



Speyside area residents Chris Sankey and Matthew Berry go over the damage to their canoe after it rammed into a log jam in the Gatineau River recently. The pair had to be rescued by an Armed Forces helicopter.

## Two rescued from log jam by chopper

by Helen Murray

Two Speyside area men spent a harrowing three hours atop a log jam in the Gatineau River recently after wild rapids rammed their canoe into the logs. They were dramatically rescued by an Armed Forces helicopter.

Chris Sankey, RR 4 Acton, and Matthew Berry, RR 3 Milton, were forced to abandon their cedar strip canoe after it buckled upon impact, turning part of the frame inside out.

Berry was tossed into the swirling waters with the current pushing him under the canoe and logs. "I remember thinking, 'Is this going to be it?'" he recalled. Berry doesn't remember how long he was under the water, but said he suddenly realized he was holding onto something. He used whatever it was to pull himself back up to the surface and into the craft before Sankey even realized he was gone. Sankey attributes his friend's athletic prowess with saving his life.

The adventure took place in the Gatineau just north of Hull, Quebec. Berry's parents have a cottage in the area on Lac St. Bernard. The two had noticed "white water" and accepted the challenge of the rapids.

The two started a couple hundred yards upstream of the rapids, in order to avoid a log jam in the middle of the river. Unfortunately, says Sankey, the pair underestimated the current and they were pulled immediately into the middle of the river.

When the canoe hit the logs, Chris, at the front grabbed the jam to keep the boat from tipping over. He tied off the front of the canoe while trying to free

the body of the craft from the jam. By tying it, Sankey explained, they would be loose, but would not start floating down the river uncontrollably.

The canoe starting taking in water, Sankey recalls, and the pair could see the broken ribs of the boat's interior at their feet, and the crumpled front. The middle of the canoe was turned inside out.

The two decided to abandon ship, and climbed aboard the log jam, thinking it safer than the sinking canoe.

Their main worry while on the jam was that it would start to break up, plunging them into the river again. They feared they would be crushed by the floating logs, with no means to protect themselves.

They could see the road from their spot, Sankey says, but no one on the road could see them, despite their furious waving of arms and shouts. It wasn't until two young girls were walking along the shore, an hour after their crash, that they were finally seen.

Police were soon on the scene explaining that a helicopter had been summoned, but it would take two hours to get there from Trenton Air Force Base. Meanwhile, they were to remain calm.

The men were impressed by the efficiency of everyone involved. A crowd of about 400 gathered on the shore to watch the rescue, and red lights from the police car, rescue squad vans, and ambulances lit up the sky. Reporters and television crews also swarmed the area.

The canoe eventually broke free of the jam and floated down the river, but by this time, the pair

really didn't care.

After a while, Berry said he noticed rocks they had not seen before. They found out later Quebec Hydro was lowering the level of the river in hopes of grounding the logs to take away the danger of them breaking up and tossing aside their passengers.

Two hours after being spotted, with dusk setting in, the Armed Forces helicopter Twin Huey finally arrived. It made one pass overhead before lowering a frogman down to them.

Berry went up first with the rescuer. Sankey recalls the "eerie feeling" he got being alone on the jam. It was getting cold, and dark and he felt very alone while waiting his turn.

The helicopter rushed the two canoeists to a school yard where the police and paramedics waited. Also waiting was another crowd of about 400 people.

Sankey says the heroes of the day were the police and the helicopter rescuers. And the crowd knew it, he said. Cheers for the police could be heard for some time, he said.

The police had fished the canoe from the water and while driving them back to their car, the North Halton pair had to promise they would never go canoeing in that area again. They both agreed.

Sankey and Berry both felt they were not ready to take on the challenges of the white waters of the Gatineau River. They both have lots of experience canoeing in "white water" but underestimated their skills.

Berry says he would go back, but only with a

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# The Acton Free Press



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## Possibility lift limits to growth in Acton

There is a possibility limits on Acton's future growth might not be as severe as municipal officials have believed for the past couple of years.

In an interview Mayor Peter Pomeroy said there are "prospects for more growth" than expected, but he wouldn't predict how much more growth might be accommodated.

Last year Halton Hills council and the region decided an urban area servicing (water and sewer) study was needed for both Acton and Georgetown to settle the growth potential of both urban areas in the foreseeable future.

In late May and early June the special steering

committee overseeing the study by Proctor and Redfern as well as Halton Hills councillors and a region committee heard from consultant Ken Taylor that there would be little Acton growth in the future. Acton's future growth is limited by the capacity of the sewage plant as well as the ability of the receiving stream, the Black Creek, to handle effluent.

The Proctor and Redfern report was to be completed last month, however Pomeroy says it won't be finished now until early September.

Taylor's earlier report was based on a set of sewage flow figures determined in consultation with the

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## Burlington driver fined \$200, mishap killed former resident

A Burlington man who was responsible for the death of former Acton and Esquesing resident Lorraine Robertson (nee Lavigne) and two other women in a car-bicycle accident last summer was fined \$200 in county court last week.

