

Care costs \$10,000 per year

Infant's family fights for his survival

By MICHAEL HOLLETT
 Herald editor

A Georgetown infant has been fighting for his life since birth, now his parents are in a fight to find the money to keep their child alive.

Thirteen month old Christopher King of Maple Ave. was born with the potentially fatal lung disorder known as respiratory distress syndrome. The child's lungs are underdeveloped and incapable of taking in the oxygen Christopher needs to live. For his entire life Christopher has been linked by a hose in his nostril to a life-giving oxygen tank.

Christopher has spent each of his 13 months under constant supervision in Toronto's Sick Children's Hospital linked to his oxygen tanks until Monday night.

Monday night Christopher's parents, William and Linda had a dream come true as they brought their son home. They had hoped it would be for good.

FEW HOURS

In his first year, Christopher spent only a few hours in his family's home before having to be rushed back to the hospital. More recently Christopher spent two weekends in the King home as the family readied for their son to come from the hospital, 13 months later.

But the realization of the King family's dream of bringing Christopher home brought with it the harsh reality that Ontario's health insurance plan makes no allowances for children like Christopher.

While Christopher recuperated within the confines of Sick Children's Hospital his health expenses, including the costs of his oxygen, were paid by OHIP. But once the child leaves and is taken to the family home, the costs of his oxygen

must be borne by the King family.

Staff at Sick Children's Hospital have told the King's Christopher's life support system will cost the family at least \$850 per month. They will pay approximately \$650 for the oxygen which Christopher uses at a rate of four litres per minute. The family must also rent the tanks, hoses and other equipment necessary to supply the child with oxygen at a cost of over \$170 per month.

APPARENTLY NOT
 The Kings are not covered by any private health insurance plans.

"We thought health insurance is health insurance, but apparently it's not," said Mr. King.

"When we learned OHIP would not cover the costs of Christopher's oxygen, about a month ago, it was a complete shock," he said.

The King's doctor contacted OHIP in an effort to get some financial assistance for the child but was turned down. The Herald contacted OHIP Monday and was told the family did not qualify for any aid from the provincial health plan.

"As long as it's outside the OHIP, expenses are no longer covered by the plan," said an OHIP spokesperson. She added that there is no precedent for appealing the policy which has existed since OHIP's inception.

Mr. King said he can't understand that while an adult over the age of 65 years can receive oxygen at home free of charge under OHIP, the provincial health plan makes no allowances for young children requiring oxygen in the home.

WON'T HELP

"It costs them \$270 a day to keep Christopher in the hospital but they won't help pay the over \$800 a month to keep him out. It doesn't make economic sense," said Mr. King.

Doctors told the Kings it was essential for Christopher's development that he be removed from hospital as soon as possible. Christopher's case is an unusual one according to the doctors. Infants suffering from respiratory distress syndrome usually are healed after three months in hospital, in fact, many premature babies suffer from mild forms of the syndrome. At the time of his birth doctors predicted Christopher would be healed in a matter of months but for an unknown reason, the child has taken much longer to heal.

Christopher is on the road to recovery, doctors are convinced the child's lung development will 'catch up' with his body, but the process will take at least another year.

Christopher's problems have been compounded by his lung's slow development. Most children suffering from the syndrome are hospitalized for a comparatively brief period of time and doctors are not as concerned about the effect the prolonged hospitalization will have on the child's mental development. As a result, young infants suffering from the syndrome can remain in the hospital until they are cured without having to be supplied with oxygen at home.

