

LOCAL

City suspends 10-year employee

The city has indefinitely suspended an employee facing drug and gun charges.

Bonnie Redden, 34, a claims adjuster in the city's risk-management department, was charged along with her boyfriend after their home was raided by police in November. Police say they found a marijuana grow-op, more than 70 grams of powdered cocaine, more than a kilo of packaged marijuana, ecstasy and painkillers and two handguns.

Redden, who was released on bail, worked for the city for about a decade. She was suspended without pay yesterday until the charges are resolved. She had been on vacation.

Joe Rinaldo, the city's finance manager, said he couldn't discuss the case. Decisions about employee suspensions are made on a case-by-case basis, he said. Redden could not be reached for comment.

Legal expert John Craig said it is a common response to suspend an employee if they have been charged with a serious offence. "Employers have obligations to protect other employees and members of the public." If proven innocent, the employee can return to work, Craig noted.

Nicole MacIntyre, *The Hamilton Spectator*

No identities in New Year's crash

PORT COLBORNE ♦ Police have not yet released the names of three people killed in a head-on crash in Port Colborne on New Year's Eve but have confirmed they were not Hamilton-area residents.

One of the deceased was a Port Colborne woman who was travelling in a minivan with her family, said Ontario Provincial Police Constable Graham Williamson.

Her husband and two children were taken to area hospitals where they remain with serious injuries.

Williamson added the other two victims were the occupants of a pickup truck that burst into flames.

He said police were still waiting for final confirmation on their identity but they were believed to be two Niagara-area men.

The fatal collision happened around 7:45 p.m. when the westbound truck crashed into the eastbound minivan in the eastbound lane of Highway 3 at Clark Road.

The cause of the collision is still under investigation and police have not yet ruled out speed or alcohol.

The Hamilton Spectator

GO Transit warns commuters

GO Transit is warning commuters to double-check their train and bus schedules this morning.

The warning comes after labour disruptions had trains and buses running late or not at all yesterday. Commuters can check GO Transit's website at gotransit.com for delays.

The problem involves GO's request to have CN, whose crews run the trains between Oshawa and Hamilton, cut 34 engineers in a cost-saving move. GO hopes to save \$2 million a year.

A federal arbiter ruled last week CN can eliminate the engineering positions. The engineers, who will be reassigned to CN's freight divisions, staged "a protest," a CN spokesperson said yesterday.

The Teamsters Canada Rail Conference for Toronto South, the union representing the engineers, denied a wildcat strike had caused problems. The union blames CN scheduling and dispatch.

One train from Hamilton was cancelled yesterday morning when equipment did not arrive, but it did run from Burlington's Aldershot station.

The Hamilton Spectator

Body found in apartment

Police canvass neighbourhood after classifying death as suspicious

BY DANA BROWN

Police are investigating a suspicious death after the decomposing body of a man was found in a downtown apartment.

The body had been in the apartment at 19 Victoria Ave. S. for several days, police said.

"We discovered the body of a male under suspicious circumstances," said major crime Staff Sergeant Peter Abi-Rashed.

The alley leading to the entrance of the first-floor bachelor apartment was taped off by police yesterday afternoon, but tenants of the 16-unit duplex were able to come and go through the front doors.

The body was found around 3 p.m. when the superintendent's girlfriend Shelly Tucker and the landlord were cleaning the recently vacated unit. Tucker said there was debris all over the apartment and the remains smelled like "rotten eggs."

Superintendent Gerry Currie said there had been problems with the tenants since they moved in several months ago.

"It's been a crack house."

Currie said the landlord was forced to take the man who rented the apartment to court in order to evict him. At any given time, there were up to six people living in the unit, he said. The tenants moved out several days ago but he did not have a specific date.

Don Cossar, who lives above the apartment, said he saw the man who rented the unit Sunday morning when he accompanied the landlord down to the apartment.

Cossar said later that night there was a noisy fight in the unit which spilled over into the street.

"There were people coming in and going steadily," he said.

