

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

A CHRONICLE OF NEWS FOR THE CANADIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY

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Executive Digest

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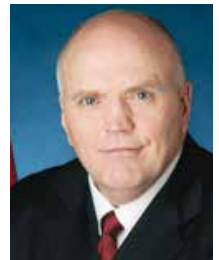
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Ontario ombudsman names former police chiefs as advisors



Nov 05 2013

TORONTO - Ontario Ombudsman Andre Marin has appointed former Ottawa police chief and assistant RCMP commissioner Sen. Vern White and former deputy and interim Toronto police chief Mike Boyd to act as advisers for an investigation into police conflict de-escalation.

“We want to make sure that our recommendations are practical and reflect the reality of police work,” Marin said.

Marin says the Ontario government should issue binding de-escalation directives to police on dealing with aggressive and emotionally distressed people.

The Community Safety Ministry has the power to do so and it's time for it to act, Marin said during a speech in Ottawa Tuesday.

“Does it make any sense that a certain behaviour in Ottawa, in Toronto, in London, can lead to you being tasered, shot or de-escalated, depending on which city you're in?” Marin said.



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“Would it not make sense to have one, intelligent, uniform policy applied across the board?”

British Columbia issued province-wide guidelines on the use of force after the tasing death of Polish immigrant Robert Dziekanski.

Giving police better conflict de-escalation tools would benefit both them and members of the public, Marin said.

The Special Investigations Unit has made progress in recent years when it was “so steeped in police culture, that it wasn’t doing its job,” Marin said.

In the 1990s, the province did issue regulations around high-speed pursuits after a series of deadly incidents that resulted in a significant reduction in the problem.

It has not taken any similar steps since, Marin said.

“The government of Ontario has to decide will it continue to sit on the sidelines, or will it exercise its authority to issue those rules,” he said.

Following the police killing of Sammy Yatim, 19, on a streetcar in Toronto in July, Marin announced his office would investigate how police react in such situations.

He said his office has since received scores of complaints and submissions around police shootings.

A spokesman for Community Safety Minister Madeleine Meilleur said they would co-operate with Marin’s investigation.

“We take de-escalation and use of force very seriously and we look forward to seeing what comes out of his work,” Craig MacBride said.

THURSDAY OCTOBER 31, 2013

Oct 31 2013

EDMONTON - An investigative unit says a 39-year-old man who was Tasered by Edmonton police has died in hospital.

The Alberta Serious Incident Response Team, known as ASIRT, says an autopsy will be done on the man who died Wednesday night.

He was hospitalized in serious condition last week after an encounter with police.

There have been few details about what happened.

ASIRT hasn’t said how many times the man was hit with a Taser, but media reports have quoted witnesses who said it was three times.

Oct 31 2013

WINNIPEG - Manitoba is proposing a new law giving police officers the power to seize alcohol from a booze can or kick a known gang member out of licensed bar or restaurant even though no crime has been committed.



City of Winnipeg Minister Kevin Chief said Thursday the province is trying to balance the rights of individuals as well as keeping the community safe.

Police also say it will give them the edge in shutting down chronic party houses and keeping gang members in check - removing the onus that’s currently put on frustrated neighbours or a restaurant owner who fears reprisals if they ask a gang member to leave their premise.

Winnipeg police Staff Sgt. Kelly Denison said the new law takes it up a notch from what’s already on the books in Alberta.

Police in that province have had the authority to remove gang members from licensed establishments since 2010.

Manitoba’s version will include known violent criminals and allow police to remove them if they believe there is a risk to public safety.

The province expects to have a new act in place by 2014.
(Winnipeg Free Press)

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 01, 2013

Nov 01 2013

TORONTO - The city’s chief of police consulted two lawyers before making his jaw-dropping announcement that investigators had obtained a video that appears to show Mayor Rob Ford smoking crack cocaine, a spokesman said Friday.



Ford’s lawyer has called for Chief Bill Blair to resign for what he called the public convicting of the mayor at the news conference on Thursday.

But Blair’s spokesman said the chief wasn’t just speaking off the cuff.

