

Newsletter #3- November 2007

Taser

In May 2006 a local teenager involved in a fist fight at a dance was Tasered by an OPP officer. COPKA researched the weapon, its uses and abuses. We asked detailed questions at two CPAC meetings. Our efforts resulted in increased public awareness of the issues involved, in-depth coverage by the local media and a new dialogue with the OPP. To date we know of no further Taser use in our area.

Police Complaints System

COPKA's delegation presented recommendations to the government at hearings in Toronto regarding The Independent Police Review Act.. Our recommendations were echoed by more than 20 other citizens' groups and we established valuable contacts

Complainant Support Team

It can be very distressing to be mistreated by a police officer. Many people are too intimidated to file a complaint. COPKA is developing a Complainant Support Team to help with this process.

Observer Network.

COPKA now has volunteer observers in Wilno, Barry's Bay and Whitney. They monitor issues of concern to our members so that we can bring better-informed complaints to the OPP's attention. We hope to expand this network to the entire detachment area.

Cruiser Speeding in Built Up Areas

One Sunday morning a speeding cruiser came barrelling over the hill as parishioners left St. Mary's Church on their way to the Wilno Tavern for brunch. "I was just waiting for the crash, it was awful", an observer told us. Over the years we have heard many complaints about this issue. In the spring of 2007, our Observer Network identified three cruisers speeding through populated areas. COPKA then brought details of the incident to the Staff Sergeant at a CPAC meeting, which we attend monthly. Subsequent reports have confirmed that, since we raised the issue, cruiser speeds have dropped dramatically.

Restorative Justice

COPKA has begun research into an alternative way of dealing with offences where offenders and victims meet face to face in a supportive environment to discuss the effects of the crime and develop a plan for making amends. COPKA has developed a one year pilot program and has applied for startup funding.

**For more information or to find out how you can get involved,
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