

Family devastated over damage to memorial

By MELANIE HENNESSEY
The Champion

For Milton native Adam Pickering, the Mill Pond has always been a special place. It's where he and younger brother Dustin Kruyff spent their childhood days fishing and boating.

After Dustin died unexpectedly four years ago at the age of 18, Mr. Pickering and his family had a memorial tree planted — which they bought and donated to the Town — and a plaque placed in Livingstone Park, next to the pond.

Now, they stop by about once a week to water the sugar maple and remember a sibling, a son, an uncle and a friend simply described as a "big-hearted, extraordinary person."

But the place that once brought so much happiness and solace has become a sore spot for Mr. Pickering and his family now that the plaque has been damaged on more than one occasion.

"It's (the plaque) only two-and-a-half years old and it's all banged up," he said, pointing out the scratches on the surface of the plaque and the chips in the marble stone it sits on. "I think it's just a blatant lack of respect for a memorial. I'm devastated."

Mr. Pickering alleges it's the Town of Milton's lawn mowing machinery that has caused the damage. He also claims it's the same equipment that's sprayed the mulch he and his family placed at the base of the tree around the park.

While Town staff has repaired the memorial in the past with some caulking — something Mr. Pickering called "disgusting" — he's now calling on the Town to replace the plaque and resurface the marble to return it to its original condition.

"I'm very concerned with the destruction of the plaque," he said. "I'm worried that they're (Town staff) getting too close to the trees with the lawn mower."

Milton Manager of Operations Doug Thompson told The Champion he's waiting for an answer from the Town's community services department when it comes to restoring the memorial, since operations staff act as contractors for that division.

While Director of Community Services Jennifer Reynolds said the Town doesn't have a formal policy to deal with the plaque damage, she said, "I think we would wish to work with the person to replace the plaque."

She added she also thinks the Town would like to discuss alternatives for

installing the plaque with the family.

Mr. Thompson said he's not sure if it's the Town's vehicles that have caused the damage to the memorial, but it's being investigated.

"There's a possibility it could've been someone else in the park," he said. "There's ATVs, four-wheelers... even cars get parked in the park."

While lawn mowers are used for park maintenance, Mr. Thompson said weed trimmers are also used around trees and stones.

"It could even be that a stone came from a mower and hit the plaque," he said.

He emphasized that there's been no disrespect from the Town for the memorial.

"Nobody would intentionally try to damage something," he said.

For Mr. Pickering and his family, a resolution to the messy situation can't come soon enough.

"I can't tell you how much this tree and plaque mean to us," he said, his voice full of emotion. "This is the only place that we have to come to mourn and grieve. This has a lot of significance to us."

