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It's Worth The Drive To Acton

Inquest recommends warning stop signs

By SANDY CAMPBELL
Herald Staff

A bent stop sign pole was the focus of a coroner's inquest into the deaths of two Halton Hills women. The inquest was held June 24 at Milton District Court.

Christine Wilcox, 17, and Mary Robertson died March 11 at the Fifth Line and Sideroad 15 intersection.

Pictures taken by the investigating constable of the Halton Regional Police, Blair Vintinner, showed one of the stop signs on the Fifth Line turned away from traffic. The pole had a sharp twist in the base. The sign was parallel to, and not facing, the Fifth Line traffic it was supposed to stop.

The fatal accident occurred when Christine Wilcox, who was southbound on the Fifth Line, drove by the turned stop sign. Her car collided with the car in which Mary Robertson was a passenger and which was eastbound on Sideroad 15, Constable Vintinner said.

Bryan Robertson, Mrs. Robertson's son, was driving the eastbound car. Stephen Wingfield was in the car with Christine Wilcox. He is still on crutches from a leg broken in two places suffered during the accident.

Mary Robertson saw the Wilcox car coming and shouted to her son to brake, "but I was too close to the intersection," Mr. Robertson testified. He was driving 40 miles per hour, he said.

While in the witness box, Stephen Wingfield estimated the Wilcox vehicle was travelling 60 miles per hour. A person who witnessed the Wilcox vehicle just before the accident testified the car was going at or above the speed limit.

Before the collision, Mr. Wingfield said he and Miss Wilcox were talking about a friend's new born child. Between 75 to 100 feet before the intersection Mr. Wingfield pointed out a friend's house to Miss Wilcox. They glanced at it, he said.



Christine Wilcox

A four-member jury concluded the cause of the accident was that the southbound Wilcox vehicle failed to yield as stated in section 115 of the Highway Act. This section states the driver on the left must yield to the one on the right.

The jury recommended "stop warning signs be placed on sideroads before junctions wherever visibility for intersecting traffic is limited."

Dr. Allistair Macintosh presided over the inquest. The purpose of the inquest is not to lay blame, but to discover the cause of the deaths and to make recommendations which prevent similar accidents, he said.

Questions asked of witnesses by the five lawyers present were mainly about the condition of the stop sign. Lawyers represented the Crown, the Wilcox family, the Robertson family, the Town of Halton Hills and Stephen Wingfield.

Much of the discussion about the stop sign concerned a Town of Halton Hills road grader working near the intersection the afternoon of the accident. Police photos showed heavy machinery tracks 18 to 24 inches away from the sign post, Constable Vintinner said.

The Halton Hills employee, Bob Lindsay, operating the grader testified he did not hit the sign post with the grader or either of its two blades. If the blades had hit the sign they would have cut it off or bent it over, Mr. Lindsay said.

Norman McKay is a road foreman for Halton Region. He testified the grader could have twisted the sign if the grader caught the side of the post. Mr. McKay passed the sign at 1 p.m. the day of the accident. The sign was in good shape, he said. The accident was at 4:36 p.m. the same day.

Mr. Lindsay was working near the intersection between 12:30 and 2 p.m., he testified. Snow was melting and flooding was beginning. Mr. Lindsay was clearing the ditches of snow.

A mechanical engineer, who specializes in the re-creation of accidents to determine the cause, said he could not conclusively link the grader to the bent post. Charles Ross Eddie, the engineer, said trees along the roadway hindered Christine Wilcox's view of the intersection.

Dr. Macintosh reported Christine Wilcox and Mary Robertson died from a combination of injuries, seconds after the accident. No alcohol was involved, he said.



About 60 people turned out Saturday night to celebrate the Acton Chamber of Commerce's tribute to Branch 197 of the Royal Canadian Legion. Named Citizen of the Year for the first time, the Legion was presented with a number of plaques from local politicians. Loaded down with the tributes were Sharon Barker, immediate past president of the Legion Ladies and Len Shona, (far right) 1985 Legion president. Reg DiCola (centre) is Chamber president. (Herald photo)

Acton's top citizen

Tributes, praise for Legion

By ANI PEDERIAN
Herald Staff

"A wise choice" was what the Acton Chamber of Commerce's selection of citizen of the year was called. About 60 people turned out Saturday night to celebrate the awarding of the honor to Branch 197 of the Royal Canadian Legion.

"It's a very wise choice, certainly, the Chamber has made for 1986," Halton Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy said. "Really, an institution like the Legion, in any community, is one of the components of the heart of any community."

He commented on the significance of holding the citizen of the year dinner just days before Canada Day and called the timing of the celebration appropriate.

Chairman Pomeroy wasn't the only politician to mark the occasion with an approving speech and memorabilia. There was a good turnout of politicians, including Counc.

