

Inquest rules death accidental

An inquest investigating the death of an 18-year-old youth in a forklift truck accident was told the youth expressed fear and dislike of the machine half an hour before he was pinned between a steel beam and the steering wheel of the truck.

Warren Farrow was killed in January when the forklift truck he was driving at Georgetown Terminal Warehouses suddenly moved backward at high speed, pinning him between the steering wheel of the forklift and a 6-inch steel box beam. The rear of the forklift and the seat were placed so that they passed under the beam.

A coroner's jury found the cause of death to be massive bleeding due to severe internal injuries to the heart and liver, and ruled death was accidental, but due to faulty forklift truck equipment.

Recommendations included repairing forklift trucks to be subject to annual safety inspections, and to have safety certificates issued and reviewed periodically. The use of safety equipment should be mandatory and all young employees should be supervised by older, more experienced staff.

The jury also recommended that new employees be educated in the safety rules and practices of the place where they are employed, and that industrial safety programs be introduced to high schools.

Evidence given by a mechanic and a number of employees of the Georgetown Terminal Warehouses indicated that the forklift truck Mr. Farrow was driving at the time of the accident was not in proper working order.

Employees said it was common knowledge in the plant that the forklift would lurch unexpectedly, a problem the mechanic said was likely due to a fault in the electrical circuitry of the machine.

Paul McGrath, 18, an employee at Georgetown Terminal Warehouses, reported that he had talked to Warren about 30 minutes before the accident. Mr. McGrath had been injured in a car accident and was temporarily unable to drive the forklift.

Warren said, "I wish you could come drive this machine—I'm really getting a afraid of it. I really don't like driving it." Mr. McGrath said.

He said he had operated both forklifts used in the warehouse.

"The main thing with the forklift Warren was driving that day was that it seemed to

bounce around on you and it was unsteady," he said.

"You'd put your foot on the accelerator and nothing would happen for three or four seconds, so you'd get impatient and put your foot down harder. Then the truck would lurch forward."

Ken Heatley, a mechanic with J.H. Ryder Machinery, serviced the machine the day after the accident. He said there were problems with the battery in the connector which links the battery with the circuitry which operates the forklift.

The battery was no longer locking properly, and there was intermittent contact, causing breaks in the power reaching the circuit, he said.

Mr. Heatley said a safety guard for the machine, which was not in use at the time of the accident, would probably have been sufficient to stop the machine, although the guard was a canopy designed mainly to protect the driver from any falling objects.

Mr. McGrath said the safety guard on the forklift was never used, because it made the forklift too tall to fit on the truck used to transport it from one warehouse to another. The guard is to be attached, front and back, with bolts, but there were no bolts to attach it with. On one occasion in July, 1977, several of the employees had tried to attach the guard, but found it would not fit properly on the forklift, and so it was never used again.

Brian Burgoyne, 18, an employee at the warehouse, said that although problems with the machine were common knowledge, none of the employees had ever complained to the owner John Elliott about it. He said Mr. Farrow had had about two years experience driving forklifts.

Roland Lechner, 18, another warehouse employee, was the only witness to the accident. He said Mr. Farrow had been lifting a skid down from a storage rack overhead, with the machine in reverse, moving slowly backward. The machine moved back slowly until Mr. Farrow's back was touching the steel beam. The machine then went forward "a couple of feet, then there was a delay of a couple of seconds, then the forklift went into reverse at high speed and pinned him below the beam and the steering wheel." Mr. Lechner said he didn't know whether Mr. Farrow had changed gears to cause the action of the forklift.

First grass fire reported

Georgetown firefighters fought the first grass fire of the season last Wednesday morning.

The fire was on property belonging to CHIC radio on Lot 6 of the 6th Line. Some refuse was being burned, but increasing wind sent the fire out of control. The fire spread over an area of five or six acres before being contained.



Chris Norton and Wayne Hulingshead lead the class in a series of exercises set to music. The Health Hustle is rapidly catching favor in Halton Hills schools. George Kennedy school is another school in Georgetown that has the exercise as part of its curriculum.

HEALTH HUSTLE ENTERS SCHOOLS

By SYLVIA VINCENT
An idea is growing in this area. It is called "Health Hustle." The idea first began in Scarborough with two individuals and has now reached some public schools in Acton and Milton.

One morning I happened to be in Speyside public school at 8:25 a.m., the time when the daily "Health Hustle" begins. Norman Howell, principal of Speyside school, offered me the opportunity of watching 12 minutes of exercise activity in one of the six classrooms where teachers and children join in to the sound of a male singing voice and a female calling instructions for the exercises. The music is lively, the tempo good for moving those muscles.

