

**Chauffeur lives in Georgetown**

**Meet Nick Lorito, the Premier's 'pilot'**

Next to Kathy Davis, Georgetown's Nick Lorito figures he probably knows Bill Davis as well as anybody.

Mr. Lorito, 41, is the premier's chauffeur, or - as Mr. Davis simply says - his driver. Once, while Mr. Davis was education minister and visiting a high school, Mr. Lorito was parked outside the school waiting for Mr. Davis. Some teens were kidding Mr. Lorito saying "James, take me here ... Mr. Davis 'very nicely' told them, 'his name is Nick, and he's my friend,' the driver recalls.

Mr. Lorito, who is also a special constable with the Ontario Provincial Police, has worked for Mr. Davis since December of 1965. He heard Mr. Davis was looking for a new driver to replace someone who'd left the job, went for an interview and the two men "hit it off." Mr. Lorito said during an interview at his Georgetown home. He had previously been driver for former agriculture Minister Bill Stewart.

Since then, their relationship has developed into a friendship something some people can't understand, said Mr. Lorito, whose only uniform is a suit and tie.

Mr. Lorito generally worked 10 to 12 hours a day by the time he picks Mr. Davis up in Brampton in the morning and stays through any evening meetings the premier has scheduled. If the legislature is in session, the days are spent in and around Toronto - driving Mr. Davis to luncheon meetings, to Toronto City Hall or maybe to a university.

Wednesdays tend to be the

most tedious. While Mr. Davis is meeting with the cabinet and the policy board, Mr. Lorito wanders around Queen's Park, chatting with MPI's, government officials or newspaper reporters. ("Some of my best friends are reporters.") The odd time he has left the building is the time "he (Mr. Davis) pops out" to go to an unscheduled meeting, so most days he simply has to wait.

At other times, Mr. Lorito drives Mr. Davis to points around the province, or flies with him to other Canadian cities where he might be needed as driver during a conference. In 1974, he accompanied the premier to Italy, where Mr. Davis's mother was born. Mr. Lorito took the tour off course to go through his mother's city.

A man who enjoys the chance to "express my views to number 1," Mr. Lorito said the premier "has been known to quote me." He said his views don't always coincide with those of the government in the "one-on-one confrontation," but "I've got the keys," Mr. Lorito quipped.

Some days Mr. Lorito can tell just by looking at Mr. Davis that it's "not a talking day." It's like a husband and wife. You can tell (when you come home), today's not the day to say, "Where's my steak?" Mr. Lorito figures that intuition is one of the reasons he still has his job.

"You go through so many emotional changes," he said of his job. "It's like following the Expo. . . You take your lumps with them." Still the premier doesn't generally let

his hair down when he climbs into the front seat with Mr. Lorito after a bad day. And though the two have had "a lot of times, fun times," Davis is "very aware of who he is," Mr. Lorito said. As premier, "he wouldn't go out and do anything silly. . . Some people would say he's straight."

The two men have a well-known common interest in the game of cribbage, a pastime they had more opportunity for when Mr. Davis was minister of education. Once on a plane ride to Thunder Bay, someone took pictures of Mr. Lorito at the cribbage board. Mr. Davis had the photos mounted on a plaque with humorous captions under each one and titled it Portrait of a Con Artist. He gave the plaque to Lorito for Christmas.

The Toronto-born driver said he and Mr. Davis "both like to win at cribbage. They sometimes play for \$1 a game, or - on "rare occasions, if he's feeling really good" - as high as \$5.

Mr. Lorito's family - his wife, Patricia, and children Michael, 12; Theresa, 10; and Christopher, 7 - have spent a considerable amount of time at the Davis' cottage on an island near Honey Harbor. This summer, when Mr. Lorito bought a motorboat, Mr. Davis was the first person outside the family to drive it.

Mr. Lorito's non-driving duties have included overseeing work at the Davis cottage. He often volunteers "as a friend" to do things Davis would have found someone else to do - things ranging from replenishing the premier's supply of pipe tobacco to painting his mother-in-law's cottage.

"I take a case of beer and

some steaks and do some work," Mr. Lorito said of jobs like the latter.

The variety and flexibility, as well as the "excitement" of meeting and talking with people all over the province are what makes Mr. Lorito's job fun, he said. One night he had dinner with the premier and others at a black-tie affair in the Royal York Hotel. The next evening, he and Mr. Davis and two others were sitting in the Chrysler New Yorker eating hamburgers and chips from a take-out place in Oshawa.

As a security man, Mr. Lorito doesn't carry a weapon, but another OPP officer who is armed always travels with Mr. Davis as well. To date, Mr. Lorito has not been involved in any serious security incident with Mr. Davis.

"As my friends say, you never know what you're prevented, but you're gonna be flummoxed for what gets through," he said.

Mr. Lorito said he admires Mr. Davis and is glad he's premier.