Another neighbour said the traffic to and from the apartment usually



Major crime investigators consult with uniformed officers near the location where a decomposed body was found in an apartment on Victoria Avenue South.

started after 1 a.m.

He said most of the people in the building are between 45 and 60 years old and are fairly quiet.

Police were securing the scene last night and said they planned to canvass

the neighbourhood for more information.

"We have just started to examine the scene so it will be quite a while before we can determine the cause of death," Abi-Rashed said.

A post-mortem will be conducted on

the remains today.

Police are appealing to anyone who may have seen anything out of the ordinary during the past few days to call Crime Stoppers at 905-222-TIPS. dbrown@thespec.com

905-526-4629

JOHN RENNISON, THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR



HAMILTON SPECTATOR FILE PHOTO

Great Glasses founder Bruce Bergez was fined \$1 million last month.

Great Glasses ordered to 'follow the law'

BY STEVE BUIST

A Toronto judge has tightened the vise a little more on the Great Glasses empire.

Superior Court Justice Nancy Spies has issued an interim order that requires all Great Glasses franchise operators to comply with the provisions of the province's Regulated Health Professions Act.

"It seems a little silly to have to get an order that says 'follow the law,' but so be it," said Cathi Mietkiewicz, president of the College of Opticians of Ontario, which went to court seeking the order.

"We intend to make sure the order is complied with," she added.

The latest court order comes a month after a Hamilton judge imposed a record \$1-million fine for contempt on the founder of the Great Glasses chain.

Dundas optician Bruce Bergez, his wife Joanne and three related corporations were found in contempt for blatantly violating a 2003 court order that required Great Glasses stores to comply with Ontario legislation that governs the prescribing and dispensing of eyeglasses and contact lenses.

The Great Glasses chain of 18 stores is known throughout southern Ontario for its "3 for 1" promotions and offer of free eye tests.

The college believes that Bergez and the chain are in violation of the legislation because there isn't an optician on duty at each Great Glasses store to dispense eyeglasses and contacts.

Mietkiewicz said the college expects each Great Glasses franchisee to employ opticians on site to perform the dispensing function.

"If there's not an optician on duty, there can be no dispensing," said Mietkiewicz.

Bergez and the Great Glasses stores have taken the position that opticians in Ontario are allowed to delegate their authority to dispense to anyone, even if the optician isn't on site.

Hamilton lawyer Louis Frapporti, who is representing the Great Glasses franchisees, said he wasn't surprised with the judge's order.

Frapporti declined to indicate if each Great Glasses franchise will now hire opticians. "We'd never counsel anyone to do anything other than to obey an order of the court," he said.

"The question as to how to comply with the regulations is something that's under discussion."

Justice Spies also ordered the Great Glasses franchisees to identify their operators to the College of Opticians by today at the latest.

The franchisees had attempted to keep their identities secret from the college, citing solicitor-client privilege, but the judge quickly shot down that argument.

"A party cannot come into this court, seek relief and/or defend a matter, and yet refuse to identify itself," the judge ruled.

No date has yet been set for a hearing to determine if the order should be made permanent.

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HAMELTONES

EPISODE ONE: "MEET (some of) THE HAMELTONES"

Jack is at work, Diane is a wee-bit tired from the holidays, Jenn is still sleeping, Andy just finished his third bowl of Double-Frosted Sugar Loops, and the star-of-the-show Mike is already in next week's cartoon...

MIKEY IS ON THE MOVE. The Hameltones' teen spokesperson has been anxious to embark on a journey of self-discovery, mixing it up with local places and faces here in the Spec every Wednesday for the next 24 weeks. See for yourself just how passionate Mike and his family can be about life - particularly life around the skilled trades. You may be surprised with what you learn along the way.

iec INDUSTRY EDUCATION COUNCIL OF HAMILTON
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skilled trades alliance

MIKEY SAYS...
I'VE GOT A BLOG TOO! FOR THE FULL STORY ON ME AND MY FAMILY, VISIT WWW.MIKESHAMELTONE.BLOGSPOT.COM/

Canada

BURLINGTON

Who, what, where, and when, all @ thespec.com