“Chief Blair sought and took legal advice from two very experienced and distinguished lawyers prior to the news conference,” spokesman Mark Pugash said Friday.

“No one should be surprised: these are extremely important matters and due diligence is something that has to be done.”

Blair went to that length because he felt it “absolutely appropriate and necessary,” Pugash added.

Ford’s lawyer Dennis Morris has denounced Blair, who said, among other things, that police had recovered the video from a hard drive.

Blair also confirmed it as the video previously reported as apparently showing the mayor smoking crack cocaine.

“As a citizen of Toronto I’m disappointed,” Blair told the media Thursday.

“This is a traumatic issue for the citizens of this city and for the reputation of this city and that concerns me.”

Nov 01 2013

AMHERST - Deputy Chief Ian Naylor is moving up the police ranks.

Amherst town council announced Thursday that Naylor will be the town’s new chief of police.

Naylor, who had served as acting chief since former chief Charles Rushton retired last year, has been with the Amherst force since 1988. Before that he served for a decade with the RCMP.

“I am pleased with the confidence that council has placed in me and I’m looking

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forward to working with staff and our community partners to ensure the Amherst Police Department provides the policing services which meet the needs of our community," said Naylor on Friday of his appointment.

(Chronicle Herald)

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 02, 2013

Nov 02 2013

MONTREAL - A Montreal judge has ordered the extradition of a murder suspect but not before blasting Saguenay police for bungling his arrest and alleged confession.

Montreal Superior Court Justice Guy Cournoyer ordered murder suspect Kyle Sheppard back to the U.S.A. to face charges of killing his wife Katie Sheppard on November 2, 2012.

Sheppard's lawyer, Toronto-based Daniel Brodsky, plans to appeal the extradition, a process that will likely see Sheppard remain in Canadian prison for at least another year.

Sheppard, 31, who is a Canadian citizen, drove to Saguenay following the death of his wife on November 2, 2012.

Katie Sheppard, 29, had been found dead on the porch of their Toledo home with a belt around her neck.

Sheppard allegedly called police and confessed to the killing. Police arrested Sheppard on November 4 at 5 a.m. but failed to take notes or inform Sheppard that he had the right to a lawyer.

In his extradition order, Cournoyer blasted the two Saguenay police officers' failure to inform the accused of his right to legal counsel, which he said showed a "blatant disregard for (Sheppard's) rights."

"The police officers failed to keep appropriate notes, their oral testimony was unreliable and there was no reliable evidence establishing the supposed urgency," he wrote.

Sheppard faces 30 years in prison or could even end up joining the 150-or-so Ohio death row inmates waiting for a lethal injection if charged and found guilty.

(CTV Montreal)

MONDAY NOVEMBER 04, 2013

Nov 04 2013

An international children's rights group says it has uncovered dozens of Canadians willing to pay to watch a 10-year-old Filipino girl perform sex acts on a webcam during a sting operation.

The group Terres des Hommes, operating out of Amsterdam, says it has identified 54 Canadians among more than 1,000 adults from 71 countries looking for webcam sex tourism.

A spokesman says all the names have been turned over to Interpol.

The sting involved setting up a pretend 10-year-old girl named "Sweetie," who signed on to various public chatrooms.

The spokesman says they were surprised at how easy it was to get the men involved to identify themselves.

He also says webcam sex tourism involving children appears to be an emerging market that police do not have a handle on.

Nov 04 2013

VANCOUVER - Four on-duty, uniformed Vancouver police officers eating supper were hurt when a BMW suddenly plowed into a restaurant in Vancouver's West End on Sunday night.



The front window of the Fatburger restaurant was smashed in about 8 p.m., leaving the silver BMW sedan sitting partly in the restaurant.

No other restaurant patrons or staff were injured.

"It's something you don't expect, working your shift. You think the dangerous parts are over when you are sitting in a restaurant having dinner.

Unfortunately these things happen," said Const. Brian Montague. "We're hoping for a speedy recovery for our officers."

There is nothing to indicate the act was deliberate, said Montague.

Injuries to the officers ranged from broken bones to complaints of difficulty breathing and chest pain, said Montague. By Monday morning, all four were recovering at home from "various injuries that, everything considered, are relatively minor," he added.

