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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Investigators examine the charred remains of a single-engine plane that crashed in the Milton Limestone quarry Tuesday, claiming the lives of a senior couple from Stoney Creek.

## Plane crash claims two lives

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
*The Champion*

A fiery plane crash at the Milton Limestone quarry left no chance of survival for an elderly man and woman returning home Tuesday.

Remains of the single-engine Cessna float aircraft went undiscovered for almost a day until a quarry employee — conducting a site patrol — stumbled upon the scene at approximately 1 p.m. Wednesday.

"The crash was not survivable," said Sergeant Frank Phillips, spokesman for Halton Regional Police. "The aircraft was completely destroyed."

Though still unconfirmed by police, victims of the crash — likely weather-related — are believed to be Stoney Creek residents Joseph Gabany and June Wright.

Both in their 70s, the two were on their way back from a week-long visit to Ms Wright's family cottage on the French River (near Georgian Bay) when the plane nose-dived to the ground, broke apart and burst into flames.

Due to heavy rain and fog Tuesday and the sheer

size of the Steeles Avenue quarry site, employees and neighbouring residents neither heard nor saw the aircraft plummet.

"There's no activity right now in that part of the quarry," explained manager Bill Scott. "This isn't the first crash in the quarry but I wasn't around for the other one (approximately 10 years ago)."



Quarry manager Bill Scott

The site is on the brow of the Niagara Escarpment overlooking downtown Milton.

Ms Wright and Mr. Gabany — a World War II pilot with the Royal Canadian Air Force and volunteer with the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum in Hamilton — were longtime friends

who had been dating for the past year, according to Ms Wright's grandson Jonathan Watson.

"They were having a great time," he remarked. "They had flown many times together."

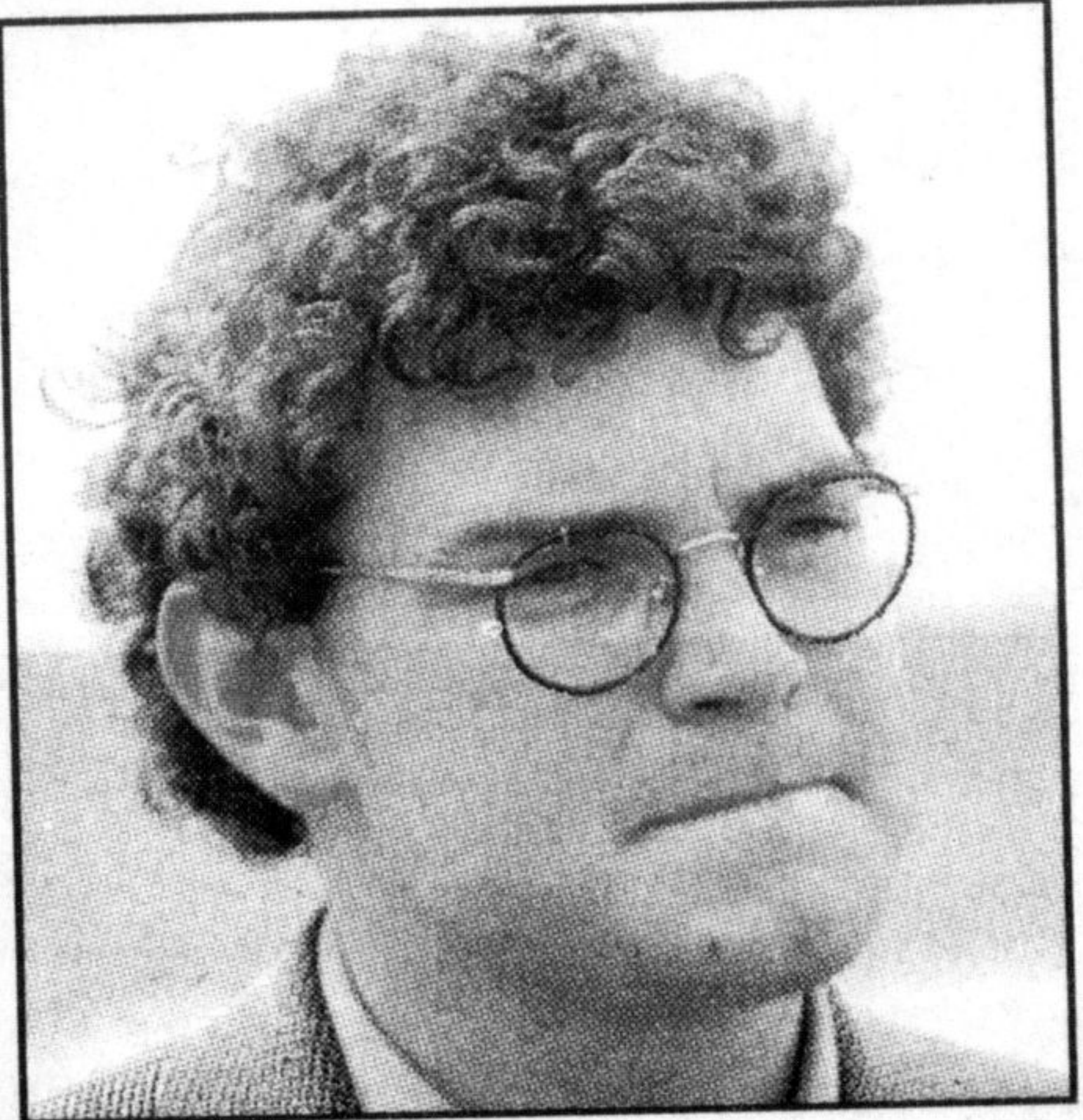
At the quarry Wednesday afternoon, the 22-year-old said he was fairly certain weather was the cause of the crash, adding that Mr. Gabany "was an experienced, accomplished pilot."

National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigator Rick Pilson confirmed that rain and fog were undoubtedly the chief factors associated with the crash.

Part of a four-member inquiry team Wednesday, he suggested that Mr. Gabany attempted to fly under the storm and that the sudden rise of the escarpment caused him to lose control.

It is unknown whether Mr. Gabany had tried to land at the Burlington Air Park — just a few minutes away — or if he had activated the emergency locator transmitter before impact.

The bodies were removed from the charred wreckage late Wednesday afternoon, with autopsies expected to be performed yesterday.



Jonathan Watson

## Tragic irony for student

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
*The Champion*

Jonathan Watson expected to help report the news, not become part of it.

But that's exactly what happened to the CITY-TV student intern Wednesday afternoon when it became evident that his grandmother, Stoney Creek native June Wright, had perished in a plane crash at the Milton Limestone quarry.

"This is half story, half tragedy for me," said the 22-year-old, just a few weeks into his summer placement. "This is awful."

Accompanying a CITY-TV news crew to the Steeles Avenue site shortly after the wreckage was discovered, Mr. Watson said he remained hopeful about his grand-

• see VICTIM on page 18

**NEWSLINES**

**Laptops taken**

Police are investigating a break-in at Nortel on Market Dr. late June 30.

Thieves broke into the company minutes before midnight by prying open the front doors, said Detective Sergeant Jackie Gordon of the Halton Regional Police.

Five Dell laptop computers valued at \$30,000 were taken from the building.

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