Walter Valente, 19, pleaded guilty to a charge of careless driving in connection with the July 6, 1980, fatalities on Plains Rd., Burlington, on June 25.

Despite calls for a jail term from the crown, Valente was given only the fine and a one year suspension of his driver's licence.

Mrs. Robertson, 24, lived with her family at the Cedar Springs Motel which they operated on Highway 7 east of Acton for several years before moving

to Church St. in Acton following her marriage. She lived in Acton and Esquesing for about eight years and graduated from Stewarttown School and Acton High School. When the mother of three was killed she and her family were living in Hamilton.

She was riding her bicycle in Burlington with four other women when the fatal mishap occurred. Two other women were also killed and two were injured. The court was told Valente moved his car from the centre to the curb lane of Plains Rd., a four lane street, when he struck the cyclist and was going about 60 miles-an-hour in an area where the speed limit is 37.5 miles-an-hour.

This is Valente's third licence suspension in the three years he has been driving and he has previously been convicted of speeding four times.

The maximum penalty for careless driving is six months in jail, plus suspension of driver's licence for two years and a \$500 fine.

## Crown appeals

Halton Crown Attorney Jim Treleaven says he plans to appeal the sentence of Walter Valente, Burlington, who was responsible for the death in a car-bicycle accident of former area resident Lorraine (Lavigne) Robertson last year.

He said Monday he is determining if the sentence for careless driving should be appealed to the Ontario Court of Appeals or just Provincial Court.

Treleaven notes he asked the county court judge for a period of incarceration for Valente.

## inside

There are lots of photos of local people involved with the playground parade and carnival. See pages B6, B8 and B9.

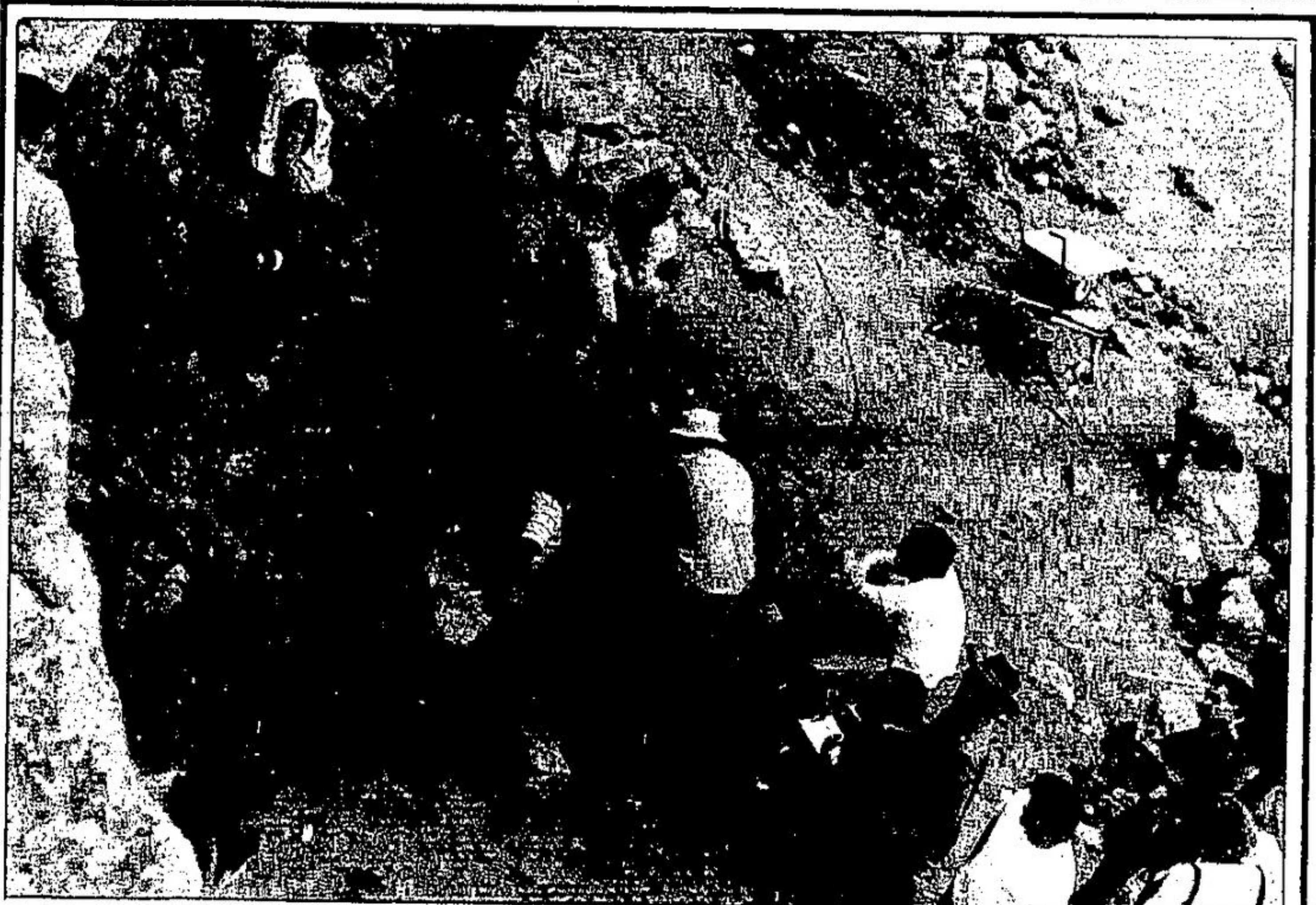
Halton Police are looking for the driver of a car which hit a woman at Main and Church Streets recently. More on page 3.



