

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK *Celebrating 20 Years*

A Chronicle of News for the Law Enforcement Community | February 13, 2015 – Vol. 20 No. 7

Executive Digest

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RCMP watchdog raps Mountie gun seizures



Feb 12 2015

OTTAWA - The RCMP watchdog says Mounties improperly took guns from flood-stricken homes in Alberta two years ago - seizures that angered High River residents and fostered mistrust of the national police force.

In a report released Thursday, the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission blames the mistakes on poor leadership, lack of guidance, and failure to communicate with the public.

The RCMP had legal authority to forcibly enter evacuated homes during the natural

disaster and even to seize loose firearms in plain view, the commission report says.

The Mounties say the guns could have posed a hazard, as there were reports of break-ins and thefts, and there were over 300 people - including one high-risk offender - who refused to evacuate.

Under the Criminal Code, such seizures did not require a court-approved warrant, but officers failed to take the necessary next step of reporting their actions to a judge.

In addition, RCMP members exceeded their authority by seizing some guns that

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were properly secured or that were not "in plain view," the commission found.

In all, 609 firearms were taken from 105 homes.

"While RCMP members, acting on their own initiative and with little guidance, may have acted with public safety in mind, they nonetheless failed to comply with legal requirements concerning the seizure of firearms," the report says.

"Had the RCMP reported their seizures to the court, it may have addressed many of the concerns and criticisms from residents, the media, and politicians."

In June 2013, heavy rainfall caused the Highwood River to swell, uprooting trees and engulfing cars and homes. During the crisis, the RCMP, provincial and municipal police, the military, first responders and volunteers rescued some 800 people.

Overall, emergency personnel, including the Mounties, did "a remarkable job" responding to this natural disaster in the initial days, the report says.

What should have been a story about heroic actions of many RCMP members during the devastating flood turned out to be "something far different" for the force, the commission notes.

Watchdog staff interviewed dozens of people and reviewed over 10,000 pages of documents, emails, notes and seizure logs, as well as more than 1,000 images and 50 videos.

The commission says RCMP leadership failed to adequately plan for communications with the public during the catastrophe, which prompted difficulties when word of the forced entries and seizures began circulating.

"What we found was that, all too often, social media filled the gap that the communications people were unable to fill," commission chairman Ian McPhail said in an interview.

"And in some instances contradictory or incomplete information was communicated to the public."

The report makes several recommendations, including creation of:

- A national crisis communications handbook;
- Guidelines on seizure of firearms, ammunition and contraband during disasters;
- Special forms to ensure better note-taking about forced entries.

The commission will issue a final report once the RCMP responds.

McPhail said he would be surprised if the recommendations were not accepted and implemented.

"They're all doable. They don't require huge expense," he said. "They simply require a more focused attention to how to respond to natural disaster situations."

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 5, 2015

Feb 05 2015

OTTAWA - A historic change to the way security is handled on Parliament Hill will be determined in a time-honoured parliamentary manner: by committee.

The House of Commons and Senate are set to debate a motion this week that would give the RCMP the lead in running security operations on the Hill.

But what the new arrangements will look like in practice is unclear - even to the Mounties themselves.

"While I have been engaged in some preliminary discussions with officials, I must write to you today to caution that there are a lot of steps to be taken before this becomes a reality," RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson wrote in a memo to staff, obtained by .

"More importantly, I must ask that we all refrain from speculating about what this may mean, or the form this may take."

Once the motion passes, a committee under the Speakers of the Commons and the Senate will determine how the process will work.

Who else will sit on the committee or what form their deliberations will take remains to be seen, though among the goals will be a new memorandum of understanding governing operations.

Feb 05 2015

CALGARY - A rap video has helped Calgary police in a drug and weapons bust.

Investigators say they found a cache of drugs and weapons inside a southwest home on Tuesday.

Police seized an Airsoft Uzi and an Airsoft Thompson sub-machine gun, \$8,000 in cash, crack cocaine, and marijuana.

Martin Schiavetti with the drug and vice unit says one of the accused was spotted in a video posted online.

The officer says the video shows activity that he says places the public at risk.

Selwyn Marcus Caine, who is 30, and 24-year-old Djambou Teddy Wemini are scheduled to appear in court on Wednesday. (CFRR)

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 6, 2015

Feb 06 2015

TORONTO - Toronto's police union is confirming that three officers have been suspended in connection with allegations of sexual assault at an after-work party.

No charges have been laid but the officers - who have between five and 10 years of experience on the force - are suspended with pay while an internal investigation is conducted.

The alleged victim, a woman, is a parking enforcement officer.

Mike McCormack - president of the Toronto Police Association, which represents both the accused and the alleged victim - says the officers' suspension is not a determination of guilt.

He says they have been removed from duty so the investigation can continue "unfettered."

Gary Clewley, the lawyer for the three officers, says the investigation is in its early stages. (680News)

Feb 06 2015

HALIFAX - Nova Scotia's Serious Incident Response Team says an RCMP officer used reasonable force when he removed a woman from a police vehicle only to have her fall and break her arm.

The independent agency issued a report saying the officer recorded the event on audiotape, which helped investigators conclude he had done nothing wrong.

The report says that on Aug. 10, 2014, the officer was dispatched to Meat Cove in northern Cape Breton to investigate a complaint about someone pointing a firearm.

The officer says when he arrested an intoxicated 57-year-old woman, she got into the back of his police vehicle before he could search her for weapons.

When the woman refused to get out, the officer pulled her out and she fell awkwardly, breaking her upper left arm.

The woman complained that the officer pulled her without warning, but the agency says the tape confirmed the officer's version of events, including the fact that the woman failed to respond to several requests to leave the vehicle.

Feb 06 2015

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. - The Canada Border Services Agency says more than 11 kilograms of suspected cocaine has been seized at Toronto's Pearson International Airport following a flight from Curacao.

The agency says the seizure happened Jan. 30 when officers were watching baggage being unloaded from a flight from the southern Caribbean country.

A detector dog was brought in and the border agency says the animal indicated to two suitcases.

It's alleged that upon further inspection

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK Celebrating 20 Years

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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of the suitcases, officers discovered 11 bricks containing a substance that field tested positive for suspected cocaine.

The packages of suspected cocaine were turned over to Peel Regional Police and the investigation is ongoing.

There's no immediate word of any charges in the case.

Feb 06 2015

OTTAWA - Justice Minister Peter MacKay says the federal government will take its time before acting on today's Supreme Court decision on doctor-assisted death.



MacKay called the matter a sensitive issue that encompasses a wide range of emotional perspectives.

The Supreme Court of Canada unanimously struck down the ban on providing a doctor-assisted death to mentally competent but suffering and "irremediable" patients.

It put its decision on hold for 12 months, giving Parliament and provincial legislatures time to craft new laws.

MacKay says that window gives the government the opportunity to carefully examine laws and decide what to do.

At least six private member's bills aimed at reforming the right-to-die prohibition have been debated and defeated by elected parliamentarians since 1993 - the most recent in April 2010.

Feb 06 2015

PRIESTVILLE, N.S. - The new correctional facility in Nova Scotia's Pictou County will open Monday.

