

New lawyer for murder accused

By Cecilia Nasmith
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The Warkworth man charged in the death of a Warkworth woman is changing lawyers.

Thirty-five-year-old Marc Vickers appeared in the Ontario Court of Justice in Cobourg Monday with Brad Halls, who has represented him until now on charges connected to the disappearance and death of Michelle Noella Barnoski.

The 33-year-old deceased was reported missing to police by family members on May 29. Her body was discovered June 13 in the back yard of her residence — a home belonging to Mr. Vickers.

Mr. Vickers was originally charged with being an accessory after the fact in Ms. Barnoski's death.

The charge has since been upgraded to second-degree murder. A co-accused, who cannot be named under the terms of the Young Offenders Act, is also charged with second-degree murder.

Mr. Vickers has indicated his wish to be represented by Gary McNeely of Peterborough, who could not be present in court Monday.

"I have quite a large amount of disclosure, and I will personally deliver it to Mr. McNeely," Mr. Halls said.

Mr. Vickers's next court appearance will be by video remand next Monday, Oct. 6.

Kraft closes doors in Cobourg

By Valerie MacDonald
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The home of Jell-O is no longer in Cobourg.

Under dull, rainy skies, the Kraft Canada company officially closed its manufacturing operations Tuesday, leaving about 200 people unemployed and an empty sign facing one of the town's busiest streets.

The business began Canadian operations back in 1919 on Ontario Street in Cobourg as the Douglas Packaging Company, producing pectin from local apples. It eventually became General Foods and then Kraft, owned by Phillip Morris Inc.

Kool-Aid production began there in 1954 along with dog food under the Gaines banner, Post Cereals came in 1963, Tang a year later and Shake 'n Bake during Canada's centennial year. Product growth and technological advances continued with robotics for the cereal and rice lines in 1994.

But the 52-acre plant's research facilities went south of the border in 1992 and Cool Whip production left in 1993.

Then came the real years of downsizing, whittling down the factory workforce of 550. In early 2004, as about 450 workers were negotiating a new contract, the company announced 20 plants and 6,000 workers in North America were on the chopping block.

Warehousing was moved, along with other products like Creme Savers candies, which swelled the ranks in 2001 but was then sold to another company. Well-known products hung in there until last November's closure announcement.

Even on the last day of production, Sept. 26, 2008, the plant made Jell-O, said Alana Weatherby, who worked there seven years.

"There were always rumours that the place was closing, but it never came true before," she said.

"Even when I was hired there were rumours... but you brushed them off."



TED AMSDEN / SUN MEDIA

Alana Weatherby was one of last employees — apart from a small maintenance crew — to work at Cobourg's Kraft plant.

Ms. Weatherby, who has a year of university behind her and holds a diploma in law and security, plus work experience elsewhere before joining the well-paying company located about a five-minute drive from her home, was an operator on the cereal and rice lines. Names like Honey Comb, Sugar Crisp and Alphabits were the staples of her employment.

"It's devastating," she said, "not just to me and my family but the Town of Cobourg... It was a main industry."

While Ms. Weatherby is young and educated, other employees are older and many couples worked there, so Kraft's closure meant the loss of their entire family income.

There were 380 people working in the plant last November when Kraft announced that the facility would be closed by this fall. Company officials could not confirm how many people had new jobs elsewhere or were still needing assistance through the joint company-union adjustment committee.

Ms. Weatherby estimates about 60 took early retirement and maybe a quarter of the remaining workers left earlier to take employment elsewhere, leaving about 250 or more without jobs.

"It's unfortunate for those in their fifties.... Where will they find another job?"

Ms. Weatherby is in the midst of doing

policing and corrections testing, hopeful it won't be long before she starts the next phase of her career.

Recently, the sale of the Cobourg Kraft facility was confirmed by Cobourg Mayor Peter Delanty who established a Mayor's Task Force to assist in selling the property and to keep jobs in the community. Kraft said it could not make any such official announcement, leaving employees confused as the final days approached. It maintains the situation has not changed.

Last Saturday evening, about 500 people were given a farewell dinner and party paid for by Kraft at the Cobourg Lions Community Centre.

"It was great," Ms. Weatherby said. "Uplifting."

Another former Kraft employee, who asked not to be identified, said there was a positive mood to the event despite the situation. Repeated telephone calls and visits to the local union office have not yielded comment from the United Food & Commercial Workers Union.

Company spokesperson Lynn Galia confirmed Tuesday the company paid for the Saturday-night event for its former employees and that there is still no official word on any sale of the Cobourg plant.

About 15 people are still employed at the William Street plant "decommissioning" it, she said. They will be cleaning, removing equipment and going through paperwork. In addition, a smaller boiler unit will be installed to provide heat to the facility over the winter, Ms. Galia said.

The adjustment committee assisting workers to find employment will remain in the facility until early-December and then move to the same building where the union office is located on the south side of Elgin Street near Northumberland Mall. Union staff will also be casualties of the Kraft closure.

Notices

A910

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Coming Events

A940

OPEN FALL DANCE - SAT. OCT 4TH, Cobourg Legion upstairs starting at 8:30 p.m. Featuring a great mixture of Music New and Old, Country and 50's with Cobourg's own Ginny McIlmoyle and Belleville's Wally Hoard and the whole band. Spot Dances, Door Prizes, Munchies, Special Door Prize Draw for Advance Ticket Holders. Promises to be a Great Night of Dance and Party. Everyone Welcome, only \$10 In Advance, Get Your Ticket Early, save \$3, Tickets will be \$13 at Door. Advance Tickets available in Cobourg at Vezina Auto, King St. East, Warner's Auction in Colborne, Downstairs at Legion Bar. Note to qualify for early bird draws, tickets must be picked up by 6:00 p.m. Friday.

COBBOURG CHTROPELG OCT 2/08

Warkworth hosts heritage walk

Proud to showcase some of its finest architecture, the village of Warkworth is hosting a heritage walk 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 5.

The guided tour starts at the Heritage Centre in the Memorial Community Hall on Church Street in the village. Visitors will receive a free colour brochure with a map, photos and descriptions of the 24 featured properties. Not all the properties are old

but all have unique characteristics.

The tour is being run by the Details Committee led by David Rollins. Tours are being led by Details members. Brochures are available prior to the walk at most businesses in the village.

For more information contact: Brenda Otto, Municipality of Trent Hills, 705-653-1900 ext 239 or at brenda.otto@trenthills.ca.