dozen interested parties.

Jun 13 2013

KAMLOOPS, B.C. - Mounties in Saskatchewan and British Columbia have teamed up to make eight arrests and bust what they alleged is a ring dealing

in drugs, guns and stolen goods.

Supt. Kevin Jones in Saskatchewan says the investigation has been underway for 18-months.

He says it began as an organized crime investigation in Saskatchewan but clues led to B.C., and one person was arrested on marijuana trafficking charges in Merritt on June 9.

A video surveillance system was also seized from the Merritt home and seven other arrests have been made, including two in Kelowna and five in Regina.

Jones says raids in both provinces have netted \$120,000, 1.5 kilograms of cocaine, 1.1-kilograms of marijuana and several weapons.

He says all the suspects face charges ranging from trafficking to participating in a criminal organization.

(CHNL)

Jun 13 2013

OTTAWA - Statistics Canada says criminal courts completed approximately 386,500 adult cases in 2011-2012, down six per cent from the previous year and the lowest number of cases completed since 2006-2007.

The agency says youth courts, which handle cases involving 12 to 17 year-olds, completed about 48,000 cases in 2011-2012, down 10 per cent from the previous year.

It was the third straight year of decline for youth cases and the lowest number of cases completed in youth courts since national data were first collected in 1991-1992.

The largest drop in completed adult cases was the 17 per cent reported in the Northwest Territories, with cases in Prince Edward Island down 13 per cent.

Newfoundland and Labrador reported the only increase in 2011-2012, with cases up 2.0 per cent, while Quebec remained stable.

The largest decreases in the number of completed youth court cases were in the territories, where declines ranged from 23 per cent to 36 per cent, while British Columbia recorded the largest provincial decline, at 16 per cent.

Jun 13 2013

TORONTO - Public Safety Minister Vic Toews says al-Qaida has weakened but remains the leading terrorist threat and Canada is a "priority target."

Toews says al-Qaida still provides guidance to regional affiliates and other terror groups.

In releasing the 2013 report on threats to Canada, Toews said conflicts such as that in Syria could create fertile terrorist training grounds.

The report also identifies homegrown violent extremism as a key threat.

Three people have been charged in Canada in the past year for alleged terror-related activities.

In all, the report concludes that terrorism poses a "persistent threat" to Canada.

Jun 13 2013

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. - External reviews of Newfoundland and Labrador's legal aid and sheriff services will examine a number of issues including staffing levels, workload and funding.

The provincial government released the terms of references today for the reviews, which were announced this spring following a backlash from legal experts over planned Justice Department cuts to courtroom security sheriffs and Crown attorneys.

The province's justice minister later backtracked on those cuts.

The government also announced today the appointment of two people to lead the reviews.

Leigh DesRoches, a retired RCMP inspector, will lead the review of the province's Sheriff's Office, while retired provincial court judge John Rorke will oversee the work on the legal aid system.

Jun 13 2013

OTTAWA - The Supreme Court of Canada grappled Thursday with the constitutionality of Canada's prostitution law, as demonstrators from both sides of the issue aired their views with colourful flair on its outdoor steps.

Federal lawyer Michael Morris argued that the Ontario Court of Appeal went too far last year when it struck down the Criminal Code ban on bawdy houses on the grounds that the law puts sex workers in danger by forcing them to work outside.

"In the face of a complex social problem, uncertainty and contradicting social science evidence, we submit that the Ontario Court of Appeal erred," Morris argued.

Lawyers for the province of Ontario also argued against any decriminalization.

Several justices made the point that prostitution itself is not in fact illegal, and raised questions about how that should affect many of the key activities related to it that are in fact banned under sections of the Criminal Code.

Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin raised the question of whether that means that prostitutes should be able to hire security guards and work in secure brothels, off the street.

"It could be Brinks or somebody. I'm not sure they're in that business," she opined, sparking muted laughter in the court.

The Ontario Court of Appeal struck down the section that forbids brothels, but it upheld a ban on communication for the purposes of prostitution, which makes street prostitution illegal.

The court also imposed limits on the section that prohibits living off the avails of prostitution to exclude people such as a sex worker's bodyguard, accountant or receptionist. It said the provision should only apply "in circumstances of exploitation."

Federal and provincial lawyers are arguing that the intent of Parliament is impose limits

on prostitution.

"The assertion that prostitution is legal in Canada is misleading. Prostitution has always been and remains more illegal than legal in Canada," argued lawyer Jamie Klukach, appearing for the Ontario Attorney General.

Osgoode Hall law professor Alan Young, who is leading the court challenge, argued the opposite in a passionate address to the court.

Young slammed the "mythmaking, fear mongering and storytelling" of his legal opponents and the "powerful lofty rarefied statements that don't reflect the law."

He urged the court to set aside moral considerations and stick to the core legal issues.

Young is representing three women at the centre of the case: retired dominatrix Terri-Jean Bedford, former prostitute Valerie Scott and Vancouver sex worker Amy Lebovitch.

In all, the court set aside five and a half hours to hear from more than a dozen interested parties.

Some groups are arguing for some form of legalization, while others say prostitution must remain against the law.

Jun 13 2013

TORONTO - Toronto police Chief Bill Blair says a series of early-morning raids has led to the arrest of dozens of suspected drug and gun traffickers and the seizure of large amounts of drugs, weapons and cash.

Blair says 39 search warrants have been executed in the so-called Project Traveller, which began in June, 2012, following numerous violent crimes, including murder and attempted murder.

The raids began shortly after 5 a.m. and involved police from multiple jurisdictions including Peel, York, Halton, Durham, the RCMP and Ontario Provincial Police as well as police in Edmonton and officers of the Canadian Border Services Agency.

Deputy Chief Mark Saunders says 19 people were arrested this morning in Toronto and nine in Windsor, adding that to date 43 people have been arrested in the investigation.

Targets around the Greater Toronto Area included an apartment building where an alleged video that appeared to show Mayor Rob Ford smoking crack cocaine was reported to be located.

Blair said he could comment on any evidence or investigative methods in the case and that it would all come out in court.

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