"One of Mr. Lorito's proudest moments on the job was when he shook hands with Queen Elizabeth during her royal visit for the Olympic Games. "Bill Davis told the staff to get in line," recalled Mr. Lorito. "The protocol people didn't like it." Mr. Lorito has a photograph of himself as he shook hands with the Queen.

Thinking back to his childhood in Toronto when a lot of kids weren't allowed to play with the Italians like him, Mr. Lorito sums it up, "small Italian boy makes good. . .

Working with the premier and meeting the Queen, I'm quite proud of that."



Nick Lorito, who works as Premier Bill Davis's chauffeur, is shown here at home with his family. Seated in the centre is his wife, Pat, while son Chris is seated in front of his father. Standing behind Mrs. Lorito is Theresa, and in front of Theresa is Mike. (Herald photo)

**HALTON'S PEOPLE**

**Director sees funeral as first step to recovery**

BY MAGGIE HANNAH  
HERALD STAFF WRITER

The traditional funeral is the first step in handling grief in the eyes of Acton Funeral Director, Bruce Shoemaker. It enables the mourner to share his sorrow and accept his loss. That is the beginning of recovery.

Helping the bereaved through this first step gives Mr. Shoemaker a great deal of personal satisfaction. It requires long hours and hard work to get things "The way we'd like them ourselves if we were the clients," he says, but the end results can be fulfilling.

"Being a funeral director in a small town is a way of life," he says. "You always have to be on call. I don't know how fellows in small towns stand it who have wives that aren't interested in the business."

Mr. Shoemaker has never had that problem. His wife,

Rhoda, is also his business partner and right hand. She does the hairdressing for the business, does the books and acts as a general helper too.

**NATIVE ABILITY**  
"Anyone who wants to exist in this business needs a certain amount of native ability in helping people cope with their grief," he says. "Training and that great teacher, experience, will probably do the rest."

Not only does the work demand certain standards on the job, it gives the funeral director a certain image during this free time too.

"You don't stop to realize how the community sees you until something happens to trip you up," he says. "One day I happened to meet a woman on the street whom I had heard was in the hospital and I hadn't seen her for some time. Without thinking I asked how she was feeling.

She gave me the strangest look and muttered something. Later I learned she had been at death's door and still wasn't too fit when I saw her she said my inquiry had given her a real jolt. I guess she wondered if I was drumming up business."

"One fellow I know wouldn't go to a community dance if he'd had a funeral that day. He didn't think it would look right. I've never gone that far about my community image. But you do have to be careful sometimes."

Mr. Shoemaker grew up in Kitchener and decided in his high school days that he'd like to be a funeral director. When he was around 16 one of his close friends lost his father and Mr. Shoemaker attended the funeral. The director did some things that jarred with him and he felt he could do a better job helping people through their bad moments than that man

had done. The idea stayed with him and his guidance councillor agreed that he had potential.

"He did his two years of apprenticeship with a funeral parlour in Owen Sound. In those days prospective funeral directors worked a year with a licence funeral director then went to the Canadian School of Embalming in Toronto for a short course. Then they returned to their training business for a second year. After that they took further courses in Toronto and finally tried written and oral examinations to pass the provincial standards examination.

**CHANGED TODAY**  
Things have changed today, however, and community colleges offer a one year funeral director's course. Students then spend a year apprenticing with a licensed funeral director before they try a practical examination.

While there are advantages to both systems Mr. Shoemaker favors the practical examination since there are people who can describe the embalming process well enough to pass a written or oral examination but just physically can't do the job.

Funeral directors must also attend post graduate school at least once in five years to retain their licence. The Board of Funeral Services operates the school for the province.

After passing his licence Mr. Shoemaker went to work in a funeral home in Hamilton for a year but he didn't like it.

"It was like a machine," he says. "I was a cog in that machine and I got no personal satisfaction out of helping anyone. If anyone said thank you they were thanking the machine and there was no reward in that. Here, if someone says 'thank you' they're directing it to us and there's a great deal of fulfilment in it."

Mr. Shoemaker came to work for Vic Rumley the end of September 1963 and had no thought of buying the business because Mr. Rumley had a son in the business whom he assumed would take it over if Mr. Rumley decided to retire. About a year later Mr. Rumley offered it to him.

"I didn't even have sense enough to say yes first," he chuckles. "I said, what about Bob?" he said Bob didn't want it, so he was offering it to me."

**FRANTIC SCRAMBLE**  
The next couple of weeks involved a frantic scramble to dig up the financing. He also got married in the middle of October 1964. Tonight (Oct. 31) marks the end of 25 years of business in the big cream painted brick house on Mill Street, in Acton, for the Shoemakers.

There have been several changes in the business in that time. One of them is the end of funeral in the home. Whether it is a matter of lack of space or a wish to avoid inconvenience, or both now most families want funerals conducted from the funeral parlour rather than their home.

"We've become a generation who sends everyone out for every important occasion," he says. "We go to a hospital to give birth, we go to a church to be married, we go to hospital for treatment of illnesses, we send our old people to senior citizens apartments or nursing home to die. We used to do all those things at home and the family was part of every thing. But not any more. Whether it's good or bad, that's how it is."

