

Miracle of life reflected in book by dying woman



Ria Huisman Kroezen

by Helen Murray
This is the story of a miracle—not a Christmas miracle with the tale being handed down from generation to generation, but a modern day, real life miracle.

Ria Huisman Kroezen was given two to six months to live. By the time her cancer was discovered it had eaten away at seven vital organs and she was in the fourth stage of a four stage disease. That was three years ago.

Today, this brave young woman is still tormented daily with the pain as the disease ravages her body, but things are different now. She says she has faced her enemy head on and laughed in its face.

She should be dead. She knows that. But she's not ready yet. She has handed her problem over to God—taken it out of the doctors' hands, and she feels better for it, she told this newspaper.

A Hepworth resident now, Ria lived in Acton most of her life, the daughter of Mary and the late Bert Huisman, of the Holland Shop fame. Twenty years ago, when only 17, she married Gary Kroezen, and they eventually settled on their farm near Sauble Beach.

All her life, Ria felt the need to leave her mark in the world. As much as she cherishes her three children, they were not enough. Even before she got sick, she knew she

wanted people to remember her after she was "dead and gone."

Since she was 14-years-old, Ria has written down her innermost thoughts in poems and meditations. The writings dealt with everything from her love for her brother and sisters and parents, to her feelings on the Cuban Missile crisis. In the past few years, her work has dealt with her feelings throughout her long ordeal, the depression, the acceptance of death, her husband's acceptance of her fate, etc.

As part of her legacy, Ria had a book of her work printed—Lines of Life. There were 1,000 copies printed which sold out in two weeks in Owen Sound book stores. A second printing is due any day now, and in Acton will be on sale at the Holland Shop. There will be a sequel coming out at Easter.

Quality, not quantity
Ria's battle with cancer has been long and hard. She had been ill for a year before it was diagnosed. Doctors told her the pain was all in her head, but she knew it wasn't. Finally, she recalls, she got a second opinion, and was told there was something wrong, but it was very minor, nothing to worry about. An operation revealed the worst.

Doctors wanted to put her on chemotherapy right away, but she refused. She wanted quality life, not necessarily

quantity, the former Actonian said. With two to six months to live, she was told to "put her house in order."

Ria believes her objection to chemotherapy was the best decision she ever made. But she admits, it was an agonizing one. Her husband backed her up, but she knew her family in Acton was upset. Her father never said anything to her, but she could sense his disappointment.

In the end, she said, she felt as if the doctor was offering a straw and giving her one last chance to grab it, but still she refused.

Ria and Gary sat down with their three children, then ages 18, 14 and 8 and told them what was happening to their mother. They did not want any secrets, and now the three know every day their mother lives is a bonus.

Soon after her release from the hospital, Ria returned to her birthplace, Rotterdam, Holland, and visited with an 80-year-old doctor who specializes in nutrition, vitamins and diet to combat cancer. He also did not offer any hope because of the advanced stage of the disease, but put her on a special diet with pills anyway.

The entire family went on the diet, but it only lasted six months. Ria found herself mentally depressed, and her disease dominated the family. Every conversation was about her health, or the pills, or diet, or

cancer. It had taken over their lives and they were totally consumed by death. Much to her children's relief, she discontinued the diet.

But at the same time, she also stopped going to doctors and Princess Margaret Hospital for her scans to see how far the disease had progressed. She was going to fight on her own she determined.

Throughout all this, Ria admits, she would never have made it had it not been for her husband and their love for each other. He was always a Christian, Ria says, but not a practising one. Now, he has given his life to Christ. In addition to keeping up his own business, he also does all the shopping and housework.

Ironies of life

To deny she went through a self pity stage would be a lie, Ria says. But there was one particular incident which has made her realize how lucky she is.


Ria met a young woman, aged 24, who had just been married, and adopted a baby. She was full of plans for the future and was excited about her life. Ria recalls for the first time in her life she wanted to change positions with this young, vibrant, alive person. Why couldn't it be Ria with the future, why couldn't they change lives? A month later, Ria got a phone call. The

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Citizens probing municipal complex issue report they've 'identified number of areas of concern'

The citizens' group probing the municipal complex issue has "identified a great number of areas of concern" regarding council's actions over the past 18 or so months and plan to unveil their findings on December 19.

"In an interview this week chairman Norm Elliott said there are now over 30 citizens on their committee and there is broad representation from Georgetown, Acton and Esquesing. There are many other citizens involved in handling tasks like petitioning, too.

An indication of the depth of concern in the community about this issue, Elliott said, is the fact there have been at least six other citizens who have offered to contribute financially should the group decide they must pursue legal avenues. The committee hasn't been soliciting financial aid either, this has been voluntary and unexpected support, Elliott explained.

In addition they have been encouraged by the countless number of Halton Hills taxpayers who have contacted various committee members urging them on and voicing support for the cause.

