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FRIDAY...

The Town held its annual clean-up day and 20-minute makeover this past weekend. See Friday's edition to find out how many residents took part.

For breaking news go to: www.independentfreepress.com



Halton Regional Police identification officer Mark Freeman takes photos of the accident scene after a helicopter crashed in an open field behind St. Catherine of Alexandria School in Georgetown South. A Georgetown flight instructor and an Acton student were injured in the crash which occurred Saturday afternoon. Photo by Graham Paine

Pilot error blamed

Two hurt in helicopter crash

LISA TALLYN
Staff Writer

Preliminary investigation by the Transportation Safety Board into a helicopter crash in Georgetown South Saturday afternoon shows the cause was pilot error.

Ken Webster, the board's regional senior investigator, said the investigation found no mechanical deficiencies with the chopper.

"Human factors issue," said Webster, when asked what caused the crash sending the pilot/instructor and passenger to hospital with

serious injuries and numerous fractures and facial cuts.

"The control of the helicopter was lost," said Webster.

Pilot/instructor of the helicopter, Gary McMahon of Georgetown, was performing demonstration flights in a field behind St. Catherine of Alexandria Catholic School on Barber Dr. when the helicopter crashed just before 2 p.m.

The passenger's name was not released.

Webster said the accident happened during a "hover exercise" about 10 to 15 feet above the ground.

The crash was witnessed by Barber Dr. resident Steve Harquail, who was standing on a mound of dirt with McMahon's father about 100 yards from the helicopter. Harquail had spoken to the pilot earlier and was waiting his turn to go for a ride.

He was chatting with the pilot's father and said the noise of the engine made him look out of the corner of his eye.

"It was very shocking," said Harquail. "The tail seemed to go down first. Then it came back up. The helicopter turned sideways and went into the ground."

See ONLOOKERS, pg. 4

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