

Medical science saves Acton man's thumb

His thumb is constantly stinging, but an Acton man is thankful it is still there to be sore.

Cecil Stuckless of Kingham Rd. mangled his thumb in an industrial accident in Milton on March 1. Once he freed his hand from the machinery, he calmly walked across the plant to the first aid station. There was no pain, no blood. Only the fear that his thumb was lost forever. It was attached to the rest of the hand by one tendon.

Fellow workers rushed Mr. Stuckless to Milton District Hospital, where chief of staff Dr. Stephen Legate attended him. Dr. Legate knew of a team of surgeons who could possibly save the thumb, so sent Mr. Stuckless off to St. Michael's hospital in Toronto in an ambulance.

Dr. Ralph Manktelow, a plastic surgeon at that hospital, along with Dr. Nancy McKee and Dr. Ronald Zuker, both plastic surgeons were notified Mr. Stuckless was on his way and prepared for the replant operation. The patient arrived at the hospital at 4.15, two hours and 15 minutes after the accident. He still did not feel any pain, he said.

Mr. Stuckless said he was awake for the entire operation, which was a gruelling 13½ hours. Local anesthetic was administered, and he watched the doctors as they worked. He explained he was in so much shock, the work did not bother him.

It was not until after the operation, and doctors had replaced his thumb, that the pain started. It hasn't stopped, Mr. Stuckless said. It feels like frozen toes as they are thawing out.

Ten days, and two casts later, Mr. Stuckless was able to return home to his family. Doctors estimated three

months before their patient will be able to have any feeling in this thumb, and another three months before it will be useable.

Even though it is his left thumb, and he is right handed, Mr. Stuckless has had to make changes in his life. When lifting his one-year-old son Roy, he must move his hand in such a way that the baby does not touch the tender part. The family had to switch to a new brand of diapers for Roy also, as Mr. Stuckless had difficulty changing the old kind. Simple things like doing up buttons and zippers also pose problems.

Every hour, for ten minutes, Mr. Stuckless must do exercises with his thumb. He can now touch the end of his other fingers with it, and move it slightly, but he has a long way to go yet. In the meantime, he stays at home waiting to heal. He has another several months before he can report back to work, and although he is "very bored", his two sons, Roy, 1, and Sheldon, 3, enjoy having their father home with them all day.

If the accident had happened six years ago, or if Mr. Stuckless was taken to another doctor, he would have lost his thumb.

Special microvascular surgeons are showing up across the country, offering their knowledge and skills in the medical profession. Many small town doctors do not know of these various teams, reports The Medical Post, a newspaper for the Canadian medical profession.

"Oddly enough, it's still not really known by all physicians that amputated thumbs, fingers, hands, arms and in some cases feet, can be replanted," the newspaper said. The paper continued



CECIL STUCKLESS is a lucky man today. He lost his left thumb in an industrial accident, and is now recuperating from surgery which replanted it. It will be several months before he can return to work, but sons Roy, 1 and Sheldon, 3, don't mind having their father home all day.

"Dr. Legate, when asked in a telephone interview what criteria Milton District Hospital uses to determine which replant candidates to send to St. Michael's said

"We send them all rather than do amputations." Unfortunately, this is often not the case with many smaller hospitals, according to Dr. Daniels, who says these centres still put amputated fingers and hands in formaldehyde."

Mr. Stuckless is very grateful to the Milton doctor, and the Toronto team. He feels he is a very lucky man to have come away from the hospital with his thumb intact. The replanting of a completely mangled thumb or finger is a very rare operation, but with medical science advancements, more and more people are as lucky as Mr. Stuckless.

Reduction of activity days rejected

Several bids by different trustees to reduce the number of professional activity (PD) days for Halton teachers failed at Halton Board of Education Thursday.

Prior to debate the administration listed the number of professional activity days teachers with surrounding boards are allowed. In Halton teachers have nine professional activity days and all of the surrounding boards are looking at 10, 11 or 12.

Trustee Bert Hinton picked out the Wellington board as one where a high number of days has been suggested by administration while trustees are considering no days or a maximum of three. He accused the administration of trying to mislead Halton trustees.

Noting all of the other boards around Halton have more PD days, Trustee Fred Armitage wondered if some boards have less. Superintendent of Special Services Ron Chapman said he didn't know.

Board members were told that professional activity days are necessary for school administration, especially in high schools, and only part of the time is for professional development.

A special cost-benefit study on professional activity days is being carried out in Halton. Trustees are concerned the money used to pay teachers for those days might be better spent having them in the classroom.

Milton Trustee Ivan Armstrong suggested professional activity days be trimmed from nine to six at the elementary level. He thought they should remain at nine for high schools since most of those days are used

for school administration. In suggesting the three day elementary reduction, Armstrong pointed out he wasn't saying the days aren't used wisely. He said he thinks they are useful but there is also "a groundswell of public opinion against them."

Armstrong said he believes the public is wrong to think they are nothing more than days off for teachers and is falsely accusing them of wasting professional activity days. At the same time he thinks the only thing the public will accept is a reduction.

Hinton agreed the days are taken seriously by teachers but thought only five are needed.

Next Oakville Trustee Jim Clelland, who had already announced he could bring a motion in the future to reduce the number of professional activity days to six for both elementary and secondary teachers, suggested a cut to seven days for both panels.

He said the days are useful but the public wants less professional activity days. Since 1973, teachers have had 40 professional activity days, Clelland added.

Hinton supported this reduction call also, noting administration which would

normally be done on those extra two professional activity days could just as easily be done during regular school time.

Trustee Bill Lawson said he couldn't support a reduction. If teachers were in the classroom no money would be saved, he said.

There is money in the budget for materials used on professional activity days, Trustee Len Crozier noted, so the days do cost the board money.

It was pointed out that the school calendar is organized much the same next year as it was this year and the board is trying a plan for two years to see how the public will react. The board is also encouraging parents and taxpayers to go to the schools on professional activity days so they can see what is accomplished.

Armstrong, Hinton, Crozier, Clelland and Trustee Eise Hilson all supported the two day reduction but the motion lost.

The possibility of Halton following other board's lead and chopping a professional activity day each time the schools are closed by snow was also discussed.

After some debate Crozier presented a motion that

either float professional activity days, which are different for each education area or professional activity days in June be used to replace instructional days lost to school closures. There will be nine professional activity days next year in Halton.

Hinton wants pupils praying for unity

Acton-Esqueing Trustee Bert Hinton has decided to try again to persuade Halton Board of Education to have pupils pray for Canadian unity.

February, Hinton asked the board to follow an eastern Ontario board's lead and have pupils pray weekly for unity. There was no interest in the plan shown by other trustees.

Hinton has announced he will try again in May to have his plan endorsed.

The following is the prayer Hinton believes all Halton pupils should be saying. "Our Father, as Canadians you have blessed us with a country rich in its people, its beauty and its material wealth. We pray that our country will ever be a truly human community and a country of peace, that we will respect each other's differences and become greater for having shared life with people different than ourselves.

"Make us as Canadians not hard and unrelenting to one another, but help us to be peaceful and accepting. And from our differences make us a people reflecting to the world not discord and division but the gracefulness and goodness of a people who know their God. Amen."

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