Witness reports indicate the southbound BMW, driven by a 30-year-old woman, veered suddenly into the restaurant, said Montague.

While the cause of the crash is still unknown, alcohol and speed do not appear to be factors, Montague said Monday morning.

Officers seized the woman's cellphone, and will be investigating whether she was making a call at the time, he said.

The woman did not appear to be injured, but was "shaken up" and taken to hospital as a precaution, he said.

(Vancouver Sun)

Nov 04 2013

TORONTO - The province's police watchdog has been called in after a man was shot in the upper torso in northwest Toronto.

Paramedics say the man was rushed to hospital in serious condition after the shooting Monday afternoon at a highrise apartment.

They say he is expected to survive.

Const. Wendy Drummond says only that police were called to the residence for a "get belongings" call when there was an "altercation."

She says the Special Investigations Unit has been called in.

(The Canadian Press, Newstalk1010)

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 05, 2013

Nov 05 2013

TORONTO - The brother of Toronto's embattled mayor is calling for the city's police chief to step down temporarily.

Coun. Doug Ford says the city's police services board should investigate Chief Bill Blair's handling of a video that allegedly shows his brother, Mayor Rob Ford, appearing to smoke crack cocaine.

Doug Ford told several media outlets Tuesday that Blair should step down while the probe he's calling for is held.

"In my opinion, this is the most political police chief that I've ever run into," he told CP24. "He believes he's the judge, jury and executioner and this has created a bias towards the mayor."

The remarks by the mayor's brother follow a bombshell statement from Blair last week that police have a video that media reports had said appears to show the mayor smoking crack cocaine.

Blair said he was disappointed as a citizen and that "this is a traumatic issue for the citizens of this city and for the reputation of this city and that concerns me."

Doug Ford said Blair's comments were improper for the chief to make and suggested a bias against the mayor.

"When he released verbally the documentation he made his personal comments while he was in his police chief uniform and there's a massive conflict of interest," he told CP24.

Blair's spokesman, Mark Pugash, refused to wade into the fray.

(680News, CP24, The Canadian Press)

Nov 05 2013

TORONTO - Calls are growing louder for stiffer penalties in Ontario for motorists caught driving while using their cellphones.

The insurance industry says such distracted

driving has overtaken drunk driving as the most serious danger on the roads.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada says it has seen four times as many motorists charged with distracted driving on long weekends as those charged with drunk driving.

Advocates are urging the governing Liberals to impose larger fines and more demerit points for drivers convicted of distracted driving.

Other provinces and territories have already started using demerit points to help enforce their laws, which advocates say will go a long way to reduce distracted driving.

A private member's bill that proposes to bring in these changes received all party support last week in the legislature.

Nov 05 2013

MONTREAL - A former union boss with ties to shady crime figures is denying he allowed the Mob and criminal bikers to infiltrate one of Quebec's most powerful labour organizations.

Jocelyn Dupuis says they weren't running the Quebec Federation of Labour's construction wing during his time as its director.

Dupuis insists he wasn't an intermediary between mobsters and bikers and the union's investment wing - he was just trying to help people get ahead in life.

He testified at Quebec's corruption inquiry today that he didn't realize he was involved with organized crime figures.

Dupuis says he knew Raynald Desjardins had previous convictions for drugs, but that he didn't know about his Mob ties.

Desjardins is a former Rizzuto lieutenant currently incarcerated pending his first-degree murder trial in the slaying of a New York Mob boss near Montreal.

Nov 05 2013

BROCKVILLE - Brockville Police Chief John Gardiner is retiring next year, months ahead of the city's expected proposal from the Ontario Provincial Police.

The Brockville police services board announced this morning it has received and accepted a notice from the chief "indicating that he does not wish to renew his employment contract, with the (board), that is to expire May 31, 2014."

"The board is in process of formulating a plan to determine a replacement for the position of police chief," added the statement.

But the chief, whose three-year contract with the city expires next May 31, said his decision to leave is not related to the ongoing costing exercise.

"I think it's time to perhaps move on and have a look at some other things," said Gardiner.

