

# Poppy box thief receives conditional sentence

By Lisa Cartwright  
SPECIAL TO THE BEAVER

A Campbellville woman, who stole Royal Canadian Legion poppy boxes from eight Oakville locations last Remembrance Day, received a six-month conditional sentence in Burlington provincial court, Friday.

Lorraine King, 24, was also ordered to perform 60 hours of community service within six months.

While the conditional sentence means Lorraine King will not spend anytime in jail, the single mother of two children did not completely escape the courtroom without spending some time behind bars.

After handing down his sentence, Judge Douglas Latimer, whose 18-year-old brother was killed in World War II, told King, "I have a learning experience for you. I will put you back in a cell until the papers are ready."

King was escorted out of the courtroom by the police and held in custody until her court papers were processed.

After King was taken away, her lawyer, Richard Stern, gave Veronica Ion, poppy chair for the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 486 in Bronte, \$1,600 in cash as restitution.

In an interview before the court proceedings, Ion said she wasn't expecting to get the money back. Ion said she will give half of the money to the Oakville branch that also lost poppy boxes.

Before passing his sentence, Judge Latimer told King that after 28 years, making a decision about people's fate was still difficult — because he was still dealing with people.

In what he called an 'unusual move,' Judge Latimer read the two letters King had submitted to the court.

One letter was written by King.

In it she wrote about visiting the grave site of her grandfather, who had served in the Second World War.

"I went to speak with him and explained what I had done. It was very hard. I pictured the look on his face."

She said her grandfather would have been every disappointed in her.

She also wrote how much she enjoyed being with her children and taking them to the park. King wrote that

## Judge rejects Crown's jail request, levies 60 hours of community work

she works at a fast-food restaurant and was honest with her employer about what she had done.

"I told my boss what I did and she was disappointed in me, but said everyone deserved a second chance."

She is now being trained as an assistant manager.

King wrote she volunteers at Allendale on Sundays and works at a church program.

The \$1,600 she gave to her lawyer to be presented to the legion was money she earned herself.

"I am trying to do everything possible to pay back to my town," she wrote.

The other letter was written by her employer who had hired her even though King was completely honest about what she had done and her upcoming court proceedings.

## Visions Canada Awards deadline Fri. May 5th

The Visions Canada Awards program is accepting submissions from the Halton students for projects about Canada until Fri. May 5th.

All students entering the Vision Canada Awards program receive a certificate and one-year pass to the Halton Region Museum in Kelso Conservation Area. Awards recipients receive Canadian mint-coin packages at a ceremony at the Halton Region Administrative Centre on June 5th. Students from Kindergarten to O.A.C. are eligible.

Interested students should discuss their entries with their teachers or school principals. They are responsible for selecting and forwarding submissions to the Board Coordinators.

For more information about the Vision Canada Awards program, contact Kim Wallace at the Halton District School Board at (905) 335-3663 (Ext. 3230) or Karen McCarthy at the Halton Catholic District School Board at (905) 632-6314 (Ext. 320)

King babysits the man's two boys and wrote that she was wonderful with them, as well as her own two children.

"In my opinion, King already has learned her lesson," he wrote.

Her conditional six-month sentence was much lighter than the 60 to 90-day jail term requested by Crown Attorney Monica MacKenzie-Bolle.

MacKenzie-Bolle argued that a jail sentence would act as deterrent for King and others from committing the same type of crime.

She pointed out that King was not a first-time offender. She had previously been convicted of fraud under \$5,000 for writing a bad cheque.

MacKenzie-Bolle argued the poppy box theft was not a crime of opportunity, it was planned.

King's Lawyer, Stern, countered that jail is not the only way to teach people that such behaviour is unacceptable.

Stern mentioned to the intense media interest the poppy fund theft has garnered and pointed to the reporters sitting behind him.

King's case also attracted media attention when she was named Milton's millennium mother after giving birth to a son at 6:52 p.m. on Jan. 3rd at Milton District Hospital. She was showered with gifts from the hospital and several local businesses.

Stern said King was never in trouble with the law until she started dating her former common-law spouse, Adam Pickering.

