

They're peaceful and quiet, but are they safe?



Milton's rural roads can be risky place for cyclists

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

By FANNIE SUNSHINE
The Champion

For several horrific moments, Garnett Abbey thought he was going to die. The Burlington cyclist was riding south on Walker's Line, near No. 2 Sideroad, in late April when a pick-up truck driver pulled his vehicle in front of him, slammed on the brakes and watched as Mr. Abbey flew into the truck bed.

"It was like a scene from a movie," the 39-year-old recalled. Mr. Abbey is one of many cyclists who frequently ride in Milton's rural parts because of the variety of flat, steep and winding roadways.

The Hamilton Cycling Club member said he trains four to five days a week in the area for three to six hours a day.

"I always train with others, sometimes with four or six or sometimes 40. The roads in Milton aren't as busy as some of the other roads in the Greater (Toronto) Area."

Although Mr. Abbey said he's been confronted by scary situations before when riding, this incident was the most serious.

"I flew over my handlebars and fell into the truck. It all happened so fast I didn't have time to stop or move. He kept driving for about a minute before he stopped."

Mr. Abbey was one of the lucky ones. He managed to walk away with only a bruised shoulder.

But others aren't as fortunate.

On August 14, Etobicoke cyclist Jacek Wierzbicki, 41, was killed by a hit-and-run driver on Tremaine Road, just north of Derry Road. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

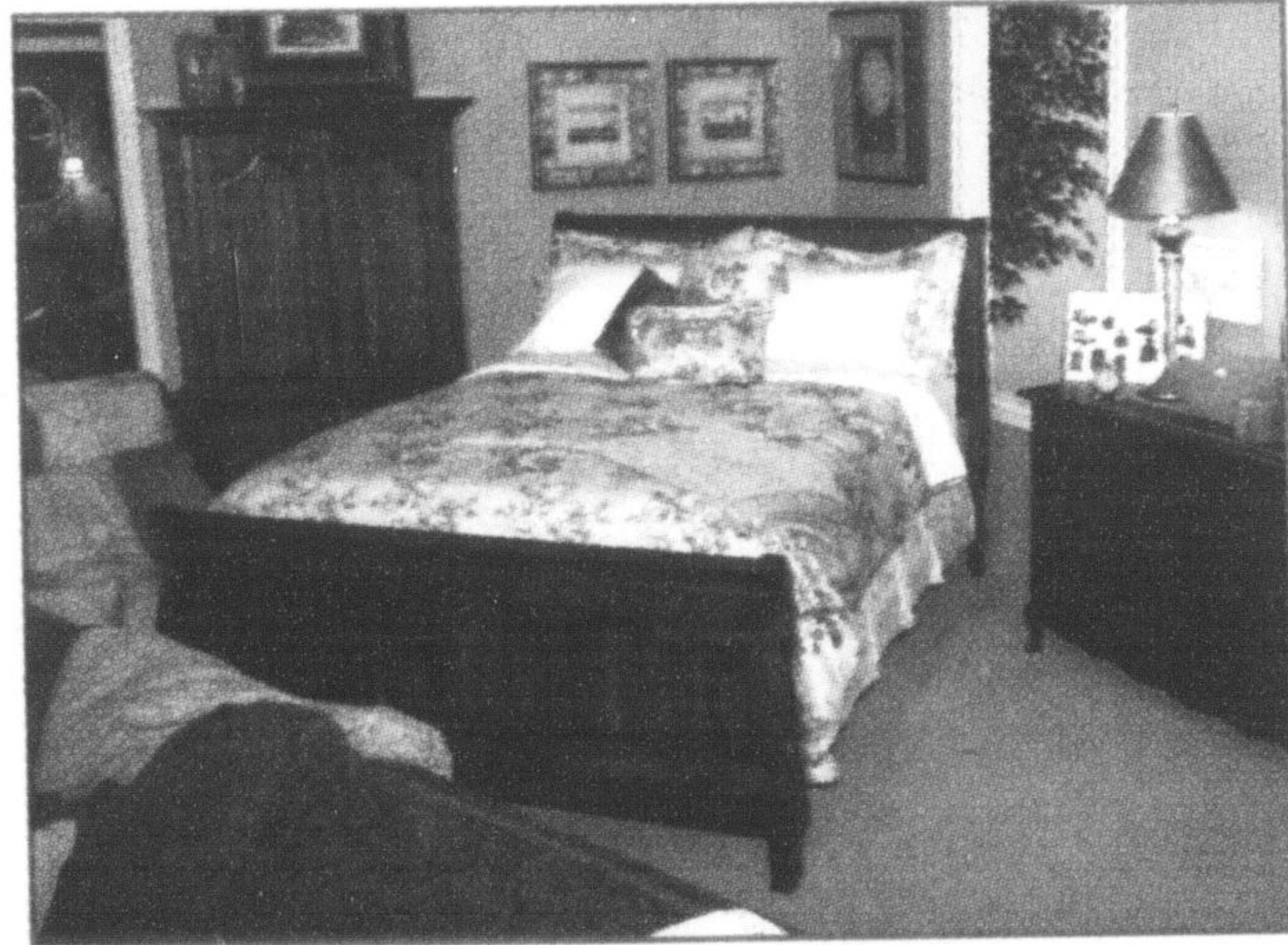
Brampton resident Paul Carroll, 30, pleaded guilty to careless driving causing death and leaving the scene of an accident. He'll be sentenced August 26.