The chief will have been in policing for more than 35 years at the end of May, and has

spent his entire adult life with a badge, starting at age 21.

"It's going to be a little strange not being a police officer anymore, but every police officer reaches a point in his life when he knows that it's time," said Gardiner.

The chief's decision comes amid a protracted debate in the community over whether the 181-year-old city police force should be replaced by the OPP.

That debate will reach its full height once the results of the OPP's costing, currently delayed by a provincewide billing review, reach the city.

That is not expected until next September at the earliest.

(Recorder and Times)

Nov 05 2013

CALGARY - A man is in hospital in life-threatening condition after he was shot by a Calgary police officer.

Calgary police say two officers approached a suspicious vehicle around 11 am.

Police say as the vehicle drove away one of the officers fired his weapon, hitting the man at least once.

Neither of the two officers were hurt.

Investigators who report to Alberta's Justice Department have been called in to review what happened.

Nov 05 2013

MONTREAL - The former Quebec biker investigator charged with selling secrets to Hells Angels also offered his services to the Mafia, QMI Agency has learned.



Benoit Roberge, charged with gangsterism, breach of trust and obstruction, had connections with Rizzuto crime family associate Rocco Sollecito, say sources close to the investigation.

Police had earlier said Roberge was spotted with an organized crime member when a SWAT team arrested him on Montreal's south shore on Oct. 5.

QMI has learned that the reputed gangster in question was a member of the Macri crime family.

Roberge worked with a Montreal-based anti-biker squad for 11 years. He left the unit in August.

Police confirm that information from ongoing biker investigations was allegedly sold

for \$50,000 per transaction.

The data jeopardized informants including Sylvain (Boubou) Boulanger, who turned his back on the Hells Angels in 2006 to become a highly paid provincial police contact, QMI has learned.

Now-deceased biker Rene Charlebois was offered dates and locations where the police met and monitored Boulanger, says a source. Boulanger is one of the star witnesses Project SharQc, a massive police operation that netted 156 Hells Angels members and associates in April 2009.

"(Charlebois) wanted an astronomical sum for this info," a source tells QMI.

QMI police analyst Richard Dupuis says that such sensitive information would be worth at least \$1 million on the open market.

The deal never materialized and Charlebois also became a police informant.

QMI reported last month that his cover was blown in another leak connected to Roberge.

Charlebois escaped from his minimum-security prison on Sept. 14 and committed suicide 12 days later.

(QMI Agency)

Nov 05 2013

A police officer testified he was on his own for the first few hours of a crisis that led to the death of a man in Neskantaga First Nation in December 2006.

On Monday, Nishnawbe Aski Police Service constable Danny Quisses testified at the inquest into Bruce Moonias' death.

Quisses said he was in the community by himself the night of Dec. 9, 2006.

He said two Nishnawbe Aski Police Service officers were assigned to Neskantaga First Nation at that time, but his partner was out of the community.

Quisses testified that NAPS officers at Neskantaga First Nation work 15 days on and then have six days off. Officers usually leave the community during their rest days so, for that six-day period, there is only one police officer in the whole community.

He noted he works eight-hour shifts, but if he's alone in the community he gets calls at home or on the police radio 24 hours a day.

On the evening of Dec. 9, 2006, Quisses said he was off work and was hosting a card game at his house when someone called to report gunshots.

It was determined they were coming from the home of Bruce Moonias, which he shared with his father, Stanley Moonias. Stanley Moonias was at the card game.

Quisses testified that, just after 11 p.m. that night, he told Stanley Moonias to call home to try to get in contact with Bruce, but there was no answer.

Quisses said he called his Nishnawbe Aski Police Service staff sergeant in Sioux Lookout to report what was happening. His

staff sergeant instructed him not to go into Bruce Moonias' residence for safety reasons and to evacuate neighbouring houses. Quisses said his superior flew to Eabemetoong First Nation to pick up more NAPS officers, and it took until about 2:40 a.m. for them to arrive in Neskantaga.

Quisses said he also received a call from the NAPS chief of police to say he was calling in the Ontario Provincial Police for help. He was aware Quisses was alone and told him to "hang tight."