Even though she didn't advance to the finals Lisa McGrath, Miss Acton Fall Fair 1980, represented the town well at the Miss CNE - Queen of the Fair pageant Friday. She and the other 100 competitors modelled two outfits, sang and each gave a short speech. They were also interviewed by the judges.



The Caravan Stage Co. is moving through the area and creating a lot of interest. More about the travelling theatre group on page 2.



A scene from the major motion picture Humungus is shot on the shore of the quarry at Waterfalls Park on Monday afternoon.

## Local man makes good with "Humungus" film

The quarry area at Waterfalls Park near Limehouse has been turned into the set of a major motion picture and the executive producer is a local resident, Michael Stevenson of R.R. 2, Acton.

Location filming for Humungus began at Waterfalls last Wednesday and is expected to be wrapped up today (Wednesday).

Stevenson, who has a long association with the motion picture business, describes his first effort as an independent movie producer as a teen-age adventure-thriller which also has elements of a horror film.

The film features no big stars, though the female lead played by Janet Julian who appeared in the Nancy Drew television series and the male lead is David Wallace, a teen idol south of the border.

For 24 years, Stevenson, involved mostly in the distribution end of the cinema industry, worked as first president of Paramount in Canada and later vice-president of Paramount in the States. For the last six years he was president of Astro Films, a Canadian firm.

Now an independent producer, Stevenson and his family moved to the area five years ago and he raises quarter horses on his 32 acre property. He and his wife Joanne have four sons, John 27, Matthew 24, David 19 and Timothy 4.

Humungus will be in the theatres by May 1982, Stevenson says with certainty, because he already has a distribution deal with Avco Embassy Pictures.

The film is about six young people who are closing up their cottage on a northern lake and their boat runs into fog and storm. There's a shipwreck on Dog Island.

Dog Island belonged to a wealthy timber baron who built a magnificent lodge here and then populated his island with vicious killer dogs. He holds a big party and one of the drunken guests rapes the man's daughter, and then is killed by the dogs.

The pregnant woman suffers a mental breakdown and gives birth to a monster, which

grows up to be a horrifying looking huge, hairy creature, the Humungus.

Humungus is raised by its mother, but when she dies he's left on the island with only the dogs and wildlife for food.

Thirty years after his birth, with food running out, the six teens arrive on Humungus' island.

The shipwrecked survivors start being killed off one by one.

The conclusion of the film is of course a closely guarded secret.

The gruesome appearance of Humungus is also a closely guarded secret. No photographs are being released of the monster and won't be, even when film publicity starts.

After Stevenson, screenwriter Bill Gray and

director Paul Lynch, conceived the film idea, the executive producer took the property to Avco Embassy and secured a distribution contract ensuring it won't wind up on a shelf collecting dust.

Filming at Waterfalls began two-and-a-half weeks after production began. Work on the picture is slated to wind up on September 12. Other shooting is taking place in Mississauga, Toronto and Sparrow Lake.

Director Lynch recently worked on the successful Prom Night film while screenwriter Gray did that movie as well as co-writing the Changing.

The film, which Stevenson, 58, expects will be rated adult entertainment or restricted, will cost over \$2 million to produce.

Over the past two or three years a lot of Canadian films, costing an awful lot of money, have been produced but they haven't been the type to attract audiences, Stevenson says. (A number of films have been made in recent years in Georgetown and one in Nassagaweya).

Stevenson feels other Canadian producers should be following the route he has with his first effort.

Find a script which is commercial and has public appeal. Then find a distribution firm and secure a solid deal. That's Stevenson's formula.

That way, Stevenson says, instead of gathering dust on a shelf somewhere it is certain to be shown. Also this method assures investors the film will be shown commercially.

Far too often, Stevenson says, pictures are made before a distribution deal is sought and then the producer finds out he doesn't have a saleable product.

Executive producers are generally just the money men.

But Stevenson's vast experience in the industry allows him final say in "casting and creative elements" as well as financing and packaging. He arranged the interim financing and this fall Humungus will be sold as a public stock issue.



Humungus executive producer Michael Stevenson watches shooting at Waterfalls Park.