Pam Sheldon, Rick Bonnette, Norm Elliott, Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller, and Halton-Burlington MPP Don Knight. Halton MP Otto Jelinek was represented by Acton resident Ted Hilton.

"The Acton Legion has been involved in many community projects and I know the Acton community is proud of its organization," MPP Don Knight said, arms laden with plaques from the province. "It's our sincere wish you will continue to be of service to your community."

Mr. Knight read a letter from Ontario Premier David Peterson written for the occasion. It paid tribute to the Acton Legion as well as all Legion branches across Canada.

A plaque from the premier thanked the Acton branch for improving life in Ontario and Canada.

"Their service to people takes many forms," the plaque read. Although the town's federal representative was absent, he sent

an apology along with Acton Progressive Conservative Party member Ted Hilton.

"What happened is, he got on the VIA train in Ottawa to get here, and landed in London," Mr. Hilton said to the delight of his audience.

Sitting at the head table with Chamber President Reg DiCola and his executive were the Legion's 1985 Ladies President Len Shona and the Legion Ladies immediate past president Sharon Barker.

"When you honor the Legion, you're honoring Acton itself," Mr. Shona said. "The Acton Legion is about people, and yes, we do things in a quiet way."

Raising his glass, Mr. Shona offered a toast from the Legion. "Here's to Acton, the best damned little town in Canada."

Mrs. Barker congratulated every Legion lady who contributed to the award.

Cabinet shuffle

One less job for Jelinek

Halton MP Otto Jelinek didn't get lost in Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's cabinet shuffle this week.

The politician lost one and kept one, as far as cabinet postings go.

David Crombie was made the federal government's Secretary of State with responsibility for multiculturalism, taking the multiculturalism portfolio Mr. Jelinek had shouldered.

Mr. Jelinek kept his title of Minister of fitness and amateur sport, a title Mr. Mulroney gave him following the 1984 election which swept the progressive conservatives into power.

"He's ecstatic," Halton PC Association president Doug Brady told The Herald. "This is his first love and choice since 1984."

Two portfolios were "just too

much" for Mr. Jelinek, Mr. Brady said.

"Both portfolios were very demanding, requiring Mr. Jelinek to be all over the place," the Association president said.

Mr. Brady said Mr. Jelinek had a long meeting with the prime minister on the weekend and handed Mr. Jelinek had been given a couple of choices for Cabinet seats, but his first choice was fitness and amateur sport.

As for Brampton-Georgetown MP John McDermond, there was speculation he would be given a cabinet post by Mr. Mulroney, however, that didn't turn out to be the case. There were no announcements made by the prime minister in changes to his parliamentary secretaries. Mr. McDermond is parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Energy.

With the cabinet changes, the Minister of Energy was changed from Pat Carney to Marcel Masse.

Cheaper land the reason firm moves: Mayor

It was cheaper land in Guelph that lured Acton's longtime employer Blow Press to Guelph, Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller says.

"Ken (Blow) told me he was really upset with a couple of developers who were holding him for ransom when he tried to buy land on Highway 25," Mayor Miller told The Herald.

Apparently the developers were wanting upwards of \$35,000 an acre.

The Mayor said the town was never approached with development applications or requests to change zoning on land by Blow Press.

"They didn't even approach me. I phoned Ken and I asked if there's anything the town could do to keep them in town," Mayor Miller said. "I was told he couldn't deal with the developers in town and it wasn't anything the town had done."

The Perth Street firm employs about 25 and manufactures presses for metal stampings. The move to Guelph later this year will close the Acton plant.

Ken Blow declined to speak about the move to The Herald when contacted Tuesday. Andy Blow is in the United States this week, his father said.

Speyside seeks injunction possible date set next week

By SANDY CAMPBELL
Herald Staff

The Speyside Area Ratepayers Association could be taking their concerns about Halton Hills Consolidation Committee recommendations to court as early as next week.

Lawyers of the Association and the Halton Board of Education will be meeting with a court representative this week to set a date, said Kevin Freier, a member of the Speyside Area Ratepayers Association. That court date could be next week, he said. It will be in Milton District Court.

The Speyside group is most directly affected by Speyside Public School closing, but they are challenging all aspects of the consolidation committee's report. In a letter of intent dated June 3 to Wally Beever, the Halton Board's Director of Education, the Speyside group's

lawyer said the consolidation report "is contrary to the Education Act, Ministerial Policy, Board policy and the rules of natural justice."

The Speyside group wants to stop the consolidation process by getting an injunction. If they achieve this in court, the consolidation recommendations would be reversed.

"Things would be as they were before consolidation recommendations were approved. Speyside and Wrigglesworth would remain open. The Speyside group states in their letter of intent to Director Beever that "schools be kept open and operated in a manner consistent with the 1985-86 school year", if the injunction succeeds.