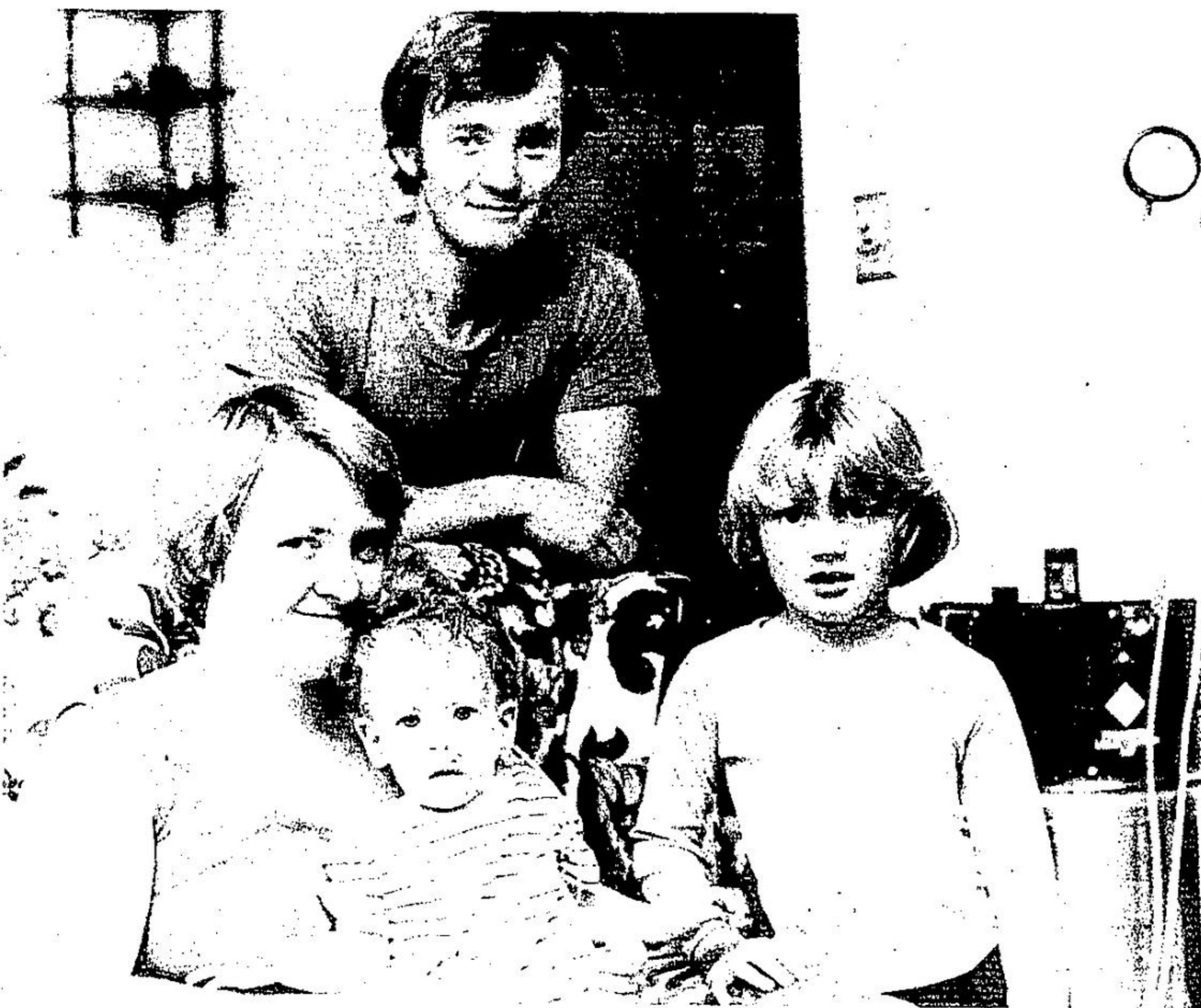
EVERY DAY

But in Christopher's case, doctors have become increasingly concerned that for every day he remains hospitalized, his mental and physical development falls further behind that of normal children.

Christopher was the oldest child in his ward. Most of the other infants were incubated and did not provide him with the mental stimulation and example other children his age would have. The only new Christopher had really knew until Monday night was the gray walls of his hospital ward, the only light he was familiar with was from the hospital's fluorescent lighting.

"To me leaving Christopher in the hospital any longer would have been stupid, he's over a year old and he's already lagging behind," said Mr. King.

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CHRISTOPHER'S HOME

Thirteen month old Christopher King (centre) is home from hospital at last, but not without difficulties, his family must raise more than \$10,000 a year to keep Christopher supplied with life giving oxygen. Christopher is shown here with his

mother, Linda, father, William and five-year-old sister Laura. Some of his life support equipment is shown in the background.

(Herald photo)

This Week



GORDON BRIGDEN

Hornby steam fan

Steam Era, the largest steam and antique show in Ontario, will take place again this weekend at the Milton Fairgrounds. Gordon Brigden, the first treasurer of the Ontario Steam and Antique Preservers Association talks about how Steam Era began 19 years ago in this week's Halton's People.

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Happy reunion

Digging into the family's history is one of those hobbies many people enjoy. The Shehns of Five Sideroad were having no luck tracking their background in the Ukraine until a Herald story put them in touch with the Shehns in Acton.

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Miller wants efforts pooled to stop rural garbage dumping

By PAUL DORSEY
 Herald staff writer

Halton Hills and Milton should pool their municipal efforts to stop the dumping of garbage along rural roads, a problem which will undoubtedly worsen with the closure of the Georgetown landfill site in October, Coun. Russ Miller has suggested.

Reacting to an update report from Halton region on the status of Halton's three remaining dumps, Coun. Miller warned the town's general committee Monday night that north Halton faces a horrendous

problem once the region starts hauling its garbage to the south.

The committee was officially informed that north Halton's last remaining landfill site, on Armstrong Avenue in Georgetown, will reach its recommended contours within the next two months. When that happens, solid waste from Halton Hills, along with that from Milton, which is now being brought here, will be transported by truck to landfill sites in Oakville and Burlington.

EXISTING DUMP
 Oakville's existing dump is

being expanded to accommodate additional waste from the north. The extra capacity promises to extend that dump's life until next April.

At that point, garbage from across Halton will go directly to the existing Burlington dump, which is also being expanded to serve the region's needs until next July.

By then, it is hoped that the region will have obtained final permission to establish a major 246-acre landfill site in an agricultural area south of urban Milton, known as Site "F". Approvals are still being delayed by strong opposition to the region's plans for Site "F" from the town of Milton itself and a concerned citizens group. The dump's opponents plan to appeal the Ontario Municipal Board's recent decision approving the landfilling scheme.

