

Does Metro need Guardian Angels?

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Spokesman for citizen patrol group says presence a great deterrent to would-be troublemakers

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By Mary Moszynski

Times & Transcript Staff

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The Guardian Angels are eyeing Moncton as a site to set up a new chapter of the controversial citizen patrol group.

Scott Sonne, the organization's Canadian co-ordinator, said the volunteer-based patrol group -- which performs citizens' arrests and attempts to break up physical fights when necessary -- is interested in recruiting volunteers in Metro Moncton.

"The most effective thing is the visual deterrent," he said. "If an individual is about to create a crime in any way, be it assault, vandalism or robbery, if they physically see four or six people wearing red shirts and berets... they're not going to do it at that given time."

The Times & Transcript's CityThink poll conducted by Bristol Omnifacts recently found that for the third straight year Metro Moncton residents' feelings of safety and security increased.

In 2006, 64 per cent felt strongly that Moncton, Dieppe and Riverview were safe communities. In 2008, that number climbed more than 10 percentage points.

Even still, Sonne said the organization takes a "why wait until you need it?" approach.

"Every city needs it because it doesn't cost the taxpayers any money, it's a visual deterrent and it's a positive role model for younger people. It encourages people to do community service," he said.

Sonne said he's certain the organization will receive the support of Metro Monctonians.

He said he was approached by several people walking down the street in Fredericton who were supportive of the organization coming to the province.

If there's any indication of support from Moncton, Sonne will travel to the city.

The volunteers don't carry weapons.

"If there are people fighting, we would blow a whistle normally," he said.

"It gets their attention. If they continue fighting, then we're trained to separate them without hurting them."

Most recently, the organization established a chapter in Halifax and has begun training volunteers in self-defence. The mayor hasn't endorsed the chapter.

Officials have been cautious with their reaction to the suggestion that the Guardian Angels might establish chapters in Fredericton, Saint John and Moncton.

Moncton Mayor Lorne Mitton said he would welcome the group to speak with him.

However, he stressed the City of Moncton is very safe and residents are extremely pleased with policing services.

"As far as service is concerned, we're quite pleased with the service we're getting from Codiac RCMP," said Mitton.

Public Safety Minister John Foran said New Brunswick boasts the fourth-best crime rate in the country.

"I think that our police forces, both provincial with the RCMP and municipal contracts, are doing a very adequate job," said Foran.

The RCMP echoed those sentiments.

"No contact was initiated by the Guardian Angels yet, so we're not really aware of what they're trying to do," said Sgt. Gilles Blinn.

"As far as Codiac goes, I can tell you we have a pretty efficient crime reduction strategy in place for Codiac."



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I for one would welcome the guardian angels into our city. The RCMP do as good a job as they are able but we all know they cannot be everywhere at the same time. In our case we have security system in place on our doors and windows but still felt the need to purchase a guard dog that will be trained, my husband and myself got nerved a bit when we read that there has been violence happening in our backyard as to say and whereas we do not believe in guns figure our new guard dog purchase will fit our needs. So yes I would welcome the guardian angels to help patrol our streets to make them safer for all citizens of Moncton.

19  THUMBS UP 2  THUMBS DOWN

 FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

Sue B., Moncton on 24/04/08, 7:19:09 AM ADT



I do beg to differ with the mayor. Moncton needs better Policing. The RCMP is stretched thin trying to stay within budget. The level of service has greatly gone down since the RCMP was brought in. Monctonians are being lulled into a false sense of security by the lack of Crime reports being put out by the RCMP and also the reporting by this newspaper.

20  THUMBS UP 1  THUMBS DOWN

 FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

R. Paladin, Moncton on 24/04/08, 7:41:36 AM ADT



Absolutely! I would welcome the Angels. Being a woman it would really give me an added sense of security to know they were there when I am walking at night or at anytime for that matter. As far as I am concerned the Guardian Angels are welcome in Moncton.

12  THUMBS UP 2  THUMBS DOWN

 FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

Anonymous Reader on 24/04/08, 9:12:39 AM ADT



Why not, The Police always claim they do not have enough manpower, having some group that have the time to watch over areas and report crimes is a good deterrent, why wait until someone gets seriously hurt, it's not that the city or Police are not doing their job...this is just additional help

10  THUMBS UP 0  THUMBS DOWN

 FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

Anonymous Reader on 24/04/08, 10:08:29 AM ADT

WOO HOO! Just what we need - vigilante justice!

0  THUMBS UP 8  THUMBS DOWN



 FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

John Blutarsky, Moncton on 24/04/08, 10:45:03 AM ADT

Why not?? They'll cost the taxpayers \$0.00, and they'll spend their money locally. I, for one, would welcome the extra eyes at night, and in areas seldom visited by the RCMP, who are stretched way too thin. As long as they operate within the law, how can this be a bad thing??

Maybe they'll actually give some of our downtown crack dealers something to worry about, finally!!

Bluto! You've been watching way too many reruns of "Death Wish", on TV!! LOL! This is Canada! We're docile, remember?

7  THUMBS UP 0  THUMBS DOWN

 FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

Anonymous Reader on 24/04/08, 12:03:51 PM ADT

HAHAHAHAHA!

I was thinking more about the SIMPSONS when Homer and his buddies started a vigilante group. SMARTLINE, with Kent Brockman:


Kent: Mr. Simpson, how do you respond to the charges that petty vandalism such as graffiti is down eighty percent, while heavy sack-beatings are up a shocking nine hundred percent?

Homer: Aw, people can come up with statistics to prove anything, Kent. Forty percent of all people know that.

Kent: I see. Well, what do you say to the accusation that your group has been causing more crimes than it's been preventing?

Homer: [amused] Oh, Kent, I'd be lying if I said my men weren't committing crimes.

Kent: [pause] Well, touche'.

2  THUMBS UP 2  THUMBS DOWN

 FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE



John Blutarsky, Moncton on 24/04/08, 12:08:47 PM ADT

Canadians...Docile? Didn't some guy get chopped in 1/2 by a sword a couple weeks ago

And riots over a series 1 win on sunday night.

Quote from Hard Walk The Dewey Cox story

"I had no idea it was so easy to chop someone in 1/2 with a machete"

2  THUMBS UP 1  THUMBS DOWN

 FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

R. Duke, london on 24/04/08, 12:25:59 PM ADT

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