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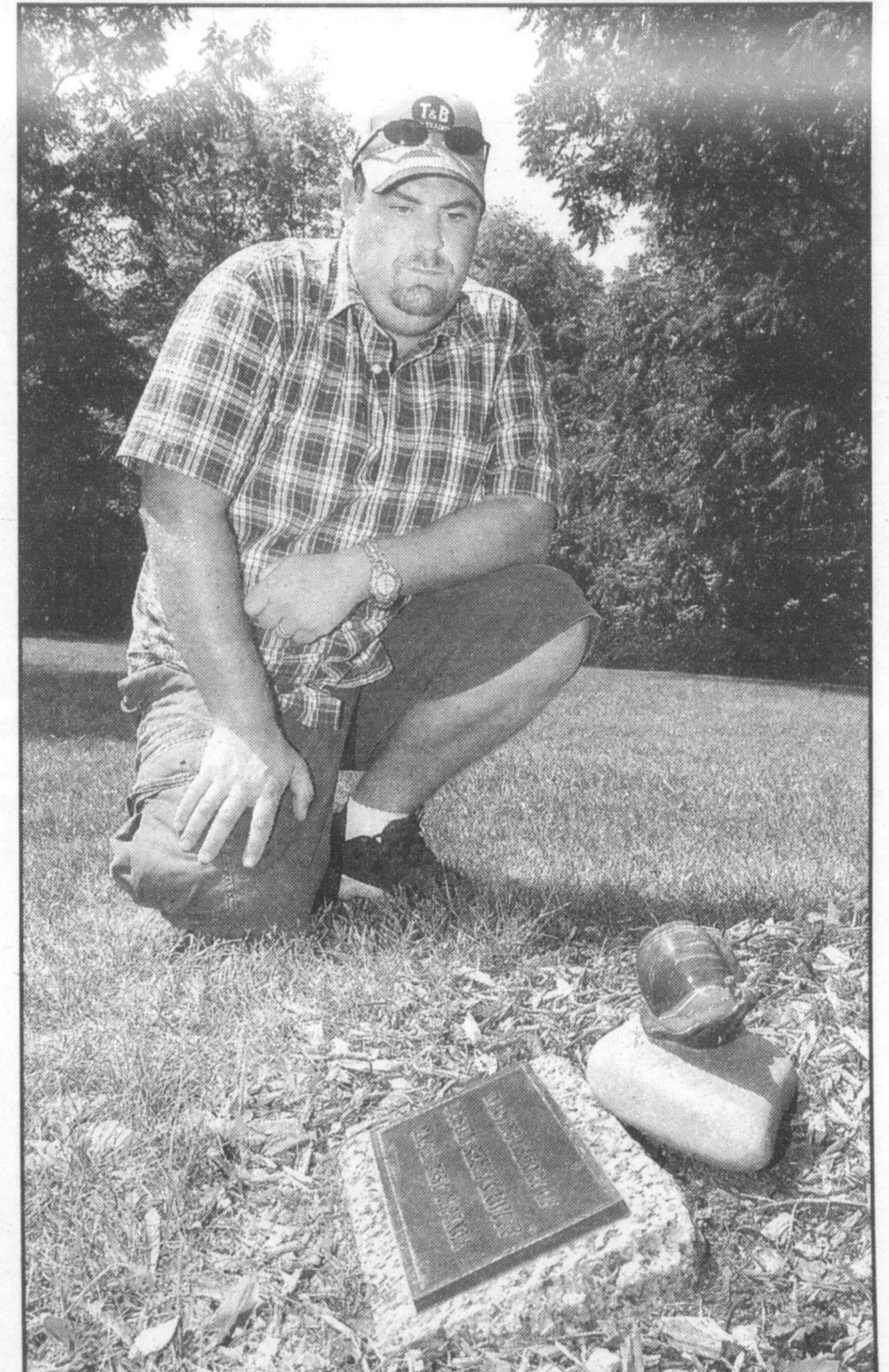


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Adam Pickering looks in disgust at the damaged plaque in front of the tree planted in Livingstone Park in memory of his brother, Dustin Kruyff.

Web site shows West Nile virus activity

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of West Nile virus in Halton this season, recent heat waves have created perfect conditions for mosquito activity and population growth.

Residents are being encouraged to protect themselves from mosquito bites by

avoiding areas with high mosquito populations, using approved repellents, covering exposed skin while outdoors and by removing any standing water outside their homes.

Mosquitoes can transmit the virus to humans after becoming infected by feed-

ing on the blood of birds carrying the virus.

To report a dead bird sighting, standing water, or for more information about West Nile virus, call the region at 905-825-6000 or visit www.region.halton.on.ca/health. The Web site includes maps showing the location of West Nile virus activity.



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Congratulations
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<p>24" Norco Bike Donated by: Cyclepath Winner: Dawn Eglitts</p>	<p>Weight Loss Certificate Donated by: Herbal One Winner: Garry Scisizzi</p>	<p>Designer Water Cooler Donated by: The Water Depot Winner: Teresa Wagget</p>
<p>Snowboard with Bindings Donated by: Boardtopia Winner: Otha Rae</p>	<p>4 Blue Jays Tickets Donated by: The Stockall Family Winner: Greg Witjes</p>	<p>5 Piece Tupperware Set Donated by: Helena Church Winner: Florence Robinson</p>
<p>24" Norco Bike Donated by: Spokes 'N' Slopes Winner: Tom Marchment</p>	<p>2 Child Bike Trailer Donated by: Stoneridge Sales Winner: Katie Struck</p>	<p>Children's Bike Donated by: The Scisizzi Family Winner: Graham Redshaw</p>
<p>Harrop Cottage Print Donated by: Harrop Art Gallery and Framing Winner: Norm Senra</p>	<p>THANK YOU to the companies, individuals & volunteers who donated prizes and their time to make this event a success!</p>	
		<p>Giant 6" Party Sub Donated by: 24hr Subway (Market Drive) Winner: Christopher Mikulic</p>