The provincial government says the Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility in Priestville can house a maximum of 196 people.

It replaces the aging Antigonish and Cumberland correctional facilities, which were built in 1948 and 1890.

The province spent \$42.3 million on the new jail, which includes a health-care unit, classrooms and booths for court appearances by video-conference.

Feb 05 2015

CALGARY - Calgary Police Chief Rick Hanson is speaking out about an Ontario terrorism suspect's recently uncovered Calgary connection.

One of three Ottawa men charged with terrorism in connection with ISIS recruitment is also a wanted man in Calgary. Khadar Hassan Khalib, 23, was charged in September

2012 for shoplifting under \$5,000 at a Bay store location in the Calgary area, and failed to attend his scheduled October court appearance.

Khalib was charged in absentia Tuesday with leaving Canada to participate in, counselling a person to participate in and conspiring to participate or to contribute in an activity of a terrorist group. RCMP said he travelled to Syria to fight with ISIS, also known as the Islamic State.

"The fact is they're very good at recruiting," said Hanson of ISIS, while appearing on the Global Calgary Morning News on Thursday. "It appeals to some young men, and in some cases some young women as well."

"Canada is not the safe haven that it used to be," said Hanson. "It will be, for years to come, vulnerable to this type of thing."

He suggests early intervention is key, similar to gang prevention.

"We're working really closely with the school boards," said Hanson, who remains positive about the future. "We've got great partnerships with community neighbourhood services and we've met with parents and members of Calgary's diverse communities."

"The willingness of the various communities to meet with us and to figure out joint solutions to these kinds of things is really kind of gratifying."

(Global News)

Feb 06 2015

SURREY, B.C. - Premier Christy Clark says her government is diverting money from "the bad guys" to their victims as the province upgrades its strategy towards ending violence against women.

The province will apportion \$3 million in civil forfeiture funds this year to pay for a new Domestic Violence Unit in Surrey, B.C., local support services and an awareness campaign.

The government says more than 12,300 instances of intimate-partner violence were reported to police in 2013, while 113 women died as a result of domestic violence in the past decade.

The new "Violence Free B.C." strategy will also boost prevention programs in schools, develop a provincial sexual assault policy and improve culturally-appropriate job programs for aboriginal women who are rebuilding their lives after experiencing violence.

Clark says the province is also committed to fulfilling recommendations from the Missing Women's Inquiry, although she said she didn't want to criticize the RCMP for reducing the number of officers on an investigative task force.

Documents revealed earlier this week that the RCMP cut six officers from its Highway of Tears investigation after warning government that provincial cuts would hinder the investigation, but Clark countered by saying the province actually boosted the RCMP budget last year by \$5 million.

Feb 06 2015

CAMPBELLTON, N.B. - The lawyer for the man arrested in connection with the deaths of two New Brunswick boys killed by a python says his client faces two charges of criminal negligence causing death.

Leslie Matchim says Jean-Claude Savoie has yet to be charged but will appear in court in Campbellton, N.B., on April 27 to face those charges.

Matchim says Savoie was arrested Thursday in Montreal and released from custody.

He says the nature of the charges is disheartening but Savoie is holding up well.

Four-year-old Noah Barthe and his six-year-old brother Connor were found dead on Aug. 5, 2013, after an African rock python escaped its enclosure inside Savoie's apartment in Campbellton, where they were staying for a sleepover.

Autopsies concluded that the boys died from asphyxiation.

Feb 06 2015

EDMONTON - Lawyers, not police, should be handling bail hearings, say Edmonton police after a Mountie was shot and killed by a career criminal who had been released.

"Most citizens expect that police officers will do police work and lawyers will do legal work," acting deputy chief Deb Jolly said in a release Friday. "That's just not happening in justice of the peace bail hearings."

It was at a hearing involving officers that career criminal Shawn Rehn was released on \$4,500 bail. While free, Rehn shot and killed RCMP Const. David Wynn and severely wounded an RCMP police volunteer as they investigated a routine stolen vehicle complaint in St. Albert north of Edmonton last month.

Court records show it was an Edmonton police officer standing in for the Crown who consented to Rehn's release at his most recent bail hearing.

Documents show Rehn was a violent criminal, in and out of jail over the last 15 years, with 57 convictions for crimes including assaults, break-ins and drug use. A transcript of his final bail hearing mentioned how Rehn was wanted on outstanding warrants and was prohibited from possessing weapons, but makes no mention of his numerous past convictions or his two federal stints in prison.

It's common for police officers to stand in for prosecutors at such hearings.

The Edmonton Police Service says officers conducted 15,441 bail hearings last year - an average of 41 a day.

The service says officers are trained by more experienced veterans to prepare them for the bail process, but often they are legally outgunned.

"Police officers are not equipped with the background and expertise in statutory and case law that defence lawyers typically possess," said the department's release.

The force said it has been asking for Crown prosecutors to take over all bail

hearings since 2006. Outside of a pilot project in 2008, the provincial government has refused that request.

Alberta Justice Minister Jonathan Denis has ordered an investigation into how the Crown handled the Rehn case. The RCMP is also reviewing their dealings with Rehn.

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 7, 2015

Feb 07 2015

MILL BAY, Canada - Three people, including a 6-year-old boy, were taken to hospital with non-serious injuries after an unmarked police SUV crashed into a pick-up truck in Mill Bay, B.C.

RCMP say the SUV from West Shore detachment was heading southbound on the Trans Canada highway when it collided with the pick-up truck near Frayne Road at about 6 p.m. Friday.

The police officer and the two occupants of the pick-up truck, including the young boy, were treated and released from hospital.

Mounties say a preliminary investigation suggests that the SUV was in routine travel at the time of the crash and the vehicle's emergency equipment was not activated.

RCMP South Island Traffic Services are investigating the collision and anyone with information is asked to come forward.

B.C.'s police watchdog, the Independent Investigations Office, was notified and has not asserted jurisdiction.

Feb 07 2015

KELOWNA, B.C. - A judge has chastised Kelowna RCMP for videotaping a woman as she was strip-searched in the detachment.

In a court decision released online this week, Judge Ellen Burdett criticized the force for ignoring a 13-year-old law that outlines the proper way to conduct strip searches.

The judge said police violated the woman's charter right to be secure from an unreasonable search by videotaping and broadcasting the footage to a monitoring room while she was partially naked.

"It appears videotaping inside strip-search rooms and simultaneous broadcasting to a central monitoring location is a routine policy at the Kelowna detachment," Burdett said.

"The policy of videotaping and monitoring all strip searches in the Kelowna detachment demonstrates an ignorance of charter rights."

Senior RCMP officers declined to say Friday whether their strip-search policy had changed. Detachment spokesman Const. Kris Clark said it was inappropriate for police to comment on a judgment.

"We're reviewing the judgment to determine its impact on our procedure, policy or training," he said.

Undercover police arrested Madison Fine for possessing drugs for the purpose of trafficking in downtown Kelowna on Feb. 27 last year.

Officers suspected she was supplying

cocaine to street-level dealers who sell to customers.

