

FIREFIGHTERS SPRING INTO ACTION TO SAVE MAN

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saving actions of two Halton Hills firefighters who were in the right place at the right time.

It was a beautiful spring day (May 3, 2019), and Strasbourghad just finished dropping off a load of sod at a landscaping job on Hewson Crescent.

While he would usually turn left onto Ewing Street after leaving the job site and head back out to Highway 7, on that day, he decided to turn right and weave his way through the scenic streets of old Georgetown.

Listening to music, enjoying the sunshine, the 57-year-old was touring down John Street toward the intersection with Mountainview Road North.

"I can recall looking around, then the lights went out, just like that," he said. "I had no warning, and no pain whatsoever."

With Strasbourgh slumped behind the wheel, his truck rolled through the stop sign at the intersection and hit a post on the corner, bringing it to a halt.

The local man's medical distress caught the eye of

Joey McClement and Mark Bailey, two Halton Hills firefighters who just happened to be at the intersection in their own vehicles.

From a distance, they thought Strasbourgh was having a seizure or a stroke.

"His head was back, and he was discoloured. I got out of my vehicle and went over immediately," said Bailey, who quickly put Strasbourgh's truck in park, removed the keys and began assessing him. "I could see that he was going VSA (vital signs absent) and had agonal breathing."

Bailey quickly got Strasbourgh out of his vehicle and down on the pavement, then heard a familiar voice behind him. It was McClement, who came prepared with a mask, gloves and first aid kit from his vehicle.

With time of the essence, Bailey began chest compressions. McClement dialed 911, then gave his phone to a bystander and directed them on what to tell the operator so that he could commence mouth-to-mouth with his pocket mask.

Partway through the intensive CPR process, the two men were joined by an-



Melanie Hennessey/Torstar

Halton Hills firefighters Mark Bailey and Joey McClement sprung into action after seeing Denis Strasbourgh roll through the intersection at John Street and Mountainview Road North in medical distress.

other off-duty first responder — a female Toronto police officer.

Bailey went in the ambulance to continue working on Strasbourgh all the way to the Georgetown Hospital.

While one may think the Strasbourgh had no idea what was happening during those intense moments, the lucky man says he actually had an out-of-body experience and was watching the

whole thing unfold like a movie.

"So I was gone, and I was looking down at them," he recalled. "As I went higher I thought, if I fall, I'm going to break my leg."

"I could see a guy running over and I thought geez, I've got a truck like that. I wonder what's going on here?" he continued. "I saw that they didn't give up on me."

Strasbourgh was first treated at the Georgetown Hospital before being transferred to Oakville, and then Mississauga, where he stayed for about a week and underwent quadruple bypass surgery — quite a ride for a man who'd never been in the hospital before.

"All of the hospital staff said the firefighters did an amazing job," he said. "At Trillium (in Mississauga),

they said if it wasn't for them, they'd have nothing to work on, which is incredible."

Strasbourgh also couldn't say enough good things about all of the doctors, nurses and volunteers he encountered on his harrowing hospital journey.

Today, he reports that he's feeling better than ever, and has a new appreciation for waking up in the morning. He still marvels at how the stars aligned to bring him, Bailey and McClement together at that north Georgetown intersection at just the right moment.

"If they hadn't stopped, or if I'd have turned left, I wouldn't be here," he said. "I'm forever grateful because I'm not ready to go. I have things to do. I have two daughters who are just getting their own lives started, and now I have the pleasure of being a part of that, thanks to them. I don't think they realize just how much of an impact they've had."

While the two local firefighters may have been off duty, they say the instinct to do something is always there.

"Your training just immediately kicks in," said McClement. "It's a first-response mentality. The nature of your job is that you want to help."

OPINION

LOCAL NEWSPAPERS VITAL TO OUR COMMUNITIES

HAPPY TO BE BACK AS A MONTHLY CONTRIBUTOR, WRITES TED ARNOTT



TED ARNOTT
Column

For many years, the Independent and Free Press invited some elected representatives to contribute a monthly column, which was published in the editorial pages.

I appreciated and valued this opportunity to in-

form you of what was happening at Queen's Park during the years the IFP published my column.

After a period of hiatus, the IFP has decided to reinstate my column, and I'm very grateful. I want to begin this one (my first one in quite a while), by publicly thanking our local newspapers for the vital role they play in our communities.

It's really as simple as this: if you want to know

what's going on in your town, you likely won't find it on one of the national news platforms, as important as they are.

But you will find it in your local paper, whether in traditional print or online. Strong communities with spirit and vitality have some common characteristics. One of them is the common point of reference a first-rate community newspaper provides to

residents, bringing people together.

We need trained, professional journalists who separate fact from fiction, reality from myth and truth from falsehood.

Local journalism matters, today more than ever in our saturated and sometimes misleading social media environment.

Let's show our support for our communities by supporting our local news-

papers.

Lisa and I enjoyed hosting our annual free family skates in Georgetown and Acton last month. We want to thank everyone who braved the January weather to join us, and enjoy one of our quintessential Canadian winter activities.

Thanks also to the staff of the Mold-Masters Sportplex and the Acton Arena and Community Centre for their warm welcome and the great job they always do.

The Ontario Legislature

is scheduled to resume sitting at Queen's Park on Feb. 18. With the many opportunities and challenges facing the province, the spring sitting promises to be eventful and compelling.

My staff and I continue to meet with our Halton Hills constituents on a regular basis at the Georgetown and Acton libraries.

If you have an issue or concern, please don't hesitate to contact our office. As always, we are here to help anyway we can.

Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnett can be reached at 1-800-265-2366 or ted.arnottco@pc.ola.org