

Outlook on Lifestyle

Court awards better Doctors can be intimidating



Against the odds
PAT WOODE

Recently we have witnessed another large financial settlement being awarded to a person now using a wheelchair as the result of a traffic accident.

This award illustrates how far apart publicly available programs are from awards by the courts.

If a person is dependant on a wheelchair for mobility, it is of little consequence why. A frail elderly person, injured worker, accident victim, multiple sclerosis patient, child with cerebral palsy, person with alzheimers or crime victim, all face the same obstacles. It makes no sense for some to go to court, some to Worker's Compensation Board, some to various government programs, some to their families, some to charity, and some to do without.

Studies have consistently shown that it is less expensive and personally more rewarding for those with disabilities to be encouraged and given support to remain out of institutions. Continuing as active members of a community means

facing obstacles that need not exist. Municipalities often approve subdivisions of single family split level dwellings. Continuous construction of these "unmodifiable" homes insures a continuing housing crisis for our aging population.

"Benefit", a term that implies reward, is not an attempt to equalize opportunity, as notoriously varied and spread over many separate agencies and government departments that often appear unfamiliar with the other's programs.

Sometimes this individual approach is not adequate or even humane. If you require special services (wheelchair, home care, physio, etc.) one local office with one phone number should provide access to all services and information. If WCB or the courts rule that one requires attendant care, a special fund should not take care of these individuals. The local office should provide the same care to them as would be available to others with similar disabilities regardless of how their disability occurred. This would be more efficient and economical.

Currently much discussion is centered on no-fault auto insurance. Why not use a similar approach to services for the disabled? I know of no one who asked to have alzheimers or spina bifida. Why should we continue to treat some people as second or third class because they did not receive a favourable court award or have a high profile and socially acceptable disorder?

DEAR DR. GOTT - I have a curved spine and am going to have a rod put in my back. The doctor didn't have a lot of time to spend with me, so will you describe the operation?

DEAR READER - The type of operation you describe is highly individualized. The doctor who proposed the surgery is your most logical resource for information. Although he may be busy and appear rushed, you are entitled to full information about the operation, its benefits and potential risks.

Don't have the operation until the surgeon sits down with you and describes the procedure in detail. Make sure you understand what he proposes to do and why. If the doctor isn't willing to provide the information you require, seek another opinion. In my view, no patient should undergo surgery without first understanding the pros and cons of the procedure. This is called informed consent. It is a mandatory part of good medical surgical practice.

To give you more information, I'm sending you a free copy of my new Health Report, AN INFORMED APPROACH TO SURGERY, which covers everything from second opinions to outpatient surgery. Others who



Your Health
Dr. Gott

would like a copy should send \$1 and their name and address to P.O. Box 91428, Cleveland, OH 44101-3428. Be sure to mention the title.

DEAR DR. GOTT - Since 1972, I've been taking atenolol, hydralazine, triamterene, Coumadin, hydrochlorothiazide, potassium chloride and quinine for high blood pressure. During this period, my wife has noticed an increase in my body odor. Could any of the drugs I'm taking cause this?

DEAR READER - Although our odors change as we age, many medicines can accentuate body odor. You are taking a tremendous conglomerate of drugs diuretics, a beta-blocker, an anti-coagulant, a mineral and an anti-cramp medicine. Any of the medicines could alter your body odor. That possibility is compounded by possible drug interactions. You should alert your doctor to the change in odor, perhaps the two of you should discuss whether so many medicines

are essential to your health. DEAR DR. GOTT - How common is Addison's disease? My daughter, who is 35, has it. Is it hereditary? She has three children.

DEAR READER - Addison's disease, the complete or partial failure of the adrenal glands, is not common. It is caused by infections, tumors, hemorrhage into the adrenal glands, or poorly understood autoimmune reactions (which cause a person to become allergic to his or her own tissues). It does not appear to be hereditary. If untreated, Addison's disease can be fatal. It causes weakness, fatigue, digestive problems, depression, low blood pressure and - in its most serious form - shock. Addison's disease is readily treatable with pills that contain adrenal hormones.

Impaired driver

For driving erratically Thursday at 1 a.m., a Georgetown man was stopped on Detrex Boulevard at McGilvary Crescent. The 46-year-old man was charged with impaired driving and will appear in court March 9.

Feeding wild birds

By DON SCALLEN

A popular pastime in recent years has been feeding of wild birds in backyard gardens. Any area of Georgetown is a good place for feeding and attracting a variety of winter birds. The valleys of the Credit River and Black Creek, that essentially define the Town's boundaries, shelter birds somewhat from the ravages of winter and provide seeds and berries for food. By supplementing these natural food sources, we can draw the birds from the valleys, to our gardens.

A wide variety of hardy winter resident species can be attracted with a comprehensive feeding program. Administering the typical department store mixture will attract a plethora of House Sparrows, Mourning Doves (if seed is provided on the ground) and in early and late winter, Common Grackles and Brown Headed Cowbirds. Expanding your feeding program with peanuts, black oil sunflower, niger and suet will attract a more interesting variety of birds to your garden. Providing niger (thistle) seed, very quickly draws hordes of ravenous Goldfinches and Pine Siskins in winter. To these small finches, niger is like nectar to a bee - they cannot resist it. A word of caution however, before you embark on your niger feeding program, this seed is very expensive at about \$21.00 for 5 kg. If you do not feel quite that charitable towards your feathered friends, settle for less expensive seed and fewer finches.

The black oil sunflower seed is a

Backyard Naturalist



favourite of Purple and House Finches. In the winter of 1984-85, tremendous numbers of Purple Finches spent the winter in Southern Ontario. A goodly proportion of that northern invasion passed through my backyard to feast on the black sunflower seed. Providing peanuts serves to attract Blue Jays (more in fall and spring than the dead of winter) and any resident squirrels. Squirrels can be a nuisance in some areas, but in my part of town, they are an infrequent and welcome addition to the garden fauna.

Suet is used to attract Woodpeckers and more infrequently, Nuthatches. Your suet will probably disappear quickly if the greedy bills of Starlings gain access to it. To guard against this, place the suet in large holes drilled into a cedar log. Then only birds like the Woodpeckers and Nuthatches able to grasp and hold onto vertical bark surfaces will be able to utilize it. My suet log does not see much winter action, being visited once a day by a Downy Woodpecker or two. If you are located next door to a woodlot, you should be able to do better.

Bird seed retailers (niger, black sunflower, etc.):
1. Early's Farm Supply - Brampton
2. Birdlife Services - Thornhill

Garden Gossip

Welcome to Gardening Gossip - a new project of the Georgetown and District Horticultural Society. Gossip we will, about gardening, the good, the bad, the success, the failures, but most of all about that wonderful feeling of helping things grow. We welcome your questions and along with the help of Bob Hankinson of Dominion Seed House hope to provide solutions to all those pesky problems.

A thought taken from an old gardening book when the price of a package of seed was a dime:
"I paid a dime for a package of seeds, and the clerk tossed them out with a flip. But it flashed through my mind as I took them this time. You have purchased a miracle

here for a dime. In this bright little package, how isn't it odd? You've a dime's worth of something known only to God."

Anonymous - Do send your questions and comments to the Georgetown and District Horticultural Society, c/o The Herald, Georgetown.

Question - When should seeds be started for transplanting to the garden?
Answer - Geranium seeds should have already been started, it is late come February. The seeds of hardy annuals, biennials and perennials should be sown by the middle of February. Tomatoes and most vegetables: start seeds indoors about six weeks before transplanting time.

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