Six members of the group, representing all areas of Halton Hills, plan to go to council December 19 and make a lengthy and detailed presentation of their findings based on extensive research in the last month. They have been delving into the purchase of the Stevens' property and council's plans to build a municipal complex in the future on that property, as well as arrange for development of a subdivision on the land, for just over a month. Elliott said in the remaining days before December 19 there are a few more areas of concern they want to

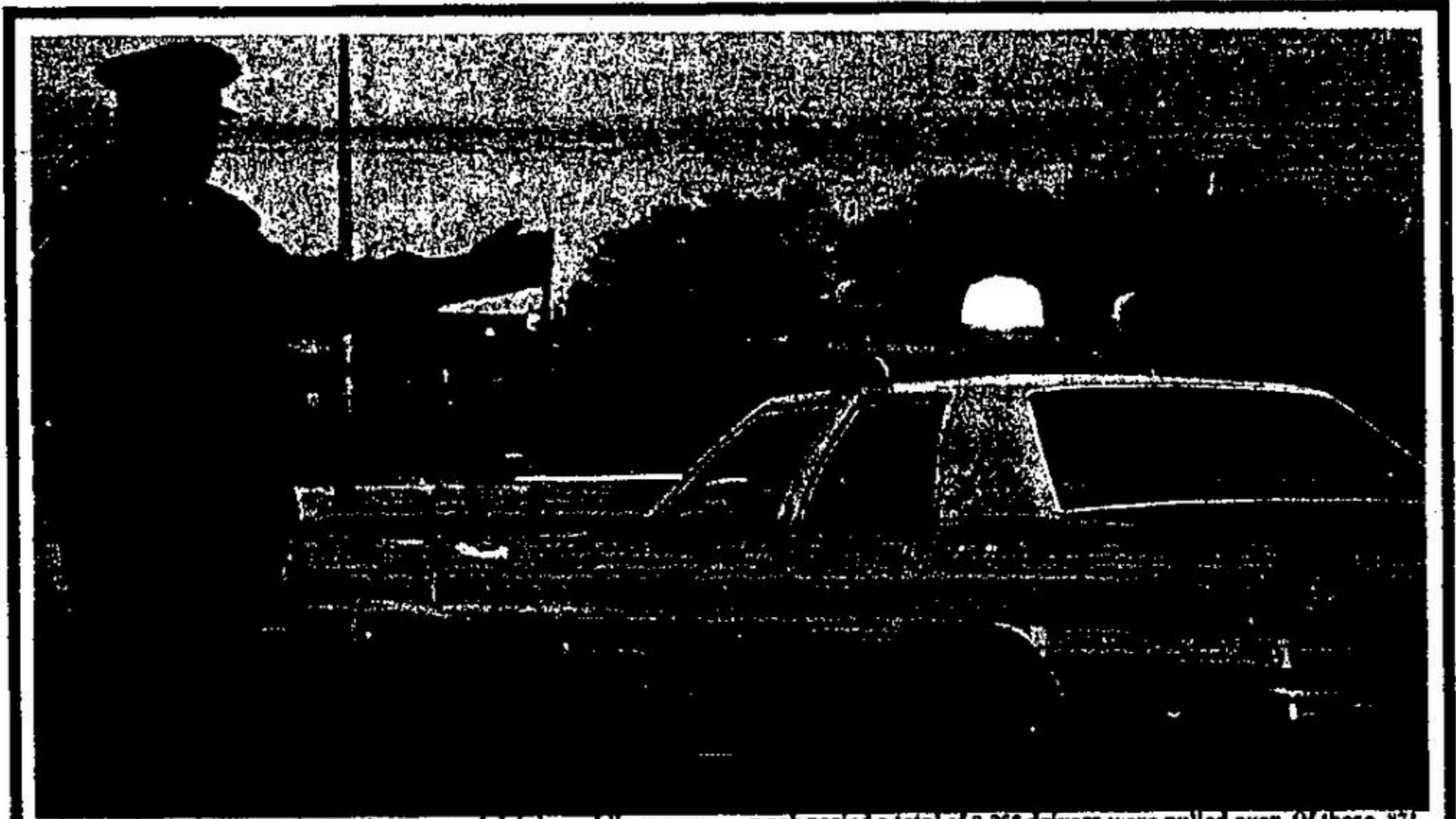
examine:
Ken Key and Craig Copeland of Glen Williams, who are working on the aspect of public awareness of the issue, say there are "irregularities with the purchase, both legal and moral." They explained the ethics of public officials are being questioned on this issue. They added "council has misread public feelings on this issue."

There is a serious split in Halton Hills, Key said, noting some citizens are very aware of the issue and extremely concerned, but there are some taxpayers who really know nothing about the issue.