When an officer approached her in a pick-up truck, she was holding two cellphones. Inside her purse was a wallet with \$915 and an open bag of baking soda, commonly used as a cutting agent, Burdett said.

A female Mountie was asked to transport Fine to the detachment.

Together with a female civilian employee, the officer took Fine into a search room. When she told Fine to remove her pants, a piece of tin foil fell out. When Fine took off her underwear, a bag was visible.

Inside the bag were 48 packets of cocaine, crack and heroin, Burdett said.

During a voir dire, Fine's lawyer Ra-

jdeep Basra argued police had no reasonable grounds to arrest Fine and delayed her from calling a lawyer due to the strip search. The judge concluded there was no such breach.

Fine removed her own clothes during the strip search and she was never fully undressed. But she was not told she would be videotaped or monitored.

"The idea that many other individuals, including men, could potentially view the strip search if they were in the monitoring room was not communicated to her," Burdett said.

Such videotaping should only be captured on a recorder inside a private search room and accessible to a limited number of people if allegations of misconduct arise, she said.



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“The police conduct in this case showed an ignorance of the law rather than a pattern of misconduct. ... She had an expectation of privacy while in the ... room.”
(Kelowna Daily Courier)

SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 8, 2015

Feb 08 2015

VANCOUVER - When Dana Larsen opened a medical marijuana dispensary in Vancouver's east side in 2008, he was more than a little nervous about what could happen.



There were already a handful of other storefront operations in the city openly defying federal drug laws by selling marijuana, hash and other cannabis products to customers claiming a medical need. But it still wasn't clear how long police and the local government would allow that to continue.

Police never came. And in the intervening six and a half years, the number of dispensaries in Vancouver has exploded, with at least 60 operating in all corners of the city with relatively little interference from law enforcement.

“There has been no big outcry,” says Larsen, a prominent marijuana advocate who is also vice-president of the Canadian Association of Medical Cannabis Dispensaries.

“If people were protesting our dispensaries and complaining and demanding something be done, maybe (the police would intervene). But dispensaries get very few complaints and raids against dispensaries get a lot of complaints.”

In fact, rather than shutting dispensaries down, officials in Vancouver are doing just the opposite, investigating how the city can regulate an industry that has until now existed in a grey area of the law.

Vancouver Coun. Kerry Jang says the city has run out of patience with the federal government, which has ruled out legitimizing dispensaries.

Jang recently asked municipal staff to determine whether dispensaries can be zoned as pharmacies, which would give the city the ability to directly oversee such operations and control their growth.

“If we did that, we would be actually starting to regulate the number of dispensaries per street, their location, the same way we do with a regular pharmacy,” says Jang, who teaches psychiatry at the University of

British Columbia's medical school.

“The concerns are the same, especially for pharmacies that dispense methadone.”

Vancouver's first medical marijuana dispensary opened more than a decade ago, and for years there were fewer than half a dozen in the city. Recently, however, that number has grown exponentially, particularly in the past year.

In comparison, the Canadian Association of Medical Cannabis Dispensaries says it knows of about 35 such facilities elsewhere in B.C., and just 20 in the rest of the country, mostly in Ontario and Quebec.

Those dispensaries all operate outside the federally regulated system, which the government overhauled last year to switch production from home grow-ops to large-scale commercial operations. Dispensaries were illegal under the old system and that didn't change last year.

Supporters of dispensaries argue the new federal system doesn't meet patients' needs, either because the legal marijuana is too expensive, supply is low, or commercial producers don't offer an adequate variety of strains. The commercial system also doesn't produce edible products or oils, but dispensaries do.

Whether the laws are enforced, however, depends on local police.

Police in Vancouver have raided dispensaries in the past, but it isn't common. Const. Brian Montague says the force doesn't consider dispensaries a priority unless they are selling to minors or police receive complaints about specific public safety concerns.

“We focus our resources on violent drug traffickers,” says Montague, who suggests the law isn't as clear as it seems.

“If you look at the Criminal Code, it clearly says that selling marijuana is illegal, but there are lots of cases currently going through the courts that make that not so black and white. It's very grey.”

There is no grey for the federal government.

Paul Calandra, parliamentary secretary to the prime minister, says the government has no plans to formally legalize dispensaries.

“They were illegal before, they remain illegal today and as long as we're in government they will continue to be illegal,” Calandra says.

“That is the law of the land, and we would hope our municipal and provincial partners would enforce the law as it stands today.”

Some police agencies are enforcing the law.

Halifax police raided the city's only dispensary last year. Local RCMP officials in Grand Forks, B.C., and Parksville, B.C., recently warned prospective dispensaries they would be shut down if they open. Mounties raided a dispensary in Kelowna last month, though two others in the city remain open.

RCMP spokeswoman Sgt. Laurie White couldn't say whether the force has a broad policy for marijuana dispensaries.

“We will take enforcement action if there are any indications of contraventions to the (Controlled Drugs and Substances Act),” she says.

“It depends on what the information is,

what the source is, and that would then drive our investigation.”

Feb 08 2015

OTTAWA - The federal revenue agency can now hand the police possible evidence of serious crime - including terrorist activity - that it happens to come across while reviewing taxpayer files.

The Canada Revenue Agency gained the little-noticed new authority, which does not require a judicial warrant, through an amendment tucked into the government's most recent omnibus budget bill.

Previously, confidentiality provisions in the law prevented the agency from handing information about suspected wrongdoing, on its own initiative, to law enforcement. The exception was information that pointed to tax-related crimes.

The new provisions apply to offences including breaking and entering, vehicle theft, arson, corruption and kidnapping. They also allow authorities to pass along information about any offence with a minimum prison term, or one with a maximum sentence of 14 years.

The list of offences is disturbingly broad and amounts to a fundamental change in allowing the agency to hand information to police without a court-ordered warrant - even when the alleged crimes have nothing to do with taxes, said Toronto lawyer Glen Jennings.

“Where is this need coming from?” said Jennings, who has extensive experience with criminal and regulatory matters. “They still haven't provided examples of where this has come up before, so it still leaves me scratching my head.”

Interim procedures for administering the new powers were issued to all revenue agency employees when the legislation received royal assent last June, said Philippe Brideau, a spokesman for the agency.

To date the revenue agency has not used the powers, Brideau added.

Officials expect to see “only a few instances annually where the new measures would apply,” says a briefing note prepared for Revenue Minister Kerry-Lynne Findlay.

“The provisions relate only to information gathered by Agency officials in the course of their regular duties,” says the June 2014 note, obtained by under the Access to Information Act. “This information exchange is one-way and will be closely controlled through a set of strict criteria.”

It's not clear to Jennings how tax officials would even come across information indicating criminal activity. But he says the new measures leave people undergoing a tax audit vulnerable - especially given the amount of personal information now stored on computers and smart phones.

“They come in and they start asking other questions. They want to see bank records, they want to see financial records out of computers,” he said. “And if that's where they're going to be gathering other information, then I think that should be very much of concern to people.”

The revenue agency is assessing the privacy implications of the measures and will consult the federal privacy commissioner about the potential impact on taxpayers, Brideau said.

