

Woman demands answers in husband's death

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Acton Tanner

Lori Ball wants people to know that you don't have to take governing bodies at their word—and if you don't think something's right, you can change it.

But instead of just saying it, like

most people have done before her, she's taking action.

Last October Lori's husband, Michael, a truck driver, was killed when struck by a winch bar while adjusting the load strap on a flat bed. He was parked at an entrance ramp to the Dutton service centre on Hwy. 401 near St. Thomas.

"Mike was very particular of where he stopped his truck," Lori recalled in her Kingham Road residence on Monday. "He would only do it at the weigh station and truck stops, so he knew something was wrong with his load to stop on the side of the road."

Apparently the winch mechanism slipped a gear and threw a metal pipe into Michael's heart.

A passing trucker performed CPR on Michael, while another motorist phoned '911.' An ambulance arrived seven minutes after he was hit and was at the hospital

within 45 minutes of the accident.

By then it was too late, but it didn't have to be. The London OPP records classified the accident as a fluke. "It was like he's 28, end of his life, end of story. But I couldn't accept that."

So Lori has spent the last 6½ months reliving Michael's death and conducting her own investigation into the accident in order to get an inquest held. And in order to explain to herself and her two sons, Derrick and Daryll, that their father "didn't die for nothing."

After Lori collected pages of evidence, an inquest was finally called. What she found out at the three-day inquest was that the ambulance that transported her husband to St. Thomas hospital wasn't equipped with a defibrillator.

Had it been, according to two doctors who testified, there was a 95 per cent chance it could have revived Michael, given he had been administered within 10 minutes of the ambulance's arrival. All three

Halton Hills ambulances are equipped with defibrillators.

"They're only \$2,000 each,"

Lori said. "It reminds me of the Winnipeg government, spending \$20 million to keep their pro hockey team in town. I mean, I love hockey, but you could buy a lot of defibrillators for \$20 million. Priorities are not straight in Ottawa."

"Even if only one defibrillator is put on an ambulance, the last six-and-a-half months of my life was worth it."

Before the inquest, Lori interviewed 30 truckers, 20 from Ontario and 10 Americans, to find out how frequent the winch bars fly off. What she learned was horrifying—"they fly off every day."

"They all said they've been hit by one or know someone who's been hit by one," said Lori, adding the mechanism that holds the winch bar together is the 30-year-old original, never been approved, is made by two companies whose models are the same and has never been upgraded or monitored.



LORI BALL

Two weeks after Michael's death, an employee at his trucking company, Best Transfer, was hit with a winch bar and suffered facial damage and lost teeth.

According to Lori, Dutton police phoned the Ministry of Transportation and Labour Affairs Board, who told them to allow Michael's truck back on the road.

"The problem is, no trucking firm has any record of how many employees have been hit with winch bars," complains Lori. "They tell them to take two paid-days off, which is cheaper for them than filing a claim with the Workers' Compensation Board."

Lori isn't finished yet. She has given the eight recommendations that came out of the inquest to the head coroner's office in Toronto. They will be sent to Ottawa for review—and hopefully, action.

If she doesn't hear back in one month—after her son Daryll has heart surgery—she'll be picking up the phone again to look for answers. Or she'll find them herself.

"These are people's lives we're playing with," she stresses.

The Regional Municipality of Halton NOTICE TO CITIZENS Are You Interested in Helping Run Halton Region?

In the Fall of 1994, the Council of the Regional Municipality of Halton approved a bylaw which authorized the provision of insurance coverage and reimbursement for Regional Staff and Members of Regional Council in the event of liability for actions or omissions which take place in the line of duty.

As part of its mandate, Regional Council is establishing a joint council/citizens committee (Self Insurance Policy Review Committee) to review the bylaw as it presently exists, and to report its findings to Regional Council.

This committee will give Halton residents from a variety of backgrounds a chance to volunteer their skills to help run Halton Region.

An Interviewing Committee of Regional Council will recommend qualified candidates for membership on the Review Committee. Committee size and specific composition have yet to be determined.

Citizen application forms may be obtained from:

The Regional Clerk
Regional Municipality of Halton
1151 Bronte Road
Oakville, ON L6M 3L1

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Telephone: from Burlington/Oakville/
Milton/Toronto: 825-6000
from Halton Hills: 878-8113
from Guelph/Acton: 853-0501
from Hamilton/Aldershot: 639-4540

Completed applications will be received by the undersigned until Friday, June 16th, 1995. Interviews will be conducted during July, 1995.

JOAN A. EAGLESHAM
Regional Clerk/Director
of Administrative Services



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FLOWER POWER!

Like many Acton residents, Coby Van Bendegem invested in garden flowers on the weekend. Here Coby checks out the display at Acton IGA. (Eve Martin photo)

SUNDAY FAMILY PROGRAMS AT TERRA COTTA CONSERVATION AREA 1995 SPRING PROGRAMS

*THE ART OF FISHING
Sunday, May 28, 10 am to 4 pm
Cost: \$10 per person

Suitable for adults and children (8 years and older)

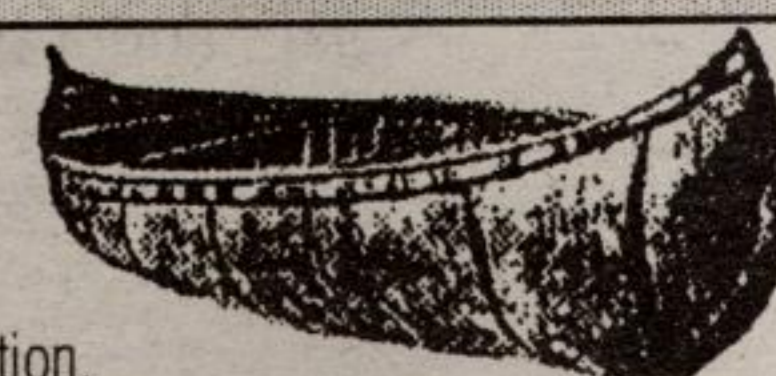
Join our accomplished fisherperson in this information-packed workshop for novice anglers who want to learn more about basic tackle and other equipment, knot tying, and casting techniques. Learn about fish habitat and the care and handling of your catch. Provincial fishing regulations will be explained.



*INTRODUCTION TO BASIC CANOEING
Saturday, June 3 and Sunday, June 4, 10 am to 4 pm
Cost: \$40 per person per day

Suitable for adults and children (10 years and older)

Join our Ontario Recreational Canoeing Association Instructors for a full day of canoeing instruction. Aimed at the beginner canoeist, this course will teach the basics of paddle strokes, canoe handling and examine canoe designs that best suit your needs. There will be some indoor instruction, but most of the time you will be in the canoe, on the water, practising the manoeuvres. We provide the canoes, lifejackets and paddles. Bring a lunch and snacks.



In 1995, the Credit Valley Conservation Authority is presenting a series of Sunday programs at Terra Cotta Conservation Area. The programs are either full day or half day events and most are suitable for both children and adults; appropriate age levels are listed in the program descriptions. A few programs are offered on both Saturday and Sunday. All programs start from the Visitor Centre in the Terra Cotta Conservation Area. For information or to register call (905) 877-9650 Ext. 22.