

EDITORIAL

with Frances Learment

Criminal, or bad childcare?

When does forgetfulness, or maybe a lapse of judgement, become criminal? For a grieving Milton grandmother, it was when Halton police charged her with criminal negligence causing death and failing to provide the necessities of life after she allegedly left her toddler grandson in a car in searing heat last month.

The two-year old died from heat exposure, but Halton police have not said why the boy was left in the car for an extended period of time outside his parent's Milton home.

If convicted, the grandmother could face the maximum sentence of life in prison. Section 219(1) of the Criminal Code sets out the offence of criminal negligence. It says: "Every one is criminally negligent who (a) in doing anything, or (b) in omitting to do anything that it is his duty to do, shows wanton or reckless disregard for the lives or safety of other persons." That means prosecutors have to prove the accused's actions were a "marked and substantial departure from the standard of care that a reasonable person would observe in the circumstances," and that a reasonable person would have foreseen the risk of their conduct.

Recently in Edmonton, police did not lay charges after determining the death of a three-year-old who died after being left in a car was non-criminal. A Markham mom who allegedly left her child in a car during a heat wave was charged with child abandonment.

Not knowing the details the Milton case, which will come out when the grandmother appears in court, surely the guilt and grief of causing the death of a beloved child is the ultimate penalty.

PAST PAGES



TEN YEARS AGO

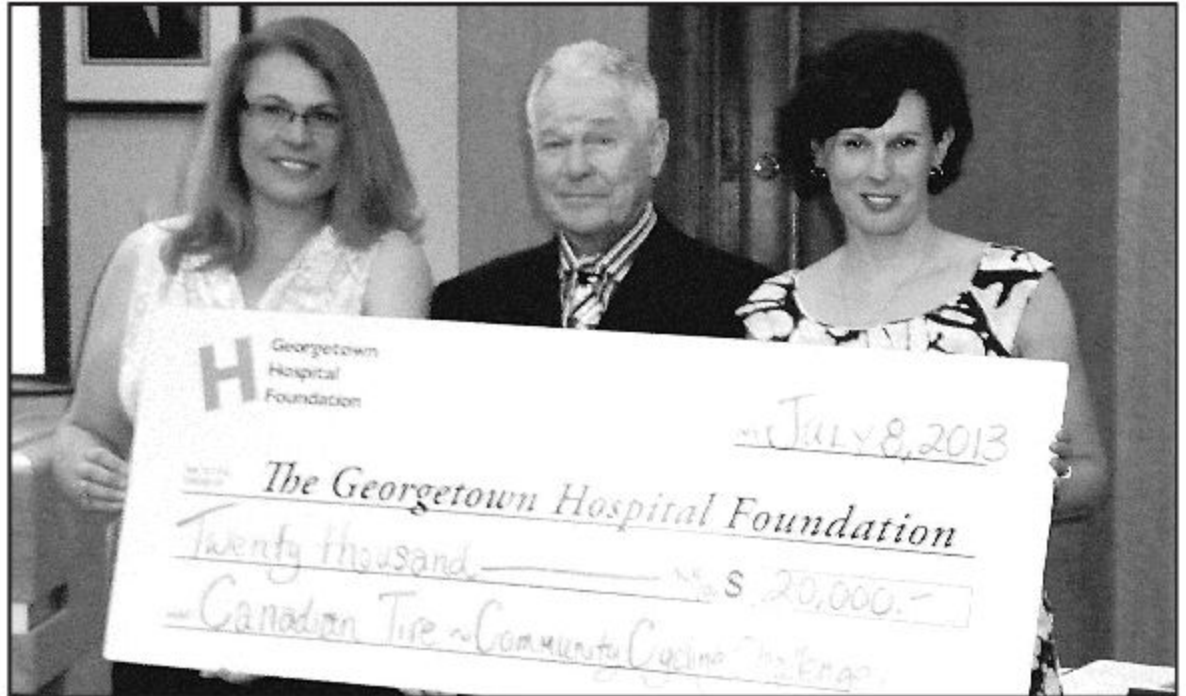
• A bicycle helmet is credited with preventing more serious injuries to a six-year-old Rockwood boy who was hit by a car near Fairy Lake after he ran a stop sign near Fairy Lake.

• Acton's John Eddolls set a new Canadian record in the lifesaving 4 X 50-metre obstacle course at the Commonwealth Championships in Durban, South Africa.

FIVE YEARS AGO

• The Town agreed to kick-in an additional \$42,888 to the Acton Agricultural Society to remove contaminated soil under the parking lot at the new Dufferin Rural Heritage Community Centre.

• Acton Councillor Mike O'Leary questioned if cheapest is always best as the Town awarded a low-bid tender to Graham Bros. Construction to reconstruct portions of the Fourth and Fifth Lines.



CYCLING CHALLENGE CASH: When the Halton Hills Community Cycling Challenge hit the half-way mark of 100,000-kilometres, Georgetown Canadian Tire donated \$20,000 to the Georgetown Hospital Foundation. Store manager Tracey Craig (left) presented the cheque to Foundation reps Paul Armstrong and Jennifer McNally on Monday at Town council. — Frances Learment photo

High and dry

Okay, they were calling for thunderstorms. How many times have we heard that from the weather man? It's the equivalent of them telling us in the winter it is going to snow...it will be a massive snow storm while children wait in anticipation of school being cancelled. Then, as I stepped out of my truck, in a split second those little rain drops that were barely noticeable turned into the torrential downpour that weather man was calling rain with potential thunderstorms. Boy, did I get wet. I was soaked.

As you know on Monday night it rained. Rain like that scares me. It doesn't scare our kids. The little guy doesn't seem to even notice thunderstorms, and since Little J could barely understand, told her not to be scared of thunder because as she reminded me Monday night, "it's just clouds bumping into each other."

When thunder strikes, it doesn't bother me. I know enough to go inside, and since the death of Acton physician Dr. Moore, I also know not to even take a chance watching a storm from a porch. What bothers me now is heavy rainfall like we had on Monday



By **Angela Tyler**

evening. The pictures on the news and in the Toronto newspapers were unbelievable.

I still am in absolute shock about the GO Train. I kept thinking about people I know in Acton who take the GO Train and might, or could have been on it. The pictures of the flooded homes are what strike a cord with me.

When I was growing up, our basement flooded. It wasn't bad in comparison to what happened to some on Monday or out west last month. The carpet had to be replaced and tap ended up being replaced. In retrospect it was nothing. After that incident, my parents always turned off their water when they were away for any length of time in case there was a leak and it flooded. That was my flood experience until two years ago.

About a month before the little guy's big arrival our basement flooded. One evening, in a very rotund pregnant state, I went

downstairs and when my foot hit the floor, the water was up to my ankles. Later that night, it began to storm similar to Monday night. I still don't know how that night didn't send me into labour. In shock from our wet basement, I remember watching the rain come down in sheets. As my only previous flood experience meant cleaning up the water and replacing the carpet that is what I was expecting yet that isn't what happened.

Our finished basement was a write-off. Our flood happened in May. In June the little guy arrived. On December 23 we were finally able to use our basement again. The next April our insurance file was closed, 11 months after our flood. It was the longest agonizing process from rebuilding part of our home to going through boxes and boxes of our belongings, deciding what we were able to keep and what we couldn't.

That is why rain scares me now. When it rains like it did on Monday now, the first thing we do is go to our basement to ensure everything is all right. Flooding is horrible, and if you have one, you never want to go through it again.



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