There is a general fear of death, and the public tends to want to ignore it or push it out of sight, Mr. Shoemaker says. That, combined with the notion that traditional funerals are relatively expensive, makes it very easy for people not aware of the facts to say that funerals aren't necessary.

"Had press stems mostly from the fact that death and the funeral business is something the general public knows very little about," he says. "Basically the people who cause us the most grief are those who aren't familiar with our method of respecting and caring for the dead."

When asked if he recommends including children in a family funeral Mr. Shoemaker said it all depends on the children, if they want to come, bring them. But don't force them if they don't want to attend.

**BROUGHT CHILDREN**  
"I remember one young widow with three young ones who brought them to see their father," he says. "The baby was only three and no one expected her to get much out of it but the two older children wanted to attend and she couldn't be left out. She looked at her father and the edge of the casket. She looked at her father and smiled. Then turned and said 'My daddy'll make a real good angel.' She had understood the whole thing and we would have done her an injustice if we hadn't let her come. But it all depends on the child. You never know."

Mr. Shoemaker also recommends against private funerals and closed caskets unless there is a need for this.

"I had a chap in one time who felt he wanted a private funeral for his wife because they didn't know anyone and they had no friends," he says. "I persuaded him to make it an open funeral just in case there was someone who wanted to come and see him. I pointed out that if no one showed up he'd have his private funeral after all but if he designated it as private any friends he had might feel he didn't want them and they wouldn't come to see him later either."

He told me later he was glad he had listened. A number of friends came to the funeral and he got letters from several others who knew his wife and said things he really appreciated hearing."

He also finds that families accept their loved one's death better if they see the remains. In cases of certain accidents this isn't possible, of course, but when it is he tries to persuade at least one member of the family to view the body.

**DIDN'T REALIZE**  
"I didn't realize how important it could be," he says. "Until I overheard one mother saying to another at a funeral how lucky she was that she could at least see her son. The first woman's son had been burned in a car accident and no one saw him. She said she always wondered if he really buried someone else. Actually seeing the body seems to help them accept the fact that the person is dead. And that has to be accepted first before they can begin to get over their grief and start living normally again."

Apart from his job Mr.

Shoemaker says he has few community commitments. He tried getting involved with Trinity United Church and various service clubs but he found that his work usually interfered.

"It isn't fair to promise you'll do something and then have to cancel out at the critical point because of work," he says. "Since I never knew when I'd have a slack day or when I'd be busy I finally gave it up."

About the only hobby he can enjoy is reading, he says. He also works with the Osteomy Association of Guelph, trying to help patients facing surgery come to grips with the life they will lead afterwards. He understands their fears since he faced them himself and finds that giving them bits of practical advice from someone who has been through what they are facing is usually what the person needs.

It doesn't always work, however, and he recalls one man from the north who refused to have the surgery and went home to die.

**Homesick Britons gather for new club**

By MICHELLE MARTIN

If you're homesick for Country Gardens and British Pubs you can get at least a taste of the old country in Georgetown's British Club. The new club offers a wide variety of activities for British who want to meet people of their own country.

The club originated with Ed Cochrane, of Cochrane Travel Agency, who, while canvassing for the Post Office realized the large number of British people living in Georgetown. Having lived in Georgetown the past three years, Mr. Cochrane, who is British himself, had not become comfortable with many people.

Thus the British Club came into existence, giving the British a club where they could meet and socialize in the good old fashioned spirit as well as travel together as a club and share stories of home. To Mr.

Cochrane, being in Canada was new and different, different from the British spirit and ways he was used to. Surely there must be others like himself, he thought. If he could start this club it would give a feeling of home to himself and the other British residents of Georgetown.

At present the club consists of 95 per cent British people, 22 families and three singles. Memberships are \$10 a family and \$8 single annually. The club is a non-profitable organization, with funds being used for the activities offered. Some activities include: dances, car rallies, and special occasion parties, with hopes of disco dances, film shows for children, picnics and raffias to come.

Some of these will be open to the public with priority going to the members. Discussions for the club began in March of this year, with

the first meeting held on May 29, which started the applications coming in. The first meeting was held at the office of Cochrane Travel Agency. At first, where, and how to conduct the meetings was a problem. As Jean Cochrane, treasurer of the club said, "We were pretty green. We're still looking for new people and new ideas."

The club activities are usually held at either Stewarttown Hall, Esquesing Hall or the Glen Hall.

The officials of the British Club are: Frank Phipps, president; Jean Cochrane, treasurer; Irene Patterson, recording secretary; Carol Gougeon, membership secretary; Joan Hayes, program co-ordinator; and Val Taylor, social convenor. To join this up and coming club phone Jean Cochrane, or Carol Gougeon, or just drop by Cochrane Travel Agency.



Bruce Shoemaker stands with a display of pamphlets put out for the public to pick up if they are interested in further information on funerals and legal matters concerning death, wills and government subsidies. (Herald photo)