All potential referrals to police will be vetted by the agency's criminal investigations personnel and must be approved by the assistant commissioner of the department's compliance programs branch, the briefing note says.

Jennings said the new provisions could create a "chilling effect" that undermines the willingness of people to file tax returns if the revenue agency is seen as not just a tax collector, but also as a criminal investigator.

Feb 08 2015

VICTORIA - The B.C. government is launching a formal investigation into the province's civilian police watchdog after receiving several complaints about senior management, low morale, inconsistent policies and other problems in the office.

In the 2 1/2 years since the Independent Investigations Office was formed to investigate police-involved deaths or serious injuries, the government has spent tens of thousands of dollars on three employee surveys, two external reviews and now, the Times Colonist has learned, a formal investigation.

Since the office was established, 22 employees have left.

The deputy attorney general's office and the Public Service Agency, the human resources arm of the B.C. government, have received several employee complaints about bullying and harassment, prompting the agency to initiate a formal investigation.

"After careful consideration of the concerns raised related to workplace issues at the Independent Investigations Office, [deputy attorney general Richard] Fyfe has asked the Public Service Agency to investigate and provide him with their advice on what steps, if any, may be necessary to ensure that personnel practices in the IIO meet the standards required by law," a Justice Ministry spokesperson said in a statement to the Times Colonist on Jan. 29.

Despite the concerns, the statements says, "The ministry has full confidence that the mandate of the IIO continues to be met."

The office has a staff of 32 investigators — though seven of those positions are currently vacant — and 18 administrative staff.

Seventeen investigators and five non-investigative staff have left since it was established.

One former police officer was fired in 2012. In 2013, three civilians resigned. In 2014, 11 employees left — four former police officers were fired, while five former officers and two civilians resigned. Already in 2015, one investigator has resigned.

The police oversight body has paid \$172,198.66 in severance to five people, according to documents obtained through a

Freedom of Information request.

At least three investigators who were fired sued for wrongful dismissal and two have since settled.

This is not the first time the workings of the Independent Investigations Office have been examined.

Last year, the province hired labour-relations consultant Tony Belcher to conduct a human-resources review, sparked by complaints from Fred Leibel and Robin Stutt, two former investigators who were fired by Richard Rosenthal, the office's chief civilian director.

The review, completed in October at a cost of \$12,475, has not been made public.

Feb 08 2015

A Canadian Forces member with ties to Cobourg died Saturday, Jan. 31 while on leave from Afghanistan.

Petty Officer First Class Howard Dyke, who was 47, died while scuba diving near Varadero, Cuba.

Dyke was close friends with Cobourg Police Sergeant Mike Richardson. Richardson said his best friend had always wanted to dive at the Bay of Pigs and was doing so when something went terribly wrong.

"I'm devastated. It's been a few days and I'm still numb," Richardson said. "He is my best friend and it's hard."

Dyke was on leave while serving as the Embassy Detachment Commander in Kabul,

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Dyke, who joined the Canadian Forces in 1985, had been posted to various Military Police units and organizations throughout Canada and has also been posted to Canadian Embassies in Tokyo and Moscow.

"The loss of any Military Police member is devastating to the policing community and our condolences got out to Petty Officer First Class Howard Dyke's family and friends," said Canadian Forces Military Police Public Affairs Officer Captain Joanna Labonte.

"In a mission like the Canadian Embassy in Afghanistan, we rely on one another's professionalism and dedication," said Deborah Lyons, who is Canada's Ambassador to Afghanistan. "Petty Officer First Class Howard Dyke was a central part of our Embassy family; he will be deeply missed for his genuine caring of others, his great Newfoundland humor and his commitment."

Dyke, an instructor from Cuba and another couple from Canada who were also close friends had just walked into the waters and were 40 feet down when he signaled there was a problem and he was going to surface.

That's the last time anyone saw him. His body wasn't discovered until more than a day later.

"They are all master divers and have their own gear," Richardson said.

One of the divers with him on that day actually commented how perfect the conditions were the day of the dive.

The military said questions about the actual police investigation need to be directed to the Varadero police force in Cuba.

(Sun Media)

MONDAY FEBRUARY 9, 2015

Feb 09 2015

OTTAWA - Three Ottawa police officers have been accused of neglect of duty after allegedly releasing a man from custody contrary to the Criminal Code and internal police policy.

Sgt. James Ritchie, Const. Diego Conte and Const. Kristina Reid have all been charged under the Ontario Police Services Act.

According to a notice of hearing filed Monday, the three officers "neglected or omitted to promptly and diligently perform a duty" when they released the man from custody on Jan. 3, 2014. The notice of hearing does not indicate why the man was in custody, although the Citizen has learned it was in relation to a domestic dispute.

The Police Services Act charges were laid after the provincial Office of the Independent Police Review Director investigated a woman's complaint.

According to the notice of hearing, releasing the man was in contravention of an Ottawa police policy on bail and violent crime and provisions of a section of the Criminal Code dealing with releasing an arrested person from custody. That section of the Criminal Code includes a requirement that

an officer shouldn't release a person if they believe on reasonable grounds their detention is necessary to protect the public interest, prevent the continuation or repetition of the offence or the commission of another offence or ensure the safety of the alleged victim or other witness.

All three officers remain on active duty. The case will continue March 25 with a teleconference.

(Ottawa Citizen)

Feb 09 2015

SASKATOON - The City of Saskatoon and its police have reached a deal for a new contract that changes the way officers are paid.

Previous agreements saw officers paid 98 per cent of an average of the Prairie provinces, but that formula is no more under the new contract.

The new agreement will see police get an 11 per cent pay increase over the life of the contract from 2013 to 2016.

It starts with a 2.5 per cent bump effective April 1, 2014.

The deal will also switch officers onto a target benefit pension plan, which is intended to give a better idea of what level of income a worker can expect in retirement.

The current system is a defined contribution plan.

Officers will keep benefits built up under the old plan before the Jan. 1, 2016 start date for the new pension scheme.

(CKOM)

Feb 09 2015

It took a couple of months for employees and visitors to the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office in Florida to notice that "In Dog We Trust" was printed in place of "In God We Trust."



Department spokeswoman Cecilia Barreda told the Associated Press a deputy noticed the mistake on the forest green rug placed at the entrance to the office after a couple of months. WFTS-TV reported the \$500 rug was in the lobby for only a couple of weeks.

Barreda said the mistake was made by rug manufacturer on only one of the two rugs the department ordered. Maybe the company didn't spell-check its rug. Or perhaps the problem was that it did. In any case, the rug is being replaced by the manufacturer, and the misprinted rug has been removed from the lobby.

(Washington Post)

Feb 10 2015

CHATHAM - Sgt. Robert Mugridge of the Chatham-Kent Police service is facing 47 criminal charges after an investigation that began last year.

The London Police Service has concluded its investigation, which was requested by CK Police Chief Dennis Poole in July of last year.

Mugridge has been charged under the Criminal Code with 47 counts of fraud under \$5,000 and three counts of fraud over \$5,000.