The OPP Emergency Response Team arrived at about 7:40 a.m. Dec. 10. They secured the area around Bruce Moonias' house. It wasn't until the OPP's tactical response unit arrived later in the afternoon that officers could make contact with Moonias inside.

Quisses testified that around 4:45 p.m. he was asked to get a stretcher and notify the community nursing station, because the OPP tactical response team was going into the house. Quisses said the medical vehicle at the nursing station wasn't working, so he took the stretcher in his NAPS police truck.

Quisses brought the stretcher into the house and saw Bruce Moonias in the bed. He testified Moonias was alert and greeted him by name.

After other officers brought Bruce Moonias out on the stretcher, Quisses drove him to the nursing station in the back of his truck.

Quisses testified Moonias was still alert and talking to people at the airport before he was flown out to Thunder Bay by air ambulance.

But in the early morning hours of Dec. 11, Quisses was notified that Bruce Moonias had died. He went to Bruce's aunt's home to break the news to her and to Bruce's father Stanley.

(CBC News)

Nov 05 2013

TORONTO - The chief of police wants \$386,000 to put 184 Tasers in the hands of front-line officers — increasing the controversial weapon's use by one-third, despite some strong public opposition.

But the chair of the Police Services Board says Chief Bill Blair will have to wait.

Blair will table a report at Thursday's police board meeting — following Community Safety Minister Madeleine Meilleur's approval of the expanded use in August — arguing the force has a record of "good judgment under difficult circumstances."

Other than referring to "operational needs" and "community safety," Blair offered no justification in his written report for requesting the expansion now.

The board will vote to receive the report Thursday for further debate and won't be voting on whether to approve Blair's request at this stage.

(Torstar)

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 06, 2013

Nov 06 2013

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. - Police say more than two dozen people have been arrested after a nine-month investigation into biker gang activity in the Niagara area.

Niagara regional police say they began investigating the activities of the Outlaws motorcycle gang and Black Pistons motorcycle gang in the area earlier this year.

The investigation - dubbed Project Resurgence - was expanded in April to include investigators with Canada Border Services Agency, Ontario Provincial Police and RCMP.

Police say they uncovered evidence of narcotics trafficking - including heroin, cocaine and marijuana - along with evidence of weapons trafficking, break and enter, assault, extortion and participation in a criminal organization.

More than 220 officers - including some from the Toronto, Guelph and Hamilton police forces - took part in early morning raids Wednesday, executing about 30 search and arrest warrants in and around the Niagara area.

The 28 Niagara residents arrested face charges including narcotics offences, conspiracy, break and enter and criminal organization-related offences.

Niagara police say the investigation is ongoing and more charges and arrests are expected.

Nov 06 2013

WINNIPEG - The Manitoba government, Winnipeg police and social agencies are teaming up on a new anti-crime program in the city's North End neighbourhood.

Premier Greg Selinger says the aim is to improve communication between the different agencies, so that troubled families can be identified and get help earlier.

The province is spending \$600,000 over three years for a pilot project in a 21-block area.

If it's successful, Selinger says it may be expanded to other areas.

Nov 06 2013

VANCOUVER - The B.C. government says it has taken action on fewer than half of the recommendations from a public inquiry into the Robert Pickton case, nearly a year after the report was released.

Commissioner Wally Oppal's report, released last December, made 65 recommendations for change and outlined a lit-

any of police failures that allowed Pickton to kill women.

The Justice Ministry has released a progress report, identifying just 28 recommendations where action has been taken, with nearly all of them still considered in progress.

Oppal's report highlighted two recommendations as urgent, including funding for a drop-in centre for sex workers in the Downtown Eastside and transportation along Highway 16, dubbed the Highway of Tears, in the province's north.

The government was quick to announce funding for the WISH drop-in centre, but the progress report says the province is still studying potential transportation options for the Highway of Tears.

One of the most high-profile recommendations was Oppal's call for a regional police force in the Vancouver area, and while a review of policing in B.C. is about to begin, the province has largely steered clear of the regional policing debate.

Nov 06 2013

ALLISTON, Ont. - Nineteen central Ontario residents face scores of drug charges in a six-month police investigation that began with two deaths linked to the abuse of a powerful painkiller.



