

Man dies in 'killer corner' crash

By RICK HUGHES
The Spectator

STONEY CREEK — A spectacular collision at King Street and Highway 20 that killed one man has once more raised fears about the safety of the intersection.

A large tractor-trailer truck collided with a Chrysler yesterday, then careened through a Sunoco gas bar, narrowly missing the kiosk, and plowing through a row of pumps that spewed gasoline across the tarmac.

Chaos

"It was utter chaos around here for a while," said Terri Warling, who witnessed the collision.

"People wanted out of here as fast as they could."

After colliding with the truck, the car was tossed in the air and came to rest on the median of Highway 20. The passenger in the car was killed. The extent of the injuries to the driver of the truck, who was taken to Burlington's Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital, and to the car's driver, who was taken to Hamilton General Hospital, were not available.

Witnesses said the truck from Philips Enterprises was heading south through the intersection, preparing to climb the Highway 20 hill. It was carrying garbage to a Hamilton Mountain dump.

Police said there was some discrepancy among witness accounts over the direction of the car.

"The car was either westbound

Collision renews fears of intersection's safety



John Copland: at scene

(on King Street) or northbound (on Highway 20) making a left turn," said Hamilton-Wentworth police Inspector John Reid.

Third

The 1.40 p.m. accident is the third fatal car-truck accident at the intersection in 2½ years.

But, in contrast to other fatal truck accidents at the corner that have raised concern among local residents and politicians, the truck involved here was not coming north, down the hill.

Ms Warling said she was eastbound on King Street, and was first in line in the turning lane

waiting to make a left turn when the truck veered in her direction.

"I was scared. I thought it was over for me, I was right there."

But the truck passed her and crashed through the large Sunoco sign on the northwest corner. It continued through the gas bar, taking out a row of pumps, and the shelter overhead, before slamming into a grass embankment. It came to rest inches from the Bamboo Tavern.

"There was a lot of gas everywhere," said a man who works at a nearby garage, "He took out all the pumps."

People rushed to help, among them nurses from a regional health clinic on the northeast corner of the intersection.

"I tried to assist with the car. There was little you could do," said Ellen Souter, a nurse who rushed out to see if she could help.

She found both male occupants unconscious.

Many people who gathered to watch the cleanup said the accident had renewed their fears of the corner.

"It scares me," said Josee Dube. "I try to avoid it. I find (New Mountain Road) safer, even though it's steeper."

"I hate this corner," said another woman, who has lived nearby for 30 years. "I never turn here."

The intersection has been the subject of many complaints by local residents and politicians, particularly in the past 2½ years.

"We've been trying for years to get something done about this intersection," said Stoney Creek Councillor John Copland, who was at the scene. An extensive 1988 study by provincial, local and regional officials into ways to improve the intersection's safety was dismissed by local politicians as a whitewash.

Dangerous

But that study did identify it as one of the most dangerous intersections in the region.

"There is only one thing that will work," said Mr. Copland, "Grade separation (an overpass with ramps), and that will cost millions."

"Everything that reasonably could be done has been done. For sure, this is a dangerous intersection. The traffic is heavy and it's going to get worse, it's not going to get better."

From his seat at the Mother's Donuts store, Don Siblock says he has seen the last three fatal truck accidents.

"What can you say, it's a bad corner. Some run the lights, some aren't paying attention.

"They call it killer corner. I guess it's living up to its name."

*Jeon McEvoy's
Husband
Douglas
Sheers
Oct 11/90*