The officer is scheduled to appear in a Chatham court on March 24.

A 25-year member of the service, he was suspended in May of 2014 after an investigation which was initially conducted by the Professional Standards Section of the Chatham-Kent Police Service, and subsequently handed over to the London Police Service at the request of Poole.

The investigation surrounded the conduct of Mugridge into how financial loans and other monies were obtained from financial institutions, members of the public and members of the police service.

(Chatham This Week)

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 10, 2015

Feb 10 2015

HALIFAX - Nova Scotia RCMP say a member of the force is being investigated after a complaint was received from a provincial cabinet minister.

Sgt. Al LeBlanc says police received a call Monday from Community Services Minister Joanne Bernard alleging that a Mountie made an inappropriate comment to her and a member of her staff during a phone conversation at her constituency office.

LeBlanc wouldn't reveal details about the comment or the officer allegedly involved but says the Mounties have launched an internal investigation.

Bernard issued a statement saying she had concern with the conduct of an individual who contacted her office and identified themselves as a member of the RCMP.

She says she then contacted police.

Feb 10 2015

CALGARY - An initiative to co-ordinate help for sexual assault victims in Alberta is being expanded over the next two years.

The CEO of the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services said \$165,000 received from the federal government will be used to create comprehensive response teams in five new Alberta communities, including Medicine Hat and Fort McMurray.

Debra Tomlinson says sexual assaults are already under-reported and even more so in rural areas and smaller centres.

The organization will work to improve responses for women and girls by working with sexual assault crisis centres throughout the province.

Tomlinson says a yet-to-be-named First Nations community is also in the queue to be part of the expansion.

The funding will go toward hiring a project co-ordinator and a sexual assault specialist nurse

Feb 10 2015

TORONTO - A computer system allowing Ontario's children's aid societies to share information - a key recommendation from a coroner's inquest into the death of five-year-old Jeffrey Baldwin - won't be fully operational until 2020.

By then nearly two decades will have passed since Jeffrey starved to death at the hands of his grandparents, who the Catholic Children's Aid Society tasked with caring for the boy.

The coroner's inquest into his death didn't get underway until 2013, when the grandparents exhausted appeals of their convictions for second-degree murder. But among the more than 100 recommendations the coroner's jury issued one year ago was an urgent call for the government to fully implement the Child Protection Information Network by February 2016.

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services submitted its responses to the jury recommendations this week, saying that while the development and testing of CPIN is complete, it has so far only been rolled out to three of the 46 children's aid societies, with two more expected to be using it by the end of March.

One year ago the ministry said it expected seven agencies to be using the system by the summer of 2014.

"The ministry has established thorough processes and automated system tools to complete data migration, but the work is complex, time consuming and requires accuracy," the ministry wrote in its responses.

Aside from a connecting IT system, the remaining children's aid societies are not interconnected and can't electronically share case information. The government started looking for a software vendor in 2010, and the implementation process is now expected to last until 2020.

A briefing note prepared for Minister Tracy MacCharles and obtained by under a freedom-of-information request notes that the Baldwin inquest recommendation wasn't the first plea for the integrated system to be implemented.

"Over the past 10 years, the auditor general of Ontario, the child mortality task force and the coroner's office, through recommendations from inquests into the death of children in care, have called for a common information system to enhance the safety of children," the briefing note says.

Spending on the initial stage of CPIN has come in about \$1 million less than the budget of \$124 million over four years, according to the note.

The jury recommended sweeping changes to the child welfare system after the inquest

heard that Jeffrey was a healthy baby when he and his siblings were placed in the care of their grandparents. When he died of starvation just shy of his sixth birthday his weight was that of a 10-month-old infant.

The inquest heard that Jeffrey's grandparents, Elva Bottineau and Norman Kidman, had both previously been convicted of abusing children, but due to inadequate record checks, poor information sharing between different children's aid societies and records under several different names for the grandmother no one discovered how dangerous the pair was until after Jeffrey died.

Standards surrounding so-called kinship care have since changed, but the jury's recommendations suggested there is much more to be done:

- The jury: All societies' records, including historical data and archives, be digitized in the new network. The ministry said that won't be done.
- The jury: The ministry should consider amalgamating all 46 individual children's aid societies into one co-ordinated agency. The ministry said it was developing a "shared services program" instead of amalgamating the societies.
- The jury: Workers should be allowed to access CPIN and the child abuse registry when they are assessing an alternate caregiver, such as a relative, and not just when investigating a child protection concern. The ministry said this is under consideration.
- The jury: There should be changes to who is subject to vulnerable sector screening



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Presenters: S/Sgt Gordon MacKinnon (ret) and A/Sgt Wayne Vanderlaan (ret)
Cost: \$100

**Day 2: April 29th, 9am – 4pm
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Presenters: A/Sgt Wayne Vanderlaan (ret) and S/Sgt Gordon MacKinnon (ret)
Cost: \$100



**Day 2: April 29th, 9am – 4pm
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Presenter: Commissioner Chris Lewis (ret)
Cost: \$150

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when a child is being placed with relatives. The ministry said the changes are under consideration.

The ministry said it is reviewing the Child and Family Services Act, expected to be complete in April, with an eye to creating new rules for the collection and disclosure of CAS records as well as information sharing. It also said that Ontario's child protection standards have been "re-drafted" and will be released this year.

Feb 10 2015

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. - The province's police watchdog says two provincial police officers are facing charges following an investigation into the death of an 18-year-old woman last October.

The Special Investigations Unit says officers were conducting a RIDE program in Burford, Ont., on Oct. 10, 2014, when a pickup truck didn't stop.

The pickup entered Brantford, Ont., where it collided with a car driven by Ashley Lerno, who died of her injuries five days later.

The SIU says constables Craig McMurtrie and Rodney Donald Grubb are each charged with criminal negligence causing death, dangerous driving causing death, and conduct likely to constitute mischief causing actual danger to life.

The officers are to appear in Brantford court on March 23.

The SIU investigates reports involving police where there has been death, serious injury or allegations of sexual assault.

Feb 10 2015

GUELPH – Veteran Guelph Police officer Jeff DeRuyter is the city's new police chief.

The Guelph Police Services Board announced Tuesday it had promoted DeRuyter to the post. He had been serving as acting police chief since August.

DeRuyter, who began with the Guelph police service as a constable in 1984, replaces Bryan Larkin, who left last year to head the Waterloo Regional Police Service. The new chief said in an interview he was thankful for the support of the board and the larger community of Guelph.

"It's an exciting day for me," DeRuyter said. "(I'm) very thankful."

DeRuyter, 51, was selected after a six-month assessment of his skills and a formal interview, the board reported Tuesday in a release.

Board chair Judy Sorbara said it was a unanimous decision at a special board meeting late last week to elevate DeRuyter to the top position. "We're very happy," she said.

He's performed well as acting chief, is involved with the community and will help the police service "advance its long-term vision," she said.

"I have full confidence in Chief DeRuyter," Sorbara said.

(Guelph Mercury)

Feb 10 2015

MONTREAL - A Montreal city judge threw out the fines given to protesters almost two years ago, questioning the police ticketing method and disputing the wording of the city's controversial anti-protest bylaw.