Money spent to buy the Stevens' property etc., many citizens believe, would have been better spent on greater municipal needs, they say. There are matters of greater priority in Halton Hills, Key explained.

Also, Key said, they have concluded that some members of council aren't really sure what they have based their decisions on. There was information available which some councillors weren't aware of."

They are aiming to collect all the petitions from stores and from neighborhood canvassers by December 14. They are aware that some citizens want to sign petitions, but don't know where to find one or haven't had someone at their door yet. For that reason they have included in their advertisement a coupon which people can fill out and mail to a box number if they are concerned about this issue.



"It's the time to be merry—but be away of driving while merry. It's the spot check season and the Halton Regional Police four-man traffic unit is roaming around with an eye to nabbing drinking drivers. They are also conducting vehicle safety inspections and doing seat belt and traffic enforcement. Last year over a five week period a total of 3,268 drivers were pulled over. Of those, 871 received warnings; 33 drivers received 12-hour driving suspensions; 24 were charged with impaired driving and three were charged with refusing to supply a breath sample. A total of 399 seat belt charges were laid.

Armstrong in for mayor

Mike Armstrong is making a bid for the mayor's chair, whether the seat is filled by appointment or election.

This brings to four the number of candidates for the spot to be vacated by Mayor Pete Pomeroy if his regional chairmanship is ratified today.

Announced candidates are Councillors Russ Miller, Ross Knechtel, and former Halton Hills councillor and Regional Chairman Ric Morrow.

Knechtel has made it known he will be a candidate only if the position is filled by appointment.



Paul Tamblin was an enthusiastic leader of song and fun at the annual Bear's Head dinner Sunday evening at the Legion. About 400 took part in the event that has become an Acton tradition. It is put on jointly by Trinity United Church and Knox Presbyterian Church. For more pictures, turn to This Week Thru the Lens, Page 2.

Armstrong wants to see the completion of the secondary plans which will form part of the Official Plan. He pointed out the Town still has to deal with the Ontario Municipal Board, the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs and the Region.

Armstrong contends the water problems in Acton and Georgetown have to be solved, and warns the Town will stagnate and have

By-election or appointment?

Big decision next Monday

Halton Hills councillors will make the big decision, by-election or appointment, next Monday night, December 12.

If they opt to fill the mayor's post by appointing a member of council, that choice will likely be made Monday night too.

Clerk-administrator Ken Richardson said council shouldn't delay in either passing a bylaw calling a by-election or filling one or more vacancies on council by appointment.

Richardson will chair this meeting, which will be a special council meeting held prior to the general committee meeting.

no widened tax base until all the plans are completed.

Switching to the controversial proposed municipal complex, Armstrong stated, "Nobody out there should worry about a municipal complex going up on the Stevens property. Unless development comes here there is no money to build it."

He said the Town had acted responsibly by putting money away for the land over the years. "Just like a couple planning to buy a house. We have saved for the property, but we can't afford to build the house yet."

He maintained nobody in the area had lost money by buying land for the past 30 years, and recalled he was involved in the deal when the Town bought 15 acres from Bruce McLaughlin for the arena site, ten years ago. "We paid \$158,000 for the land, sold 1.4 acres for \$218,000, and ended up with 13 acres for nothing and a profit of \$58,000 to boot."

He said taxes wouldn't go up to pay for the complex, because by the time the surplus land is sold not only will the complex be paid for but there will be a profit.

Armstrong said he was happy some citizens had formed a committee to review the land purchase and maintained if they find deficiencies in the reports and have suggestions he would be happy to listen to them.


He said he is prepared to give all the time required into the job "if it's 10 hours a day that's what I'll put in."

On the Croatian Centre, Armstrong pointed out the decision was made last week. (The decision was made to take no legal action.) He claimed prosecution just brings confrontation and solves nothing.

"The only way to solve the problem is to proceed with the site plan, which means nothing can be done without the approval of the Site Plan Committee."

Local artist Avril Bell is leaving the area for Cobourg. See story on Page 5.

Inside today's Free Press
Citizens' told councillors it's "undemocratic" to appoint the Town's next mayor at Friday's drop in. Turn to page 8. The same taxpayers voiced concerns about the Stevens' property purchase at drop-in. See Newsmakers for details.
Councillors bid farewell to Peter Pomeroy Monday night. See page 9.
The Rockwood Post Office celebrated 130 years of service to the community Thursday. Photo and story on page 6.
A local lady who loves dogs is the chairperson for a big show this weekend. More on page 6.
Halton Hills councillors unanimously pledged to always keep an office open in Acton where people can pay their taxes, Monday night. More on page 2.
Planning a Yule season sing-song? Then you'll need the special section inside today's paper.
Horoscope, crossword, Community Calendar, recipe of the week and Bill Smiley are in the Real Estate section.



Sabres ski! turn to page 10