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'HOMETOWN PAPER, NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS!'

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 1996

## Rockwood man dies in car crash

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The Acton Tanner

The co-owner of an Acton restaurant faces five alcohol-related charges in connection with a two-vehicle accident on Friday that took the life of a Rockwood man.

Franciscus "Frank" Van der Geer, 31, was pronounced dead at Oakville Trafalgar Hospital after suffering a broken neck and massive internal injuries in the accident which occurred about 7:45 pm in the intersection of Hwy. 25 and Campbellville Road, also known as Regional Road 9.

Four-year-old Jake and two-year-old Justin Van der Geer, who were asleep in their car seats in the back of their dad's 1981 Monte Carlo, suffered cuts and bruises and were treated and released from Milton Hospital, with their uncle, Derek Davidson, who suffered some internal bruising.

The boys and their father were trapped in the car when it flipped over during the crash and had to be cut free by rescue crews.

Milton OPP report Van der Geer's car was westbound on Campbellville Road when it was broadsided by a northbound Ford



VAN DER GEER

Ranger pick-up truck that failed to stop for a red light.

Family and friends gathered at the Van der Geer's Rockwood home on Sunday to

comfort his widow Leslie and plan his funeral. Frank's mother-in-law Irene Davidson cried as she recalled finding her grandsons at Milton Hospital.

"Jake's face and cheek were badly cut and I said to him, 'Oh, Jake, your poor wee face,' and he said to me, 'Granny, my face will be okay, but my Daddy's dead,'" Davidson said as she described her son-in-law as a loving, good father and husband.

"He (Jake) was trapped in the car when they were trying to get Frank out and he knew that his Daddy was dead. It's terrible. He talks about him all the time."

"And do you know? The other driver didn't have a mark on him," Davidson said.

Davidson heard of the acci-

dent when her son phoned from the hospital. Leslie Van der Geer learned of her husband's death on the 11 pm news when she saw some film of the accident scene.

Van der Geer, who worked at NTN Bearings in Mississauga, also operated Cedar Ridge Landscaping, a part-time snow plowing and landscaping business in Rockwood, where the family had lived for nine years.

Van der Geer and his passengers were heading to Milton to pick up some kitchen cabinets when the accident occurred. Van der Geer and his wife then planned to leave the boys with their uncle while they headed for a weekend getaway in Toronto.

Van der Geer's funeral was held yesterday (Tuesday) at Holy Rosary Church in Milton.

Charged with impaired driving causing death, three counts of impaired driving causing injury and having over 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood is 38-year-old Steve Brunelle of Elmore Drive.

Brunelle was released from jail on Saturday and will appear in Milton court Monday, April 1.



### PUT ON THOSE DANCING SHOES!

Some Acton Star Thru Square Dancers shared their time and talents by attending the Halton Hills Recreation and Parks' weekly recreation drop-in program for adults with special needs at the Acton Legion last Wednesday. Here square dancer Mable Hives shows Ben Sadzewis a few moves. (Doug Harrison photo)

## Staff stunned by layoffs

For the 50 Acton employees of the Halton Board of Education who received layoff notices last week, March break will not be a welcome rest and a chance to rejuvenate.

For those facing termination, March break will be a time to worry and wonder what September will bring if the Board is forced to make the layoffs, in light of the provincial government's failure to release a set of financial measures allowing it to manage the drastic reductions in provincial grants announced in November.

The layoffs mean that one in every two-and-a-

half Acton Board staff could be out of work at the end of this school year. That includes seven of the 33 teachers at McKenzie-Smith Bennett School, seven of the 24 teaching staff at Robert Little and 12 of the 38 teachers at Acton High.

The remainder of the layoffs cover instructional assistants, lunchroom supervisors and one secretary. Board-wide 1,501 full and part-time staff were given pink slips, terminating their employment at the end of this school year.

Although there were tears during some of the

See *TOOL KIT*, Page 2



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