If there is an injunction and the decisions of the consolidation committee are reversed, some in the Speyside group would like to see the consolidation process attempted again. Others believe there is no

The committee meetings cut into doctors' mornings, lunch hours or office hours, Dr. Trant said.

"We feel we have to do something to protest and put pressure on," Dr. Trant said. "It's not going to affect patient care in any way. Patients will still be looked after."

Georgetown doctor Elliot Halparin agreed. He's chairman of the board of representatives for the Ontario Chapter of the College of Family Physicians.

"It's not dangerous in the short term, but I don't see how it's possible to keep the hospital functioning over the long term (without committee meetings)," Dr. Halparin told The Herald.

By ANI PEDERIAN
Herald Staff

Georgetown doctors took another step in the escalating war against Bill 94, Friday, they considered themselves resigned from all hospital committees.

The decision to resign was made Thursday morning at a meeting attended by 18 local doctors who are affiliated with the Georgetown District Memorial Hospital.

"Everybody except one at the meeting agreed to resign," Dr. Don Trant, president of the medical staff at the hospital, said. Dr. Craig Browning was the sole opponent to the move. "There is some disagreement as to what the best way of opposing it (Bill 94) is, of course."

Some doctors are seeing emergencies in their office, some are working regular hours as they were before the strike, against legislation that bans extra-billing, began. Others feel they shouldn't be causing any inconvenience to their patients, Dr. Trant said.

With the resignations, hospital administrator Brian Pollock is left with a difficult situation. He must inform the government of the resignations, and then it's up to the province to deal with it as it sees fit, Dr. Trant explained.

"The motion said that in view of the fact that participation in hospital committee work is voluntary and depends on co-operation between the government and medical staff, because we feel there's a lack of co-operation, we feel we can't serve on those committees," Dr. Trant said.

Along with several administrative committees, the move puts the therapeutic abortion committee out of commission as well. Patients and their doctors will have to find another hospital where the therapeutic abortion can be undertaken. By law, a committee of three doctors must approve therapeutic abortions in Ontario hospitals.

"As far as other sanctions, there are no plans at the moment of either closing the emergency department or the hospital to admissions," Dr. Trant said. "Our emergency will be run as usual."

The emergency department was closed for one night as a form of protest earlier in the doctors' strike.

Elective surgery will continue to be cancelled, the president of the medical staff said, with the situation being assessed on a day-by-day basis. Dental surgery will be cancelled indefinitely as well, so if you were hoping to get those wisdom teeth out, you've got a bit of a wait on your hands.

Dr. Trant named some of the committees doctors must participate in: infections, medical records, emergency, education, library, tissue, audit, operating room, intensive care, safety, and the medical advisory committee.

In the hills

Busier hospital

Visits to the emergency department of Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital are up between 25 and 40 per cent, said Brian Pollock, acting administrator of the hospital. Most of that increase is because local doctors are not seeing patients. There are also patients coming from Brampton, Mr. Pollock said.

Outside of Halton Hills visitors Brampton visitors are the main source of the increase. The most Brampton patients the hospital has seen in a day is 20, Mr. Pollock said.

Danby exhibit

An exhibition of paintings by Ken Danby, Canadian artist and one of the finest realist painters in the world, will hang in the Library-Cultural Centre gallery in Georgetown from July 16 to August 31.

The artist will attend the opening night gala on July 16, sponsored by the Friends of the Halton Hills Libraries. Tickets for this special event are priced at \$5; on sale at Acton and Georgetown libraries.

Victim in hospital

Two Halton Hills men were injured in a single car accident on Tenth Line at Sideroad 27 June 23 at 6:45 p.m.

Gregory Robson, 26, of Fifth Line in Limehouse received minor injuries. He was treated and released from Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital. Stephen Kitchener, 28, of Main Street South in Acton suffered major injuries and was transferred to Toronto General Hospital, where he is in critical but stable condition.

No regional green

Two things you can be sure of about the new municipal complex for the town.

One, the building will be built with "barrier free" access for the handicapped. This was a request made of the town by the Physically Handicapped Citizens Association of Halton North. This design allows access to the proposed building for those with physical disadvantage.

A second thing you can be assured of is that the town's complex won't be "regional green", the bright green that makes Halton's administrative building in Oakville stand out.

The Municipally Owned Property Committee Chairman Pam Sheldon made these assurances last week to The Herald. Put away those "green relief" sunglasses, now.



Berry appealing

With milk and sugar, that's how Anna-Liisa Ropponen, 9, of Streetsville likes her strawberries. The youngster was out Saturday

afternoon picking the ruby berries at Helvetia Farms on Eighth Line in Georgetown. (Herald photo)