Provincial police say fentanyl - which is 100 times more potent than morphine - is commonly used in a slow-release prescription patch but is being illegally scrapped off and smoked, with potentially lethal results.

The Project Daisy investigation was launched in May into the two deaths and other illegal activity related to the acquisition and distribution of the drug in several Simcoe County communities.

Police say 19 arrest warrants were executed on Monday and Tuesday, with 208 fentanyl patches, 100 Oxycontin pills, marijuana, bear spray, \$1,400 in cash and a GMC pickup truck seized.

The accused face a total of 172 charges, including trafficking in a controlled substance, possession of a controlled substance and possession for the purpose of trafficking.

Six of the accused appeared in a Barrie court Wednesday, while the remainder are due in court on Dec. 19.

"The inappropriate use, abuse, and diversion of prescription narcotics are public health and safety issues right across Canada, and our area is no different," Insp. Dirk

Cockburn said in a release.

Police said two other deaths in the area are also suspected of being fentanyl-related.

The province's coroner found there were 253 deaths of acute drug toxicity linked to fentanyl between 2009 and 2011 - second only to deaths from oxycodone, police said. Another 36 deaths linked to fentanyl have occurred this year.

Nov 06 2013

OTTAWA - The federal government wants to create a publicly accessible database of Canadian terrorism incidents.

The web-based tool would be aimed at helping policy-makers and researchers identify trends and patterns in extremist behaviour.

The government says no such comprehensive Canadian database exists, meaning every researcher must start from scratch in accumulating the same materials.

In addition, some researchers have a proprietary approach to the information they collect and do not share it with others.

The government recently solicited bids from interested parties for a contract to host and begin building the database.

It has set aside about \$130,000 over two years to get the project started.

Nov 06 2013

MEDICINE HAT, Alta. - A jail guard in southern Alberta faces drug charges following an investigation that turned up marijuana and \$1,000 in cash.

Police say Ricki Raymond Fehr, who is 24, was arrested at the Medicine Hat Remand Centre last week.

Officers were investigating allegations that someone was bringing marijuana to inmates.

Fehr has been charged with possession of a controlled substance for the purpose of trafficking and possession of proceeds of crime.

He is scheduled to appear in court on Dec. 3. (CJCY)

Nov 06 2013

QUEBEC - The Parti Quebecois' controversial values charter is being re-branded - and its official new name is a mouthful.

It will be tabled Thursday as a bill in the legislature under the formal title: Charter Affirming The Values Of Secularism And The Religious Neutrality Of The State, As Well As The Equality Of Men And Women, And The Framing Of Accommodation Requests.

The minister responsible says he didn't pick that 28-word name.

Bernard Drainville says the title was selected by government lawyers who worked on the bill.

The plan would force state employees to take off their headscarves, yarmulkes, turbans and larger-than-average crucifixes if they

want to keep their jobs.

However, it appears to have no chance of passing in its current form, in the current legislature.

Nov 06 2013

MONTREAL - Montreal police have shown off the latest addition to their crime-fighting arsenal - a \$360,000 armoured vehicle they say has been in development for the past 11 years.

Francois Houle, the commander of the Montreal force's SWAT team, says the grey-coloured vehicle, similar to those that transport money, will be used primarily to protect officers against armed suspects, who may be involved in situations like hostage-takings.

Reporters were invited Wednesday to get a closer look at the imposing police wagon, which is designed to allow officers to use less force when negotiating with someone threatening to use weapons.

Houle says it could be used to protect an injured citizen or a police officer who is trying to get inside a perimeter where a person is using firearms.

He adds that the mobile barricade can take a pounding from projectiles, but he won't provide any precise details about its capabilities.

The SWAT team boss notes that other major police forces in Canada have similar armoured vehicles, including the RCMP, Quebec provincial police, Ontario provincial police and municipal forces in Quebec City, Ottawa and Vancouver.

Nov 06 2013

SASKATOON - Members of the Saskatoon Police Pipes and Drums Band say they're worried about the future if they can't attract some new members.



Rob Kinnaird, the pipe major who has played in the band for more than 30 years, has taken to Kijiji looking for new - and younger - faces.

