

LOCAL

Man charged with assaulting officer

An attempt to evict a group of young people from a Burlington nightclub early Saturday led to what police are describing as an attempt to stab a Halton officer.

Halton police credit club security staff with helping to save the officer's life. The officer was on patrol in the parking lot of NRG nightclub on Plains Road when he went to help security staff after the group of men was asked to leave. A fight broke out when the officer asked one of the men to leave the area, police said. The man pulled out a 10-centimetre knife and lashed out twice at the officer, the second time just missing his throat. Security staff intervened and the officer wasn't hurt. The man was subdued by backup officers, who used a Taser.

A Taser uses high voltage electricity to momentarily incapacitate an assailant. A 23-year-old east Hamilton man is charged with assaulting police, assault with intent to resist arrest, assault with a weapon and possession of a weapon dangerous to the public peace. *The Hamilton Spectator*

Suzuki's tour in town Feb. 17

Environmentalist David Suzuki will stop in Hamilton Feb. 17 on the election-style, national tour he launched in Atlantic Canada last week.

He's using the 40-city trip to urge Canadians to make environmental issues their top concern in the next federal election.

The Suzuki Foundation website shows the science broadcaster is scheduled to appear with singer-songwriter Sarah Harmer in the Great Hall at Hamilton Place at 7:30 p.m. on Sat., Feb. 17.

Admission will be \$10 for adults and \$7 for students, the unemployed and children.

Local organizers plan a mini-festival in the lobby and mezzanine starting at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets are available at Dr. Disc, 20 Wilson St., 905-523-1010; Bryan Prince Bookseller, 1060 King St. W., 905-528-4508; EcoHouse, 22 Veveers Dr., 905-561-9852; and the Compass kiosk at McMaster University.

The Hamilton Spectator

New police van won't need tow

Hamilton police are going to get a replacement for their tired, 1982 Winnebago command van.

The van has been a bit of an embarrassment lately. It has to be towed to crime scenes.

The new one is used — from an Iowa manufacturer, Dodgen/Born Free Motorcoach Inc.

The "new" 2006 model, 7.9 metre command centre II diesel-powered motorhome will cost the service about \$130,000.

Deputy Chief Ken Leendertse told the Hamilton Police Services Board recently the unit is "a demonstrator."

The police have been looking at various replacements for the old command van for about two years.

The Hamilton Spectator

HIGHLAND FLING: Plow goes for a slide



KAZ NOVAK, THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

Tow truck operators work to right a snowplow yesterday afternoon after it caught the edge of a ditch on Highland Road and rolled on its side on Hamilton Mountain in Stoney Creek. With cold temperatures and flurries expected to continue all week, plows and city road crews will likely be out daily battling blowing snow. Highs are predicted to hover around -11.

Chronic pain keeps hurting

Province limits its coverage, Chedoke will no longer cover uninsured

BY JOANNA FRKETICH

Hamiltonians living in pain are being denied crucial care to help them cope because they don't have private or workplace insurance.

The province only pays for certain types of pain care, so doctors have been sneaking uninsured patients into their pain management programs for free. But with waiting lists growing to as long as three years, Chedoke Hospital has limited its program to those with private insurance or patients injured on the job so their care is paid for by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

"We're pretty disappointed," said Charles McRae, clinical manager of the program. "We couldn't keep going. There's no funding for a multidisciplinary approach to pain management."

The province pays for acute care to treat pain such as nerve blocks or doctor visits to get prescriptions for medication.

What's not covered, for the most part, are programs that help patients learn to live with chronic pain.

"We have to focus on the essential services Ontarians need under the Canada Health Act," said A.G. Klei,

spokesman for the Ministry of Health.

But both medical professionals and patients argue that multidisciplinary teams are essential to treat chronic pain and point to numerous research studies backing them up.

"It's very important, certainly for complicated patients," said Dr. Norm Buckley, medical director of the Pain Management Centre at Hamilton General Hospital. "But if you're not working or not injured on the job, you're not covered."

The main focus of the teams is not to treat pain, but to help patients cope with it so they can still live active lives.

A wide variety of health professionals such as occupational therapists, nutritionists, physiotherapists, social workers and psychiatrists teach everything from how to lift groceries off supermarket shelves to what positions to sleep in and proper meditation techniques.

"If you don't keep moving, the pain just swallows you up," said Feather Glover, who has been through a similar program at St. Joseph's Centre for Ambulatory Health Services in Stoney Creek.

"It's easy to sink into that big black hole of depression."

The 56-year-old Hamilton woman,

who suffers from arthritis, fibromyalgia and a number of autoimmune diseases, was nearly housebound when she started the 11-week program.

Now she helps run a pain support group, volunteers with the program and is leading a much more active life. "It gave me a feeling of self worth again," she said.

The Stoney Creek program, run by Dr. Jeff Ennis, has been swamped by patients since Chedoke stopped treating the uninsured.

"It's important to me to make sure the door is not closed on people," said Ennis, who is trying to treat as many as he can. But he has only so many spots in his program, which runs five times a year, and many go to those with insurance.

"There needs to be funding for these types of programs," he said. "It's only going to get bigger."

Ennis suffers from chronic pain himself, so knows first hand why it's so important to teach people how to carry on despite it. "You still feel crappy but at least you have a life," he said. "I start my day sick and I go to bed sick. But if I can do a few useful things during the day, then my soul is intact."

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