

Hit and run accused is released on bail

STEPHANIE THIESSEN
Special to The IFP

A man charged in the July 13 hit and run death of 18-year-old Lauren Cooper was released on bail Thursday.

Stephen Alchin, 34, formerly of Halton Hills, appeared for a bail hearing at the Ontario Court of Justice in Milton.

He faces a charge of criminal negligence causing death—which carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment—as well as charges of failing to remain and drug possession.

Alchin, who wore green camouflage shorts and a dark green jacket, didn't react nor glance at his family when Justice of the Peace Prior Bonas read his decision, but his mother, Joanna, and older brother, Roger, let out an audible sigh of relief.

The Georgetown residents were designated as Alchin's sureties, and stand to lose \$50,000 each should Alchin violate any of the conditions imposed by Bonas.

These conditions include that he live with his mother and report to police weekly. He must seek and maintain employment, not operate any motor vehicles and not purchase or consume non-prescription drugs or alcohol. He must remain in his mother's house between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., unless he's with one of his sureties, and he had to surrender his passport. Any contact with the victim's family is forbidden, and Alchin must stay at least 500 metres away from the victim's home at all times. A publication ban prevents the reporting of any evidence presented in court as well as the justice's reasons for granting bail.

Cooper was struck by a vehicle while she was rollerblading between 8 and 10 p.m. She was discovered by her father lying in a ditch close to their Second Line home, just north of No. 15 Sideroad, about 10:40 p.m. She was pronounced dead at Milton District Hospital.

Alchin, of no fixed address, was arrested at Halton Country Inn on Sixth Line in Nassagaweya just before 7 a.m. the next day.



LAUREN COOPER



Halton Hills firefighters emerge from a home on Eden Place Friday morning after responding to a call from a neighbour at 4:20 a.m. No one was home at the time of the blaze which spread from the basement to the second floor. Damage is estimated at \$200,000 and the cause is still under investigation.
Photo by Eamonn Maher

Eden Place fire damage hits \$200,000

No one was injured in an early morning fire at an Eden Place, Georgetown home Friday that caused \$200,000 damage.

Halton Hills firefighters responded to the home after a neighbour who had heard the smoke alarm and seen thick smoke coming from the home, called 911 at approximately 4:20 a.m.

When firefighters arrived they were met with thick, heavy smoke, and were unsure if the occupants were home. When they entered the house they saw fire coming up the basement stairs.

A fire crew took control of the blaze that had spread to the first and second floors of the home, while other firefighters searched for occupants. It was soon confirmed no one was home.

A spokesperson for the fire department said temperatures in the home were extremely high and, coupled with the smoke and humidity, firefighters found conditions very difficult to work in.

The cause of the fire is undetermined.

Pesticide use best left to municipalities, says Region

Continued from pg. 1

Pesticide Alternatives for Milton, or PAM, also asked the Region to take stronger action on the cosmetic pesticide issue.

The group recently petitioned Milton council to implement a bylaw to restrict the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes on private property.

Councillors went on to make their own comments and ask the residents a variety of questions, which led to some heated exchanges.

While Burlington Councillor Rick Craven suggested the cosmetic pesticide ban needs to be handled by the Province and that a "patchwork" of different bylaws across Ontario won't be effective, Orton said she thought that's an attempt to "pass the buck."

Tensions mounted as Craven asked Orton, "How do you know we have a (pesticide) problem?"

She told him that she has a chemical sensitivity, so every time her neighbour sprayed pesticides, she had a seizure.

She went on to say she doesn't understand why Craven doesn't know more about the issue, since he's a councillor.

Chairman Joyce Savoline then jumped in, angrily telling Orton that her answers are "disrespectful."

"You're being very flip and rude," she said. "Please don't do that anymore."

Orton apologized and said she didn't

mean to be rude, but Savoline retorted, "I think you did."

The chairman later said she doesn't think the Region would ever enact a pesticide bylaw because each municipality wants to craft their own based on their values, local needs, etc.

Halton Medical Officer of Health Dr. Bob Nosal agreed, saying, "It is the call of the local municipalities to determine how they're going to deal with this issue."

PAM president Erika Ristok suggested that the Region could encourage the four local municipalities to put bylaws in place.

"We'd like Halton to take a stronger stand in guiding municipalities," she said.

Halton Hills Councillor Clark Somerville believes pesticide bylaws should be handled by the municipalities.

"I think it's at the best level," said Somerville. The number one reason he said was, "we (the towns and cities) own the parks."

"The region is not in the recreation business," he said. "We have more roadsides."

He said the Town of Halton Hills adheres to a "prudent avoidance" policy with pesticide use on town property. He explained pesticides are not applied by Town staff unless they believe they have to be used. Before they can use them, however, they have to go to town council to get permission.



CLARK SOMERVILLE

Town to give more notice of spraying

The Town of Halton Hills has changed its pesticide spraying policy so that all school principals, parent councils and daycare operators will be informed before any spraying is done in parks adjacent to their schools.

The principals and operators will be requested to send home notice of the spraying to the parents of the students.

Spraying will also not take place when children are present—during the times students are walking to and from school, for example.

Although the Town publicizes in the newspaper when it plans to spray parks, a parent complained to council members that that wasn't good enough.

Town staff will also review the signage in parks about the spraying to make it more understandable to children entering the park.

The policy currently reads that spraying will not be done within 15 metres of schools, daycare centres, play structures and watercourses.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer

A report from Nosal was presented to the committee and council to update councillors on the issue of reducing pesticide use for non-essential purposes.

The report says the health department continues to support a "prudent avoidance" approach to pesticides.

"Prudent avoidance means relying on natural control and preventative measures and using chemical pesticides only when all other measures fail," the report reads.

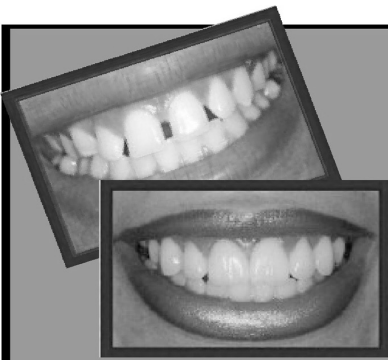
"Halton will continue to promote a policy of prudent avoidance and work with its partners in building on the success of the Naturally Green education and awareness-raising program in the months ahead."

Halton CAO Brent Marshall went on to outline the Region's current environmentally-friendly initiatives, such as the fact it discontinued spraying pesticides along rural roadsides 20 years ago and on all Region properties four years ago.

In the end, regional council approved having Savoline write to the federal and provincial governments urging them to take a leadership role on the issue of restricting non-essential and cosmetic pesticide use.

It also endorsed getting staff to report back on a budget and business plan to continue with the Naturally Green initiative on a cost-share basis amongst the Region and its four municipalities, focusing on prudent avoidance and awareness strategies.

—With files from Lisa Tallyn, staff writer



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