



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Got it covered, mom

Five-year-old Ashley Richardson proudly displays her ink-covered hands, after being fingerprinted, as mom Lorie holds her daughter's ID passport. The service was provided at Zellers Saturday, as part of a child safety initiative by Block Parents of Canada and Polaroid.

He tearfully recalls discovering body

By IRENE GENTLE
Special to The Champion

In dramatic testimony Thursday, a witness broke down in tears as he described finding the lifeless form of his father-in-law Fred Sheppard in an outhouse on his Steeles Ave. property.

Mr. Sheppard, 77, was found shot to death in March, 1995. Keith Madeley, 25, a former boyfriend of Mr. Sheppard's granddaughter Lori, is standing trial in Milton for the murder.

After more than an hour of intense testimony Brian Gagnon lapsed into sobs as he recalled going to the Sheppard property with his son-in-law James Harrison to check on Mr. Sheppard, who had been depressed and ailing.

"We pulled in and his car was there," Mr. Gagnon told the court. "I told Jamie (Mr. Harrison) to check the sheds. I thought maybe he'd fallen and couldn't get up."

Mr. Gagnon, who is married to the victim's daughter Susan, told the jury that on that night Mr. Sheppard's normally over-heated house was freezing.

"It was ice cold. The stove hadn't been on for a while," said Mr. Gagnon. Mr. Sheppard had no heat or running water in the home and used a wood stove for warmth.

Mr. Gagnon told the jury he lit the stove before going to search the grounds, including an outhouse.

"The door was latched, which means it was locked from the outside. I didn't think anyone was in it. I opened the door and there was Fred," said a tearful Mr. Gagnon as several people attending the trial also sobbed. "Fred was laying on the board with his pants down. He was laying on his side, all kind of crouched up."

Mr. Gagnon also told the court it was possible the accused had Mr. Sheppard's bank card and personal identification number in his possession March 2-3 of 1995.

A series of withdrawals had been made from the Sheppard account on those dates.

"I needed to borrow \$40 and Fred had no cash so he lent me the card. I sent Keith and Lori to pick it up for me, in late February," said Mr.

Gagnon. "I had the card a couple of days and then I asked Keith to return it to Fred."

Mr. Gagnon said he never saw the card again.

Mr. Gagnon also testified he had not approved of his then 14-year-old daughter Lori's relationship with the accused but let him move in with their family anyway.

"I wasn't pleased. I didn't want to have anything to do with him," said Mr. Gagnon. "I just didn't want Lori to go away. I figured this way I could at least watch."

On Friday, an ill defense lawyer caused another delay in a trial plagued by interruptions.

The cross-examination of Mr. Gagnon has been postponed until today.

However, the jury was told before adjourning Friday that blood found on the sleeve of a leather jacket linked to Lori Gagnon has been found to belong to Mr. Sheppard.

"It is now admitted as a fact that the blood found on the left sleeve of the USA jacket is definitely the blood of Fred Sheppard," said Crown attorney Brian O'Mara.

Clerk held up at store

Halton Regional Police are searching for the man who robbed M&M Meat Shops in Milton Thursday night.

Entering the Main Street outlet at 8:45 p.m., the masked suspect produced a gun and told a female clerk to open the cash register.

She did as she was told and he reached over and scooped up bills and coins before exiting the rear door.

A search of the area by officers was unsuccessful.

The clerk was not injured and no shots were fired.

The suspect is described as a white male 20 to 30 years old of average height and with a thin build. He was wearing a black ski mask and grey sweatshirt and brandishing a black, long barreled handgun.

Anyone with information on this incident is asked to call detectives in Milton at 878-5511 ext. 2415 or Crime Stoppers at 825-8477.

NEWSLINES

Youths charged

Two local boys were arrested Thursday night following the shake-down of a third youth, according to Halton Regional Police.

The incident, in which a 13-year-old was threatened and robbed of a small sum of money, occurred at 8:30 p.m. near the corner of Derry Road and Ontario Street.

The victim was not injured and the suspects were located later a short distance away, without incident.

Both 15-year-olds were charged with robbery while one faces additional counts of failure to comply and uttering threats.

They'll appear in Milton Court March 20.

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