It was interesting watching the children's reaction, most of them entering into the activity with gusto and grins, while one or two quieter ones were really not too sure what to make of the situation.

Occasionally Mr. Howell's voice could be heard: "Don't worry about your shirt, Peter. Come on now, Don. You can do better than that." "Very good Susan. Keep it up." "Knees bend, knees bend."

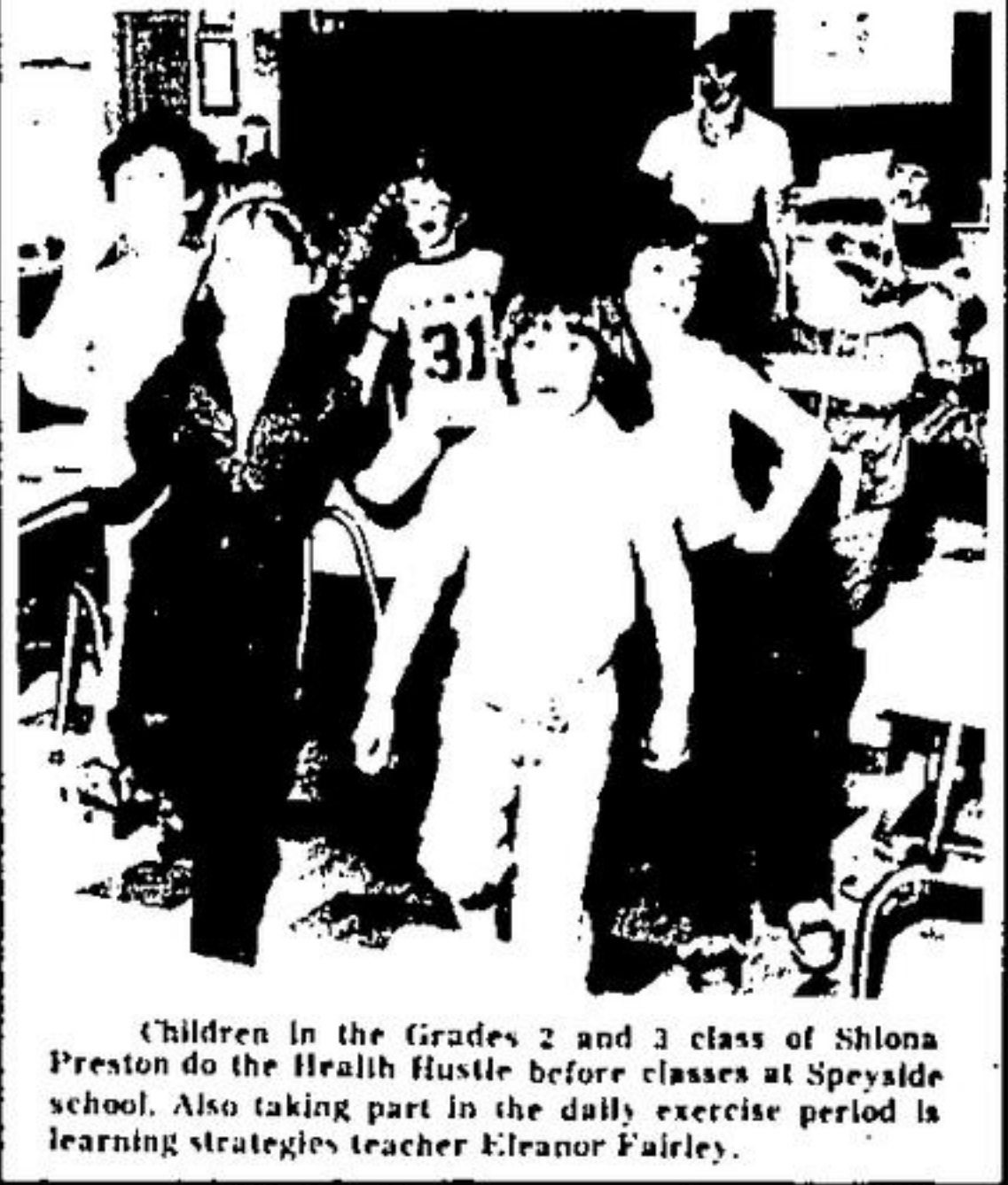
From the open doorway where I was standing I could also hear the clapping hands in the other classrooms while the music continued to play. At the end of the session a

smiling Mr. Howell, slightly out of breath, walked with me to the entrance. The exercises tone up teachers, too.

Mr. Howell explained to me that the exercises come in a series of seven tapes with booklets. One tape has Christmas music. When Speyside acquired the first tape from Scarborough two months ago a small team of Grade 6 children were chosen to act as leaders. They were taught the exercises and in turn demonstrated to the rest of the students in the school gym.