Whether or not the region is successful in developing Site "F" for landfilling, however, is not chief among the concerns of Halton Hills councillors.

"I'm very concerned because what we're going to end up with is more garbage along the rural roads," Coun. Miller said this week. "It's been a constant complaint of mine to

(town public works staff). People are just not going to drive from Acton to Oakville to dump their garbage."

Despite assurances from region officials that there is no apparent problem involving roadside dumping in Halton, Coun. Miller claimed there is already "all kinds of garbage" left in random piles along rural roads throughout Halton Hills and Milton.

Coun. Miller urged town staff to consult their counterparts in Milton to determine whether the hauling of garbage from Milton to Georgetown has indeed been problem-free, as officials have suggested. If there have been problems, he said, both towns should get together to develop solutions.

ONGOING STUDY

Town engineer Bob Austin informed the committee that an ongoing study should soon determine whether the region should construct transfer stations in north Halton where waste could be temporarily stored prior to its transportation to south Halton.

A proposal considered by the town last year would have seen Leferink Disposals Ltd. of RRI Limehouse receiving the town's garbage at a commercial transfer station to be built on the firm's property. The firm has since learned that it has insufficient space for the commercial operation, however, but is still considering a smaller, private station, Mr. Austin said.

In predicting an October 31 closing for the Georgetown dump, the region's public works director, Bob Moore, and officials of the region's landfilling consultants, M.M. Dillon Ltd., offered the Oakville site on the Fourth Line north of Highway 5 and the Burlington site on the North Service Road west of King Road to the town for landfilling.

Dillon's report estimates that approximately 190,000 tons of solid waste were buried in Halton between April, 1978, and May, 1979. Using a newly-

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DANGEROUS DRIVING CHARGES LAID

Charges have been laid against the driver of the car which crashed two weeks ago, killing two Georgetown girls.

Leslie Davies, 16, and Nancy Langedyk, 18, died when the car in which they were passengers left the road and smashed into a tree stump, a hydro pole and a mail box. The accident happened on 17 Sideroad west of Trafalgar Road.

Thomas Vansleker, 19, the driver of the car, has been charged with careless and dangerous driving. He and his sister, Karen, 21, were both injured in the crash, and were sent to hospital.

Disston sale stopped, plant may still close

Although the sale of Acton's Disston saw plant has fallen through the fate of the factory's 130 employees is still unsettled.

Goran Sorman, organization and business development officer for Disston Canada Inc. confirmed Monday that the proposed sale of the Acton and Vancouver plants to R. Hoe and Co., Inc. of Scarsdale, New York has been cancelled. Mr. Sorman said the company still plans to sell the factories but would not elaborate further.

Nor would he say whether the September 29 closing date originally given to employees when the sale to Hoe was announced was still in effect.

A press release from R. Hoe president Bob Corrao said Hoe will be seeking another method of entering the Canadian market since the company was unable to reach a written agreement with Disston Canada Inc. A company spokesman said the talks stopped because the companies "ran out of common ground" to negotiate

Although Disston has refused to comment on the plant's closing date a source inside the plant said workers were told last week the company would begin removing equipment from the Acton plant this week.

Then plant's closure will put 113 hourly workers and 17 clerical staff out of work.

Disston Canada Inc. and it's American parent Disston Inc., were both purchased in 1976 by Sandvik, a Swedish company with international interests.

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King case heads for legislature

As The Herald went to press Tuesday Ontario Opposition Leader Stuart Smith of the Liberal Party contacted the newspaper and said he intends to raise the Christopher King case in the provincial legislature as soon as it reconvenes.

Dr. Smith termed the King family's plight "absolute lunacy."

"This is exactly the kind of short-sightedness that has marked our health system up until now," Dr. Smith said.

Dr. Smith leads the Liberal Party of which Georgetown MPP Julian Reed is a member. Mr. Reed is on holiday and Dr. Smith's office was contacted by The Herald in the local MPP's absence.

When contacted Monday by the newspaper, Dr. Smith's office said they intended to investigate the Christopher King case.

Tuesday, Dr. Smith told The Herald the only option open to the King family to receive financial assistance from the Ontario government is to apply to the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

FULL COSTS

"That still won't cover their full costs and the family won't get an answer on their application until at least a month after they apply," Dr. Smith said.

"To me it's perfectly obvious that it is more humane and economic for OHIP to provide the family with funding. It is outrageous that they have to go to COMSOC for funding."

Dr. Smith said that considering the costs of hospitalizing a child it is obvious that the province will save money if Christopher is cared for at home.

Since the family is willing to take on the difficult burden of caring for their child at home, the provincial health care system should encourage and assist them according to Dr. Smith.



WHERE'S THE LOOT?

These two 'state troopers' were filmed Thursday in a scene from Never Trust an Honest Thief, being filmed locally. The trooper were busy searching 'Ned's Shack', looking for stolen money.

(Herald photo)