The judgment came down Monday in the case of three people fined at the demonstration of March 2013. The tickets, at \$638 each, were for violating article 2.1 of the controversial municipal bylaw P-6.

Municipal bylaw P-6, enacted during the 2012 student protests, requires demonstrators to provide police with an itinerary and route of a protest before it begins.

On March 22, 2013, police officers arrested over 200 people at a protest. The demonstrators were commemorating a massive march held in Montreal a year earlier, in what some dubbed the start of the "Maple Spring" movement. Nearly 300 had gathered in the streets of downtown Montreal. Within 15 minutes, nearly 80 per cent were corralled and ticketed in a kettling process when police contained the large crowd.

In Monday's ruling, Judge Randall Richmond concluded the tickets were invalid. Richmond said the police officers were not personally present when they signed and issued the tickets.

The three defendants, Eric Thibeault, Patrick René and a third unnamed person, asked the judge to dismiss their fines because of a "total lack of evidence." They also said the specific article in the bylaw does not oblige them to disperse, and it's not the right article cited for police to fine people in an illegal protest.

The police officers who testified in court said their superiors had told them to give tickets in this manner to save on time and the number of officers needed to appear in court.

Judge Richmond sided with the defendants and said "regardless of the way the police superiors had told them to their work for logistical reasons [...] this does not remove the seriousness of their acts." The judge explained that a ticket is a statement made under oath and serves as an important document in court.

Richmond concluded that the Montreal police trivialized the way tickets should be issued. He also described it as "astounding" because police risked condemning innocent people.

(CTV Montreal)

Feb 10 2015

MONTREAL - Three Montreal police officers have been suspended without pay for their behaviour a decade ago during a high-speed chase in order to arrest the drug-addicted sister of a media tycoon.

In a ruling last week by the police ethics commission, Alessandro Lo Dico and Mike Mezzacappa were suspended for two days for not attending to passengers in one of the vehicles hit during the police chase with Anne-Marie Péladeau and her then-boyfriend, Éric Kennedy.

Roberto Sforza was suspended for four days for using more force than necessary while arresting Péladeau, the sister of Pierre Karl Péladeau, controlling shareholder of media giant Québecor Inc.

Sforza and his partner, Fabio Nicola Cavaliere, were chasing Kennedy's car on Oct. 12, 2005, after he and Péladeau reportedly stole some cigarettes. The chase caused two accidents between police cruisers and three citizens' cars.

Kennedy's car came to a halt and police pulled the driver and passenger out. While putting Péladeau in the back of the police cruiser, Sforza pushed her in the back and she hit her head on the door frame, the ruling says.

The other two officers also failed to check if the passengers of a Dodge Caravan, driven by a woman taking her daughter to school, were all right after being hit.

Such behaviour tarnishes the image of police and undermines public trust, even if the accident didn't cause damage other than to the vehicle, the commission noted. The abusive use of force by Sforza shows an unacceptable lack of professionalism, judgment and self control on the part of a police officer, the ruling said.

The arrests were recorded by a television station owned by Québecor Inc.

Sforza, who had been with the force for five years, was reassigned to a desk job, then charged with assault causing bodily harm and assault with a weapon. He was acquitted in 2008. Since 2012, he's been part of the SWAT team.

In Oct. 2006, Péladeau pleaded guilty to four theft-related charges, one of obstructing justice and another of attempting to obstruct justice.

Other charges were dropped. Quebec Court Judge Claude Millette released her on 18 months probation. Kennedy served a four-month prison sentence.

(Montreal Gazette)

Feb 10 2015

CALGARY - Youth crime is being reduced by a program pairing kids with positive mentors, say its proponents.

The seven-year-old Youth at Risk Development Program (YARD) has led to a 41% decrease in criminal charges among its participants compared to those who didn't take part, says a third party assessment of the 250-strong study group.

And 54% of those involved in YARD — which matches social workers and police officers with at-risk youth — say the program has changed their behaviour.

Along with those and other numbers, much of the confidence in YARD comes from anecdotal evidence, said Calgary Deputy Police Chief Trevor Daroux, who added it's making a real difference in cutting youth crime.

"It's a very impressive program ... there's actual proof that it's working," said Daroux.

"Ultimately, it reduced victimization."

Since its start in 2008, the program has handled 1,450 referrals that have come mainly from youths with friends involved in crimi-

nal activity and kids suspected or admitted to having gang connections.

It also focuses on sports and academics to lift students beyond the reach of negative influences.

Too often, those students' mentors were criminals, said Daroux.

"There are times when the proper mentoring can change that story," he said, adding the efforts are preventative.

"Every single victim say they wish the crime never occurred."

(Calgary Sun)

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 11, 2015

Feb 11 2015

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. - The Canada Border Services Agency says close to five kilograms of suspected cocaine has been seized at Toronto Pearson International Airport following a flight from the Caribbean.

The CBSA says officers who were monitoring the offload of baggage arriving on a flight from Saint Maarten on Feb. 8 identified a backpack for further inspection.

The agency says the officers found four bricks containing a substance that field tested positive for suspected cocaine inside the backpack.

The packages were turned over to Peel Regional Police and the investigation is ongoing.

There's no immediate word of any charges in connection with the seizure.

Feb 11 2015

VANCOUVER - The federal government is extending a hand to victims of crime in B.C. that may have had difficulty accessing support because of language or other cultural barriers.

Justice Minister Peter MacKay announced half-a-million dollars in funding will go towards initiatives like translating the province's victim impact statement into eight new languages.

The money will also be used to increase the number of testimonial aids for people hurt by crime, and to raise awareness among specific multicultural groups of a telephone hotline for people injured by domestic violence.

MacKay says human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children remains a real, serious issue in B.C., even as violent crime rates are in some cases on the decline across Canada.

B.C.'s ministry of justice will manage the funding, which will also go towards delivering community workshops for preventing human trafficking and to exploring new ways of responding to violence against women and children.

Feb 11 2015

EDMONTON - Edmonton police say their new flying camera helps investigate serious traffic crashes by giving them a bird's-eye view of the scene.

"In front of us today is the newest tool in our tool belt as far as collision reconstruction goes," Const. Binoy Prabhu, of the Edmonton police major collision investigation unit, said Tuesday as the service unveiled its \$27,000 unmanned aerial vehicle or UAV, a custom-built version of the miniature aircraft available to hobbyists. The drone has been flown at more than 15 major crash investigations since last June, when police received an operations certificate from Transport Canada.

The six-rotor, carbon-fibre and aluminum, battery-operated UAV, built by Chaos Helicopters of Swift Current, uses GPS positioning to keep it stable and carries a payload of a remote-controlled digital SLR camera, a search light, a forward-looking infrared camera and a flight data recorder. It can remain aloft for about 12 minutes and can be controlled from 610 metres away.

Edmonton police decided in January 2014 it needed an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) to give officers an aerial perspective of serious traffic accidents. Alberta RCMP have been using UAVs since late 2011, with 10 across the province.

