

Conditional discharge for forging prescriptions

COLBORNE
CHRONICLE
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By Cecilia Nasmith

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Justice Robert Graydon agreed it would not be contrary to public interest to give Cobourg resident Mario Albert a conditional discharge on his guilty pleas to eight charges of forging a prescription and one of possessing a controlled substance.

The 56-year-old accused had asked for this disposition instead of a suspended sentence in order that he might more easily travel to visit his elderly mother in the United States. Defence counsel Brad Halls added that Mr. Albert had already missed his stepfather's funeral.

Justice Graydon was reacting to a positive pre-sentence report in agreeing to the disposition in Cobourg's Ontario Court of Justice Aug. 18, adding an 18-month probation order as well.

Mr. Albert had been facing about 100 individual charges, but pleaded guilty June 30 to nine telescoped charges that included all the offences.

Crown attorney David Thompson said on that date that Mr. Albert had been under treatment in 2007 for pain resulting from an injury, with oxycodone among the variety of medications which had been prescribed.

"He felt the quantity prescribed was inadequate to meet his needs for pain control, and took it upon himself to alter, on multiple occasions, legitimate prescriptions and to tender those forged prescriptions," Mr. Thompson said.

- At York Super Pharmacy in Cobourg, Mr. Albert presented forged prescriptions on July 4, August 27 and September 20, and obtained a total of 270 oxycodone tablets.

- At the Medicine Shoppe in Cobourg, he presented forged prescriptions on June 14, July 4, August 14 and September 5, and obtained a total of 300 oxycodone tablets.

- At the Wal-Mart pharmacy, he presented forged prescriptions on June 29, August 15 and September 11, and obtained a total of 270 oxycodone tablets.

- At the Cobourg Pharmacy, he presented forged prescriptions on July 31, August 15 and September 13, and obtained a total of 270 oxycodone tablets.

- At the Zellers pharmacy, he presented forged prescriptions on July 6, August 15 and September 7, and obtained a total of 270 oxycodone tablets.

- At the Shopper's Drug Mart pharmacy in Cobourg, he presented forged prescriptions on July 6, August 15 and September 17, and obtained a total of 270 oxycodone tablets.

- At the General Nutrition Pharmacy in Cobourg, he presented forged prescriptions on June 29, July 27 and August 22, and obtained a total of 270 oxycodone tablets.

- At the Downey Pharmacy in Colborne, he presented forged prescriptions on July 4, August 17 and September 24, and obtained a total of 270 oxycodone tablets.

"By my count, he attended at the eight listed pharmacies a total of 25 times with forged prescriptions," Mr. Thompson summed up.

Sentencing was delayed to allow Mr. Albert to complete his residential-treatment program

Justice Graydon was impressed with his progress, as well as with Mr. Halls's submission that Mr. Albert has his own entertainment agency that produces shows all over the province, a significant number of which are for charity.

Mr. Albert has apologized to his family doctor, who has accepted him back as a patient, Mr. Halls added, and only favourable comments have come from his family members, business associates, counsellors, employees and the organizations that have benefited from his charitable work.

Awaiting his sentence in court, Mr. Albert had listened to several heart-breaking stories of lives ruined by drug abuse.

"I am in awe at the tremendous power drugs can have over a person's life," he commented. "I can only be grateful beyond words what the good news is: that there is help out there. I am truly thankful for all the help that has been offered to me."

Justice Graydon noted that Mr. Albert's actions were not undertaken in an isolated moment of panic, but over many occasions over the course of several months.

On the other hand, the drugs were not obtained for profit but for relief of pain from an inflamed sciatic nerve, and Mr. Albert came before court with no previous criminal record.

Upon being charged, he undertook to obtain his own counselling and treatment, and when he experienced the anxiety and depression of withdrawal, he persisted rather than relapse.

"I congratulate Mr. Albert on his conduct, behaviour and character," Justice Graydon said. "I hope you are allowed to cross the border."

During his probation, Mr. Albert is to continue counselling and treatment as his probation officer recommends, refrain from alcohol and illicit drugs, and remain out of every pharmacy in Cobourg, Port Hope and Colborne except for the Cobourg York Super Pharmacy.

Local News



BOB OWEN/SUN MEDIA

Robert Croft has been appointed the Grand Steward of the Ontario District Masons.

Local Mason gets regional appointment

COLBORNE CHRONICLE AUG 28/09

Colborne Mason Robert Croft has been appointed Grand Steward of the Ontario District Masons. He will be invested at a special ceremony this October.

The appointment, made by Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother Allan J. Petrisor runs into 2009.

As Grand Steward, Mr. Croft will accompany Ontario District Deputy Grand Master Blain Moffatt to official functions.

The Colborne Lodge member has been a Mason for 47 years, beginning in Port Hope. He moved to Colborne in 1973 and six years later became its Worshipful Master.

The Ontario District lies between Whithy in the west and Colborne in the east.