



## Cyclist hurt

Halton Hills emergency services personnel were called to Maple Avenue, near Cedarvale Park, Friday afternoon after a cyclist fell off his bicycle. The man was taken to Georgetown hospital. No further details were available.  
Photo by Ted Brown

## Former Halton Hills resident charged

# Dad finds daughter struck down by driver

STEPHANIE THIESSEN  
Special to The IFP

Stuart Cooper wants to celebrate his 18-year-old daughter's life, rather than focus on the ugly circumstances surrounding her death.

He doesn't want to talk about the fact he found his youngest child lying in a ditch Thursday night near their Second Line home, struck by a vehicle while she was rollerblading.

Nor does he want to waste his time discussing the motorist who took off after Lauren was run down just north of 15 Sideroad.

Instead, he wants to think of Lauren, his sweet-faced, blond-haired angel, as the spirited person she was. A person who knew how to live.

Sitting in the sweltering heat by the backyard pool Lauren loved to swim in, the Nassagaweya resident recalled some of his favourite memories.

Lauren learning to drive. The first time he saw her on ice skates. Going golfing together.



LAUREN COOPER

"She had a clear understanding of life," her father said of the Grade 11 Milton District High School student. "She was utterly dedicated to whatever she took on."

The one comfort he and his wife, Deborah, have is the knowledge they raised their daughter to be a fine young woman—something they're realizing more and more talking with those who knew and loved Lauren.

"If there's anything we get out of all this pain, it's that we did what we set out to do," he said, adding, "Her sparkle will never be replaced."

The tragedy took place on a night not unlike any other.

Lauren had been in-line skating by herself sometime between 8 and 10 p.m. Thursday, police said, when she was struck by a large vehicle and knocked off the road.

There was no sign of the motorist who hit her, and police began a hunt for a Chevrolet pickup truck or SUV that was leaking coolant and had a damaged front.

"It was quite an extensive search," said Halton Regional Police Staff Sgt. Don Cousens.

Just before 7 a.m. Friday, police located the vehicle at Halton County Inn on Sixth Line, as well as the owner of the vehicle.

Stephen Alchin, 34, a former Halton Hills resident now of no fixed address, has been charged with criminal negligence causing death, failing to remain and drug possession.

Cousens confirmed that Lauren was found by her dad at about 10:40 p.m. Resuscitation efforts by Cooper and emergency services were unsuccessful. Lauren was pronounced dead at Milton District Hospital.

"It's a very tragic situation. It's impossible to imagine what the family's going through. For a father to find his daughter in such a state... no amount of training can prepare (us) for such a horrible scene," Cousens said.

Cooper expressed his frustration that the 80 km/h speed limit on Second Line might as well be 120 km/h, the way people drive. Guelph Line is currently closed from 15 to 20 Sideroads, meaning drivers are now taking Second Line, increasing the traffic outside their home. Poor street lighting adds to the dangerous situation, he said.

Cooper urged Town planners to consider the safety of rural roads as Milton continues to develop, explaining many neighbours are now afraid to let their children and teens ride their bikes outside.

Lauren, along with her parents and 20-year-old sister, Nicola, immigrated to the United States from England in 1998 and settled in Milton two years ago.

Lauren had recently been hired full time at Tiny Tim Developmental School, Georgetown Campus, after working for almost a year as an after-school student.

"She was really great with kids," said daycare supervisor Lyndsay Slater, adding, "The kids and the parents are having a really hard time (dealing with her death)."

With most of the children around six years old, it's hard for them to comprehend what's happened, Slater said.

"Some of them get it, some of them don't," she said.

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