"What's been sorely missed all this time has been the ability to present an overall picture of certain bits of data that could not be communicated, however eloquent one could be," said Prabhu, adding police previously relied on scale drawings and maps to tell the story of crashes.

From its operational altitude of slightly more than 91 metres up, the machine lets officers see evidence such as tire tracks and far-flung debris that they might miss standing on the ground.

Police must follow Transport Canada regulations when flying the drone. Operators must have permits and pilot training. Flight plans need to be filed to notify other pilots flying in the area.

It takes two officers, a pilot and spotter, to operate the machine, which must be kept in sight at all times.

(Edmonton Journal)

Feb 11 2015

VICTORIA - A B.C. Coroners Service report is calling for a review of the province's Graduated Licensing Program after the deaths of 106 young drivers.

The report says most of the people who died between 2004 and 2013 were between 17 and 18 years old.

It says fewer young drivers have died in the province since the program was introduced in 1998, but input from teens is needed to implement safe driving practices.

Despite the drop in young driver deaths, motor vehicle incidents remain the leading cause of death in B.C. for youth between 15 and 18 years.

The report recommends increasing

awareness about fatal crashes involving young drivers through enhanced data collection by the coroners service and the Insurance Corp. of B.C.

The licensing program involves a learner's stage when drivers who pass a knowledge test must display an "L" sign on their vehicle, followed by a road test that leads to the novice stage and an "N" sign on vehicles.

Feb 11 2015

OTTAWA - Recently toughened rules that block Canada from doing business with companies who commit crimes anywhere in the world have put the federal government's main buyer of goods and services in a bit of a bind.

The Public Works Department has contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars with HP Canada - whose Russian sister company pleaded guilty in a United States court last September to charges of bribing Russian government officials for a contract and was fined more than US\$58 million.

HP Russia executives created a secret, multimillion-dollar slush fund and used some of that money to bribe Russian government officials, who gave the company a contract worth more than 35 million euros, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

Under the so-called integrity framework, companies convicted of crimes in Canada or abroad are barred from bidding on government contracts for 10 years. The ban also extends to subsidiaries and sister companies of convicted companies.

That had Public Works scrambling to figure out what to do about HP Canada - a company with which the department has 66 active contracts, standing offers, supply arrangements and call-ups worth around \$377 million.

Then-deputy minister Michelle D'Auray prepared a memo to Public Works Minister Diane Finley in August 2014 - a little more than two weeks before HP Russia pleaded guilty - outlining what could happen if a U.S. court convicted the company.

Public Works has the option of using a special "public interest" exception to get around the integrity framework's 10-year ban and sign new contracts with HP Canada, D'Auray told Finley.

"Should HP Russia be convicted, HP Canada will not be eligible to enter into new contracts with PWGSC or the other organizations using PWGSC's Integrity Framework - including Shared Services Canada (SSC) - unless it is in the public interest," the memo says.

"The public interest exception applies on a contract-by-contract basis where exceptional circumstances are necessary to the public interest ... In these circumstances, PWGSC could impose stringent controls, administrative measures and monitoring over the contract."

The Canadian Press obtained a copy of the memo under the Access to Information Act.

The department found that only two of its contracts with HP Canada included integrity

framework clauses. The first was a \$290-million contract for a pension modernization project, which expires in November 2017 and has three, two-year renewal options. The memo to Finley recommends letting the contract run its course without renewing it in two years' time.

The second contract, valued at \$428,000, is a sole-source deal to provide the Defence Department with technical support for software installed aboard 17 ships and seven facilities on shore. The memo says Public Works will not cancel the contract "for reasons of operational requirements and proprietary rights."

Another 13 Public Works contracts do not include the integrity framework clause, so they cannot be cancelled.

Neither Public Works nor HP Canada immediately responded to requests for comment.

Feb 11 2015

SASKATOON - David Milgaard says Canada's justice system is "a failure" and is calling for an overhaul to make sure no more innocent people end up behind bars.

Milgaard was 16 years old when he was wrongfully convicted of the 1969 murder of Saskatoon nursing aide Gail Miller, a crime that eventually was pinned to serial rapist Larry Fisher.

He spent 23 years behind bars trying to prove his innocence.

Speaking to a packed University of Saskatchewan classroom on Wednesday, Milgaard called on the federal government to create independent review boards to get innocent people out of prison faster.

Milgaard said the criteria for a review should be reduced, and the boards must have the ability to quickly review evidence so that innocent people "can get out of their cages."

He stressed that the board should consist of members of the public, rather than police.

"We are fools if we think this potential corruption doesn't exist," he said, referring to the idea that police have a vested interest in appearing to solve crimes regardless of the evidence.

(CKOM)

Feb 11 2015

Knowing that it can't fight terrorism alone, the RCMP has reached out to Canada's diverse communities, participated in Muslim youth forums, attended cultural events and dinners, even held yoga classes for women of different cultural backgrounds.

But is any of this community outreach working?

A report released Tuesday at a public safety conference in Ottawa suggests while the Mounties have made inroads, its outreach initiatives are "piecemeal and disjointed" and suffer from a "lack of a clear overall strategy."

Some community members remain suspicious when police show up at gatherings, according to the report by researchers at the Royal United Services Institute, a British defence and security think-tank.

Even Mounties are confused as to what the overall aims of community outreach are: is it to project a smiling face and inform people what the RCMP does; or is it to collect hard intelligence? Should success be measured by the number of cultural events attended or the number of leads generated?

What's not helping, one Mountie told the authors, is some CSIS intelligence agents using the RCMP "brand" to gain access to community members, further hindering trust-building efforts.

Lead author Charlie Edwards said the allegation has not been substantiated but was included in the report to reflect the fear among some RCMP members that the "firewall" between community outreach and intelligence gathering may be "difficult to maintain."

A CSIS spokeswoman said agents do not pass themselves off as RCMP.

"I see no value," added Ray Boisvert, a former CSIS assistant director.

"CSIS officers have developed their own unique narrative to approach and engage people." An RCMP spokesman said the force was still reviewing the report's findings and unable to comment.

The study, which received funding from the Canadian government, wasn't all bad news. The RCMP's outreach to the Muslim community around the time of the arrests of two men for allegedly plotting to derail a Via passenger train in Ontario was "universally hailed" as a success, the study reported.

Before the arrests were made public in April 2013, the RCMP convened Muslim community leaders from Montreal, where one of the suspects lived, to brief them on the case and answer questions.

"From the RCMP's point of view, it was seen as a trust-building exercise designed to assure the community that it was the criminal 'activity' being targeted rather than the community itself," the report said.

RCMP outreach officers have also participated in town halls with other public safety officials from CSIS and the Canada Border Services Agency.

One of the more "out of the box" ideas the RCMP has tried is holding yoga classes in Toronto to try to engage ethnically diverse women.

According to the RCMP website, the program has attracted women of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali, Indian and Chinese descent.

Sureya Ibrahim, community engagement worker at Toronto's Centre for Community Learning and Development, said the outreach events have helped to improve relations between new immigrants and public safety officials.

