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'HOMETOWN PAPER, NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS!'

WEDNESDAY, ^{April 7} APRIL 3, 1996

Struck teen remains on life support

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Acton Tanner
 An 18-year-old Acton High student continues to fight for her life after being struck by a van at the Main Street-School Lane pedestrian crossing on Friday night.

Valerie "Val" Farrell of Matthew Court remains in critical condition in a coma on life support systems in Hamilton General Hospital's intensive care unit.

Halton police report that Farrell was attempting to cross Main Street from west to east when she was struck by a southbound van.

That van, driven by a 38-year-old Halton Hills man who police would not identify, has been seized as part of the on-going police investigation.

Acton High student Ryan Prueter witnessed the accident as he drove northbound on Main Street.

"I saw Val walk out into the road and I thought to myself that she was going to get hit," Prueter recounted in an interview on Sunday.

"As I went through the crossing I looked in my side view mirror and saw the guy (the van driver) try to swerve out of the way and then I saw Val rolling on the ground."

"She just walked out - she didn't check to see if any cars were coming," Prueter said as he noted that the pedestrian crossing lights were working at the time.

Farrell's father Dennis, who with wife Cindy, has been at his daughter's bedside since the accident, said he feels badly for the driver of the van.

"The police told me that the poor guy didn't have a chance to avoid Val," Farrell said in an interview on Saturday.

"It's unclear exactly what happened, but the roads were wet and it was dark and the police told me that one witness said they saw Val push the button (to activate the crossing lights) and step right out to the road.

"Somebody also said that maybe one of the dogs pulled her off the curb into the traffic, but I don't know," Farrell said. Val was walking her dogs at the time.

Farrell is a Grade 12 student who is working at Blooms Away Flower Shop on a co-op work program.



FARRELL



LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS!

Acton High presents the well-known musical *Little Shop of Horrors* Thursday, April 25, Friday April 26 and Saturday, April 27 with all shows beginning at 7:30 pm. Cast members include, from left, Jason Lowrie (the dentist), Jenn Johnson (Audrey), Laurel Soutiere (voice of Audrey II) and Nick Vancek (Seymour). Ryan Bell, in back, embodies Audrey II, the man-eating plant. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$7 for children and seniors and are available now at the school or at the door. (Karen Wetmore photo)

School trustees continue budget cutting

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Acton Tanner
 Budget debate at the Halton Board of Education turned emotional this week as trustees were forced to make deep cuts to the \$285 million spending plan as they try to avoid a tax increase.

Trustees, who cut \$6.6 million from the budget following marathon meetings last week, need to make an additional \$10 million in cuts to balance the budget and are expected to meet all this week until the budget is finalized.

"The cuts we've made so far have the least impact on the classroom," explained Board Finance Committee chair, Trustee Tim Kingsbury, on Friday.

"The amendments for cuts now become more controversial and more emotional because they have more impact on students."

Twenty-five per cent of non-teaching professional staff were the first to be cut by trustees, including seven child and youth counsellors, five psychologists, three social workers and four language pathologists. Those cuts will save the Board \$360,000 this year and \$900,000 annually.

Trustees also cut 8.5 instructional leader and consultant positions for a savings this year of \$170,000 and \$425,000 annually.

The Finance Committee cut all lunchroom supervisors, and will save \$118,000 this year and \$300,000 annually by eliminating a number

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