And with summer before us, more and more people will be exercising outdoors, Mr. Abbey continued.

"There are a lot of people riding because cycling is a popular sport. The motorists should be treating us like we were another vehicle," he said, adding he regularly has gravel sprayed at him

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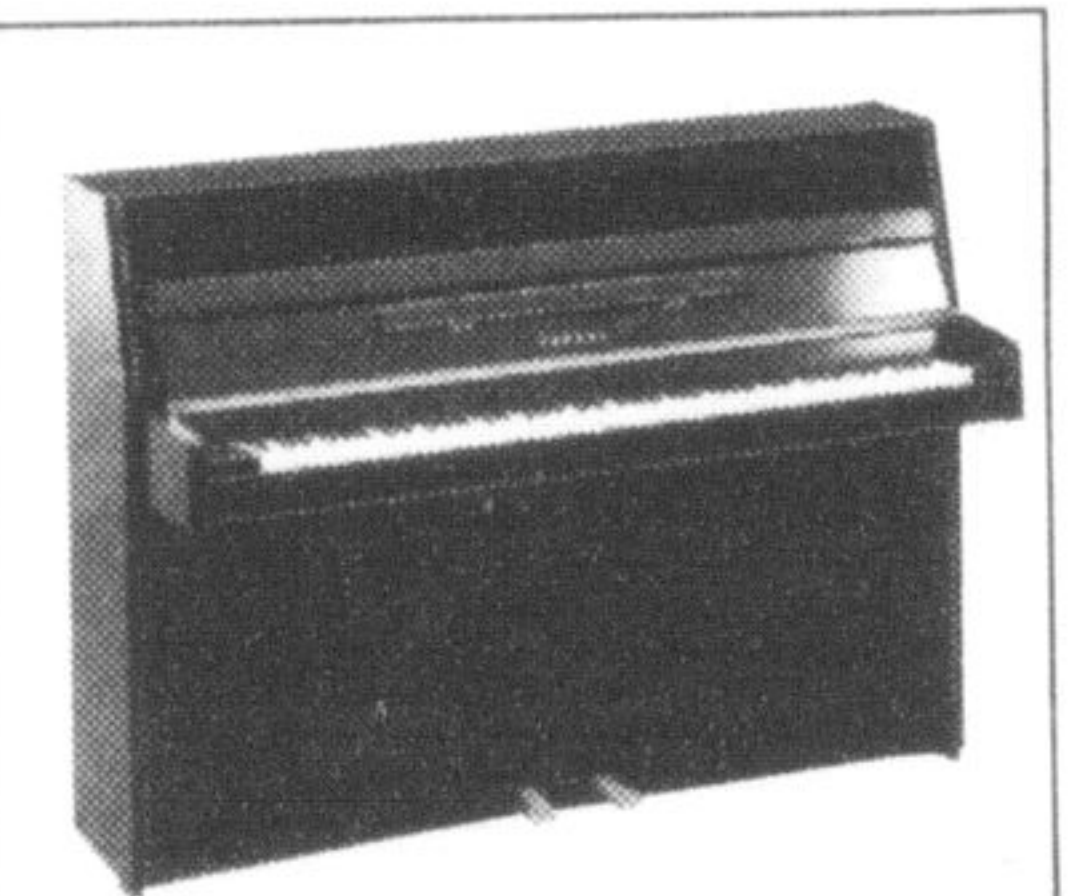
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