However, for the second tape which will be started next week there has been a slight change in that this time two children from each class, except primary, have been chosen to act as leaders, promoting a better feeling of participation. The Grade 6 team will lead the primary students.

Personally, I think 12 minutes spared for this type of exercise would also activate many sluggish bodies in high schools, and certainly in offices where even walking is almost non-existent. Because our climate forbids a healthy morning walk on ice covered ground for a good part of the long winter, why better than a little lively exercise to music first thing in the morning, and a laugh goes with, to stimulate both body and mind?



Children in the Grades 2 and 3 class of Shlona Preston do the Health Hustle before classes at Speyside school. Also taking part in the daily exercise period is learning strategies teacher Eleanor Fairley.

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Widows offering widows help

By LOUI TAYLOR
Herald staff writer
Widowhood is a very high stress situation, and the best support for a widow is someone who has gone through the same experience. Betty Brooks told women at the Y Workshop For Widows April 11.

Mrs. Brooks is the executive director of a Toronto-based organization called Community Contacts for the Widowed, which offers help and support to widows. The group concentrates mainly on widows under 65.

"The impact at age 75 is heavy, but not as heavy as it is for a younger widow," Mrs. Brooks said.

The workshop was held to discuss the possibility of forming a widow-to-widow program to enable women to support each other during the period of bereavement. About 30 women, many of them widows, attended the afternoon session.

"The good thing about a widowhood program is that they can say 'I've been through that. You won't feel like that for ever,'" Mrs. Brooks said. "Friends, relatives and ministers are just great, but it's different if a widow tells you something."

The average age of widows in Canada is 56, but 37 per cent of widows in Canada are under 65. One fifth of all new widows in Canada each year are under 45.

"At the turn of the century, we were a rural society, and death was a part of the cycle of things," Mrs. Brooks said. "We've institutionalized death." The mass media has depersonalized death, and created a sense of unreality, she said.

In addition to emotional stress, widows are also subject to physical problems, Mrs. Brooks said. Widows are prone to certain diseases, such as heart disease and certain types of cancer and ulcers. The suicide rate among widows is high for the first three years. There is an increase in drug use, and most widows suffer periods of depression.

"Widowhood is like a big wet bag of cement that conks you, and leaves you paralyzed for awhile. Then it swings back like a pendulum and hits you again, just when you thought you were recovering," Mrs. Brooks said.

Correction

A story about the 1978 Children's Aid Society of Halton in a recent issue of The Herald incorrectly stated that Coun. Russ Miller was the only member on the board of directors from Halton Hills. However, Mack Heerema, a long-time resident of Georgetown, is also a member of the CAS board of directors. The Herald regrets any embarrassment to Mr. Heerema.

There are three stages to widowhood, Mrs. Brooks said. The first stage is denial, and can last for days, weeks or months. It can take some time before the widow really faces the realization that her husband is dead.

The second stage is depression, which is accompanied by physical, social, financial and psychological symptoms. Many widows describe a feeling of tightness in the chest, and feel palpitations of the heart, Mrs. Brooks said. While these symptoms should be checked by a doctor, she said, they are more than likely related to bereavement.

Emotional manifestations of widowhood can be very disconcerting, Mrs. Brooks said. At one time or another many widows feel anger at their husbands for dying. Mrs. Brooks spoke of a widow who wrote thank-you letters to the staff of the hospital after her

husband died, thanking them for the way they had cared for him. Some time later, when her anger began to surface, she found that she was wishing she had never written the letters.

Guilt, the feeling "If only," "I should have," and "I could have," can be very demoralizing to a widow, Mrs. Brooks said. She talked of a widow whose husband had gone out for the day and died of a heart attack. His wife had been in bed when he got up in the morning and had debated as to whether she should get up and join him for breakfast. Fortunately, she did, Mrs. Brooks said, "but imagine her feelings if she had stayed in bed that day."

"I don't think widows should have to feel guilty about feeling free, or enjoying themselves," Bernice Bacchus, a widow involved with Community Contacts for the Wi-

dowed, said. "We didn't ask to be put in this position."

The third stage is acceptance, Mrs. Brooks said. One woman had to fill out a form some time after she had been widowed. The form included a section on marital status, married, widowed, divorced or single. She had to check off a box to indicate her status.

"She had never called herself a widow before," Mrs. Brooks said. "It was the hardest thing for her to do, to check in that box marked 'widow'." A group of women at the workshop expressed interest in forming a conversation group in Georgetown for widows to get together and talk over their problems.

Doreen Burt, a member of the Y, and herself a widow, said the Y would be happy to help get a discussion group going.

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