"Most of the time when immigrants arrive they don't know their rights and responsibilities. We have a lot of Muslims in this neighbourhood," Ibrahim said. "We never thought we could be asking questions that openly."

Some community leaders complained the RCMP spends too much time reaching out to religious leaders, while neglecting other

voices. They also said the RCMP needs to do more than show up at events and sample "cultural food," but also work at hiring more minorities.

(National Post)

Feb 11 2015

CALGARY - Sex and related charges against ex-cop and convicted child pornographer Steve Huggett were withdrawn Wednesday, because his alleged victim has died.

Crown prosecutor Jenny Rees dropped four charges against Huggett, including sexual assault with a weapon, because she no longer has a case to present.

She told court on the day Huggett's trial was to begin that the alleged victim was deceased, without discussing the cause of death.

Outside court, Rees explained the woman's testimony, if believed, was crucial to Huggett's successful prosecution.

"I would need her evidence to obtain a conviction," she said.

"It's ... a credibility issue, we would not be able to obtain a conviction without the ability (of defence counsel Alain Hepner) to cross-examine."

Huggett also faced charges of criminal harassment, extortion and possession of child pornography in connection with his dealings with the woman, who can't be identified.

Huggett, who is free on bail, still faces trial in June on charges he molested a seven-year-old girl in the early 1990s. At the time Huggett, who retired in 2007, was a patrol officer with the Calgary Police Service.

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 12, 2015

Feb 12 2015

CHILLIWACK, B.C. - British Columbia's police watchdog is investigating the death of a Fraser Valley man who was accused of stabbing a dog.

RCMP Insp. Ed Boettcher says Chilliwack Mounties were called to a home late Wednesday afternoon and "engaged" the suspect inside the residence.

He says the suspect allegedly struggled with police, before officers used a conducted energy weapon and arrested him.

Boettcher says the man appeared unresponsive, so police performed CPR and called paramedics who took the suspect to hospital where he was later pronounced dead.

He says an officer was injured, treated in hospital and released, and the dog was taken to a veterinarian.

Police called the Independent Investigations Office of B.C., which Boettcher said was on the scene late Wednesday night.

Feb 12 2015

Police officers standing in for Crown prosecutors at bail hearings has become an issue in the shooting of two Mounties last month near Edmonton.

The shooter, Shawn Rehn, was on the streets after a police officer consented to bail on charges that included possession of a motorcycle, escaping custody and weapons offences.

Police can release people arrested for minor crimes on promises to appear in court later. In more serious cases, suspects must be seen by judges or justices of the peace within 24 hours and can ask for bail - the process Rehn went through. It varies among provinces whether Crown prosecutors attend these hearings or police officers act in their place:

British Columbia: Crowns typically conduct initial bail hearings. But in smaller jurisdictions, after hours, police act in their place. Crowns are available around the clock in larger centres.

Alberta: Police step in for Crowns in all bail hearings before justices of the peace.

Saskatchewan: It's uncommon, but police can act as Crowns before justices of the peace.

Manitoba: Crowns handle all bail hearings and are on-call nights and weekends. They are also available by phone in remote locations.

Ontario: Crowns handle all bail hearings. Weekend and statutory holiday courts operate in each region of the province.

Quebec: Crowns, not police, actually lay criminal charges in Quebec and handle all bail hearings before judges. They are available nights and weekends.

Newfoundland and Labrador: Police officers can step in for Crowns on summary conviction offences, only if they are designated as agents by the attorney general. None is currently designated.

New Brunswick: There are no justices of the peace in the province. Hearings are held with judges and Crowns, over the phone if necessary after hours.

Nova Scotia: Bail is heard during regular weekday hours before judges with Crowns. On nights and weekends, accused people appear before justices of the peace with police acting on the advice of Crowns over the phone.

Prince Edward Island: When accused persons first appear before justices of the peace, police can make submissions instead of Crowns. But most cases are put over to be heard by judges with Crowns.

(Source: The justice departments or Crown offices in each province)

Feb 12 2015

MONTREAL - A Quebec coroner says several factors contributed to the tragic fire at a seniors' home that killed 32 people a little over a year ago.

Cyrille Delage says in his final report into the fire at the L'Isle Verte, Que. home that building codes weren't properly followed, employees lacked training and there were delays in firefighters getting to the scene.

Delage called for a review of emergency procedures at seniors' residences across the province.

"We have to better the security rules in seniors homes in order to avoid similar tragedies like the one that occurred at the

Residence du Havre," he wrote in a report released Thursday.

Fire swept quickly through the home in the early morning hours of Jan. 23, 2014.

The residence housed 52 elderly people, including many who couldn't move around without the use of a walker or wheelchair.

Delage also recommended changing the province's building codes to make automatic sprinklers mandatory in all certified seniors residences, old and new.

Delage also recommended that provincial authorities encourage rural and urban cities and towns to centralize fire services and to regularly review fire-fighting procedures.

He called on municipalities across the province to regroup firefighters services in order to have a co-ordinated plan under common leadership.

Delage said that smoke detectors in seniors' homes need to be loud and visible by both employees and the people who live there. He added the detectors need to be connected to a central alarm system that alerts the local 911 centre in the region.

The coroner also had strong words for some owners of seniors' residences and politicians across the province who he said might be angry his recommendations will cost money.

"Let them (be angry) up until the moment that another disaster like this one happens again," he said. "They'll have to explain to their constituents why they did nothing."

Feb 12 2015

CALGARY - Police say a year-long investigation into organized crime in Calgary has led to a dozen arrests and the seizure of millions of dollars worth of drugs.

The Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams says the drugs include cocaine, fentanyl, methamphetamine, heroin and marijuana.

They are believed to have been supplied throughout Alberta.

The suspects include alleged suppliers, manufacturers and street-level traffickers.

A variety of weapons were also seized,

along with \$600,000 in cash and five luxury vehicles.

The 12 suspects face a total of 66 conspiracy, organized crime, drug and weapons-related charges.

Feb 12 2015

HIGH RIVER, Alta. - A proposed class-action lawsuit has been filed against the RCMP over the seizure of guns from homes in High River during flooding in southern Alberta in 2013.

The lawsuit alleges the seizure was an unlawful and unnecessary invasion of people's private lives and caused distress, humiliation and anguish.

It also alleges that Mounties damaged homes and property, breached people's charter rights and caused them emotional and psychological trauma.

The lawsuit, which has not yet been certified, seeks monetary damages and a declaration that the RCMP were negligent.

Statements of claim contain allegations not proven in court.

Feb 12 2015

WINNIPEG - Winnipeg police say they found a shotgun that had been stolen from a cruiser during a call to a home about a child welfare matter.

Police say they went to a home on Monday and seized several firearms and ammunition.

They say further examination of the seized firearms determined that a shotgun seized from the residence was identified as missing from a marked police cruiser on May 26, 2014.

Police say the shotgun has been modified.

As of August 2014, shotguns are no longer kept in cruiser cars and are secured in the station when not signed out to an on-duty member.

A 28-year-old woman and a 30-year-old male have been charged with numerous firearm related offences and are in custody.

Police did not say what happened to the child or children who originally sparked the call.



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