The pipe section is now down to eight core members, and Kinnaird would ideally like to recruit four more pipers.

But he says finding people who can play the bagpipes is not an easy task.

He says kids these days don't seem to want to put in the time it takes to master the "difficult" instrument.

The band has been around for 50 years. (CKOM)

Nov 06 2013

CALGARY - Calgary's police chief says he stands by the actions of officers who shot a man in the city's southeast earlier this week.

Rick Hanson says the officer who shot the suspect has 18 months on the job and felt his life was at risk.

Hanson also says the suspect is known to police and allege the vehicle he was in was stolen.

Although he says he is confident the officer's actions were justified, Hanson says the investigation by the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team will continue.

The family of Matthew Brown, the man who was shot, admits he recently served time for robbery with a weapon but says he wasn't violent and didn't deserve being shot.

They say he had simply been sleeping in his vehicle after being up late the night before.

Brown, 23, is in hospital in life-threatening condition with a bullet lodged in his neck. (CHED, Global Calgary)



Nov 07 2013

TORONTO - In their latest attempt to rid the city of over-the-counter pot substitutes, Toronto drug squad officers raided downtown retail outlets on the lookout for "The Izms," tiny packets of made-in-Canada herbal blends that, until recently, most Torontonians assumed were legal.

"The colourful packaging is deceiving and could attract children to purchase/obtain the drug," wrote Toronto Police Const. Wendy Drummond in a statement about Tuesday's raid, which netted 84 packets of The Izms (pronounced izz-ums), as well as "posters and promotional advertisements."

Until it became the focus of a crackdown early this year, The Izms had cornered the Toronto market for synthetic cannabinoids; mixtures of herbs and synthetic hallucinogens that mimic the effect of marijuana.

The Izms was founded by Adam Wookey, grandson of the developer who built Hazelton Lanes, and a former cocaine dealer who was jailed at the age of 22.

Upon his release, as he later told a reporter for Metro Toronto, he set to work marketing "legal alternatives" to illicit drugs; first PurePillz, which manufactured pill alternatives to ecstasy and speed, and then The Izms, which focused on smokable offerings.

Promising "less burnout and paranoia than illicit" and "no legal risk," the product has been ubiquitous at head shops, convenience stores and romance boutiques across Canada.

That started to change in January, when

a man walked into the Love Shop, a romance store in Hamilton, claimed he had a weapon, and ordered the clerk to hand over all the synthetic marijuana.

Within weeks, the bizarre robbery had put the product in the crosshairs of law enforcement, and elicited a March public alert from Toronto Police warning that “any business owners in possession of the described products should call police.”

The police renewed the advisory after Tuesday’s raid. Although the “variety stores” targeted by the operation lost their stocks of the hallucinogen, nobody was charged.

In March, Mr. Wookey was charged with two counts of trafficking synthetic marijuana — although the charges were soon stayed without explanation.

Last week, the 29-year-old was again arrested after police raids reportedly turned up \$2-million worth of MDMA, marijuana, cocaine, ketamine, heroin and crystal meth that could allegedly be traced back to Mr. Wookey.

The Izms did not reply to National Post emails for comment, and an employee reached at the company’s customer service line refused to comment or acknowledge Tuesday’s raids.

The company’s standard argument, however, is that its product is not illegal since it does not contain any illegal ingredients. And technically, despite reams of promotional material stating otherwise, it’s not meant to be smoked. The product is marketed as incense, and its packaging even makes sure to note that it is “not for human consumption.”

Health Canada would disagree. Although the product contains no cannabis, simply by being a “synthetic preparations of cannabis” it is fair game for the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, according to a Health Canada statement last November.

Toronto Police say the product can cause “seizures to hallucinations to acute psychosis”— although critics note that the product remains too unstudied to make definitive links.

In the United States, reports have emerged about different brands of synthetic marijuana sending teenagers to the hospital with chest pains or even causing fatal lung damage, prompting state bans and raids by the Drug Enforcement Administration.

(National Post)

Nov 07 2013

TORONTO - A disciplinary charge against a Toronto police officer charged in the shooting death of a young man on a streetcar has been put on hold until the end of the criminal case.