But King continues to see him, the Crown argued, even though both her family and her probation officer do not like him.

"She still does not wish to end the relationship," said MacKenzie-Bolle.

In his sentencing Judge Latimer told King she was not allowed to associate with anyone who her probation officer felt was unacceptable, including her common-law spouse. But he said she was an adult and the decision was hers.

"I'll leave it like that. They say love is a wonderful thing."

On Friday, King was also sentenced for a conviction for theft over \$5,000 pertaining to welfare fraud.

While living with her common-law husband, King claimed she was a single parent and received social assistance as such for six months.

For that offence, King received 24 months probation and has to perform 180 hours of community service. She also has to pay \$5,538.46 in restitution.

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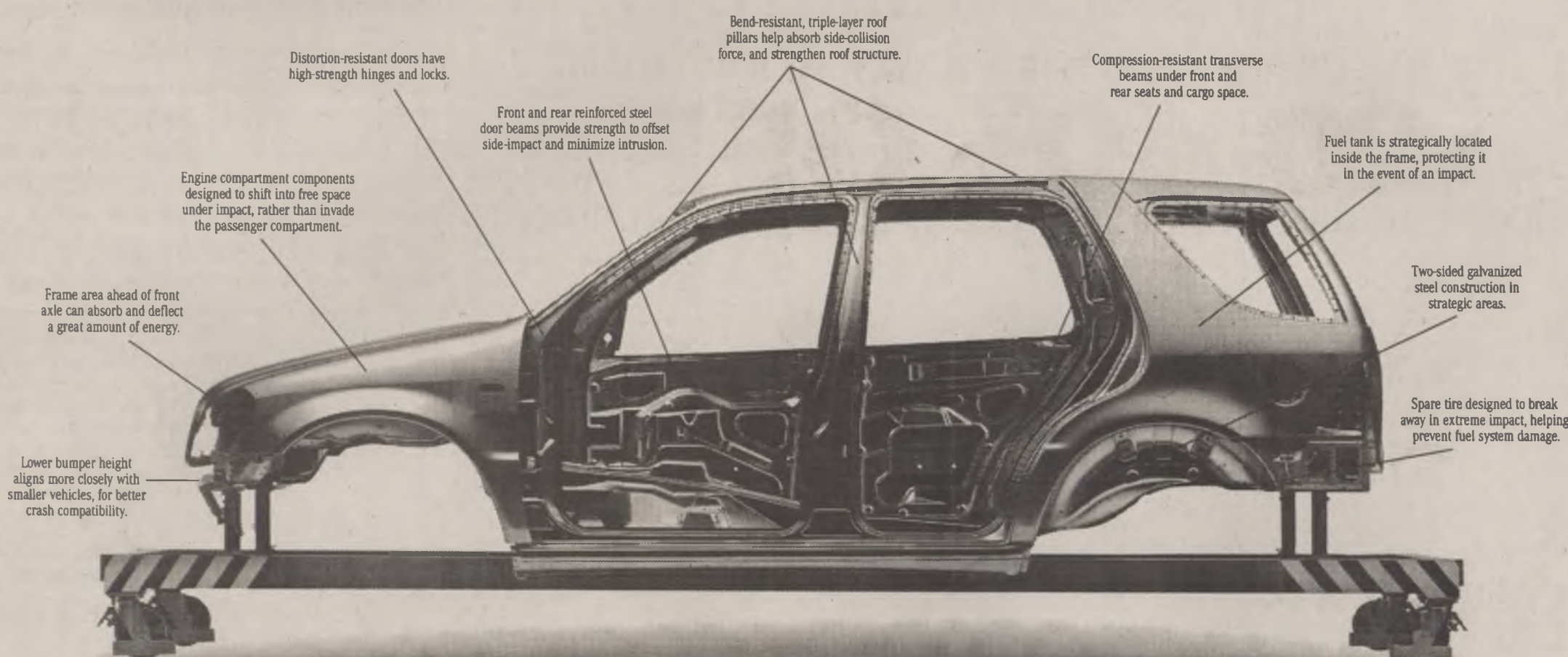
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