

In murder trial

The defence testimony ends after only two days

By IRENE GENTLE
Special to the Champion

A Milton murder trial that has spanned almost eight weeks, called upon close to 50 witnesses and been beset by delays and interruptions came to an abrupt end last Thursday.

After calling only five witnesses over two days the defence rested its case in the murder trial of Keith Madely.

She's cool under fire

By STEVE LeBLANC
Special to The Champion

Morgen Balletto learned many lessons at university, but one that came outside the classroom has probably proved to be the most valuable.

Her parents' Thomas Street home was saved from possible ruin last Wednesday morning, due in large part to her experience with a student house fire at the University of Western Ontario.

After her father discovered an upstairs blaze in brother Nicholas' bedroom and cut it down to size with a fire extinguisher, the 24-year-old recent graduate quickly remembered to shut all nearby doors before evacuating the house.

"That's the first thing I learned and it came right back to me," Morgen said. "I really wasn't that nervous."

Both Mr. Balletto and Milton Fire Department spokesman Mark Cross agree this precautionary measure probably kept the fire from spreading.

"It (closing doors) was likely the biggest thing that contained the fire. I was impressed at how Morgen handled herself," said her father.

Morgen was treated for smoke inhalation at Milton District Hospital, mostly as a precaution, and released later in the day.

The Balletto family was awake downstairs when the smoke alarm went off just after midnight and at first they thought the fire was a result of a boiling pot in the kitchen.

It turned out to be an electrical fire, which local firefighters battled back within a half hour of arrival.

"I've got to give a lot of credit to the fire department," said Mr. Balletto. "For volunteer firefighters to get woken up in the middle of the night, they had a great attitude. I think that's probably half the battle right there."

The Crown alleges that Mr. Madely, 25, killed Fred Sheppard, 77, who was found shot to death in the out-house of his ramshackle Steeles Avenue property.

Mr. Madeley was dating Mr. Sheppard's granddaughter Lori at the time of the murder.

The defence's last witness testified that Mr. Sheppard's son-in-law Brian Gagnon joked about receiving \$1 million dollars for doing the killing.

Sandra Watson testified that Mr. Gagnon, who is her uncle, arrived at her house at 5:30 p.m. April 4 with his son-in-law Jamie Harrison.

"Brian came into my house and he entered through the kitchen. On his way through he was talking about \$1 million. I asked what million dollars he was talking about," testified Ms Watson.

"He said the million dollars (family friend) John Gundy had given him to kill Fred Sheppard."

Ms Watson testified Mr. Gagnon had been joking and was drinking when he made the claim. She also told the court Mr. Gagnon had later in the evening denied doing the killing.

"He'd been drinking when he came in, he was drinking on the way to my house and he was drinking in my house. He said the cops had just started leaving him alone a couple of days ago. He said he was sick of all the questions and that he didn't kill Fred," said Ms Watson.

"He was quiet. It seemed like he was feeling sorry for himself. Like he was sad he had to go through all this."

Crown and defence attorneys are scheduled to begin their address to the jury on Monday. Jury deliberations could begin as early as Tuesday afternoon or Wednesday morning.

Ironically the deliberations will begin almost three years to the day after Mr. Sheppard's death, which was said to be between March 1 and 7, 1995.

Deoni blasts his colleagues

By CAROL BALDWIN
Special to The Champion

Indecision by some of his colleagues over setting next year's school calendar sparked harsh words from veteran Milton Trustee Joe Deoni at last week's Halton Catholic District School Board committee meeting.

"I've never seen so many hypocrites in all my life," Mr. Deoni angrily stated during the meeting.

His anger was directed at trustees who were asking about the public board's decision on its school year

• see TICKED on page 3



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Cat got your tongue

Katy Bennett, 8, showed off her cat face at the Family Fun Day festivities Sunday morning. The events at Glen Eden included donut eating contests and egg tosses. For more photos, see page 14.

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