Const. James Forcillo briefly appeared before a disciplinary hearing at Toronto Police headquarters Thursday on a charge of discreditable conduct under the Police Services Act.

Toronto Police Association president Mike McCormack said before the hearing that the charge is laid any time an officer is charged with a criminal offence.

Forcillo, 30, is charged with second-degree murder in the death of 18-year-old Sammy Yatim, who was shot multiple times and Tasered on an empty streetcar in July.

The incident was captured on surveillance and cellphone video on which nine shots can be heard following shouts for Yatim to drop a knife.

Nov 07 2013

NORTH BATTLEFORD, Sask. - The Saskatchewan Court of Appeal will not allow key evidence to be used in a woman’s drug trafficking trial because police burst through the wrong door of her home during a raid.

The ruling - published recently on an on-line legal database - concerns a drug search in a North Battleford home two years ago.

Police obtained a search warrant to check the place after getting a tip about a different suspect using an upper floor suite to store drugs.

Officers converged on the home in September 2011 and went upstairs, where they used a battering ram to enter a locked room in which they found evidence of trafficking.

Drugs found in other parts of the house led to the arrest of the woman, who had called 9-1-1 to report a home invasion when she heard a commotion as the officers arrived.

But the courts said the search warrant was issued for the rental suite, which had a separate exterior entrance, and that the document mentioned marijuana in the upstairs suite.

The problems led to the evidence being excluded from the woman’s trial, which is expected to lead to difficulty for the Crown in proceeding with the case.

(CBC, The Canadian Press, Online Out)

Nov 07 2013

OTTAWA - The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled against a British Columbia man who was seeking to avoid a second trial in a marijuana grow-op case.

Thanh Long Vu was charged after an RCMP raid on a house in Langley, B.C., in September 2007.

The police seized two computers and a cellphone in the raid, but the trial judge threw out evidence gleaned from them, saying the authorizing warrant should have been more specific about electronic documents.

With the evidence excluded, Vu was acquitted, but the B.C. Court of Appeal disagreed with the ruling and ordered a new trial.

Vu appealed to the high court, which ruled against him in a 9-0 decision.

Writing for the court, Justice Thomas Cromwell said he agreed with the trial judge

that the warrant did not authorize the search of the computers and phone, but overall it was not a serious violation of rights and the evidence should not have been excluded.

Nov 07 2013

REGINA - Saskatchewan is bringing in a zero drug and alcohol tolerance policy for drivers under 19 and for all drivers in the graduated licensing program.

The move is one of 14 traffic safety measures that was recommended by a legislative committee report in August.

The province is also going to seize cars at the roadside for young or new drivers with alcohol in their systems and for all drivers with a blood alcohol content between .08 and .15 or who refuse a test.

Mandatory ignition interlocks are also coming for convicted impaired drivers.

Donna Harpauer, minister responsible for Saskatchewan Government Insurance, says 184 people were killed on roads and highways in the province last year.

Nov 07 2013

Wellington County is disbanding its OPP mounted unit.

County council voted on Oct. 31 in support of a police services board recommendation to dismantle the unit, which consists of three horses: Bosco, Jasper and Moose.

The issue was also part of a closed session of council, after which Warden Chris White announced the unit was being disbanded after 11 years of service.

“It wasn’t an easy decision,” said councillor Ray Tout, who is the county representative on the police services board. “People love horses.”

The horses have been a fixture at fall fairs and patrols in many of the urban communities throughout Wellington County.

Tout said the cost to operate the mounted unit is about \$250,000 annually, including two officers staffing the unit, a vehicle to transport the horses, lodging and food.

Bosco has been under veterinary care over the past several weeks and is expected to remain under care for an extended period.

“It became quite expensive in the eyes of the [police services board],” Tout said of the decision.

“That’s two officers we can have on the street,” he added, noting the officers will be redeployed. “What’s more important for Wellington County is two officers on the beat.”

The mounted unit is one of the few OPP detachments that provided mounted officers on patrol.

The unit, Tout said, will be officially disbanded by the end of the year, with the horses being put out to pasture.

(Wellington Advertiser)