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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

LET'S PLAY BALL: Harmony Deslauriers, 5, playfully sticks her head through the opening of a baseball skills cut-out. The young t-ball player, who can't wait for the start of baseball season, was at the Milton Girls Baseball Association's table as part of Sports Registration Day Saturday at Milton Mall. The league offers girls baseball from t-ball to women's. Another registration event will be held tomorrow at Wal-Mart.

Emotional testimony starts impaired trial

By Stephanie Hounsell
 CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

It was a scene of unimaginable horror.

A policeman on the witness stand was brought to tears as he described the gruesome sight he faced as a rookie officer responding to a call on a bitterly cold winter night.

At 3 a.m. February 23, 2007, Dwain Newham was the first officer on the scene of a collision that saw a Nissan torn open after it slammed into the back of a stationary tractor-trailer, an Oakville court heard.

"It was a horrible scene. There was a male..." Newham said, his voice trailing off.

The Steeles Avenue/Fifth Line collision — on the border of Milton and Halton Hills — left one man dead, 33-year-old Jason Wood of Hornby, and Miltonian Lori McKinley seriously injured.

A third person, 31-year-old local resident Dylan Palmer, was uninjured.

Later that day, Palmer was charged with impaired driving causing death, impaired driving causing bodily harm, dangerous driving causing death, dangerous driving causing bodily harm, and having over the legal limit of alcohol in his blood.

He pleaded not guilty.

Tuesday and Wednesday were the first days of Palmer's trial, which is being heard by Judge Stephen Brown.

In her overview, Crown Attorney Laurie Jago told the court that Palmer, McKinley and Wood had consumed alcohol first at the Hardball Café on Regional Road 25, and then at Charley Fitzwhiskey's on Ontario Street before heading east along Steeles where the tragedy took place.

Three officers and the driver of the tractor-trailer took to the stand this week. They each testified that at the scene of the accident they were led to

believe by various people that Palmer hadn't been driving, but that it was a fourth man.

But after an extensive search using police canine dogs and the fire department's infrared technology, police came up empty-handed, court heard.

Newham told the court when he realized he couldn't do anything for the male on the road, he went to the woman. She was being comforted by a man he later found out was Palmer, her common-law spouse.

Other officers arrived, and Newham was directed to search the surrounding area for a fourth person.

"I was looking for blood, footprints, anything to indicate someone had wandered from the scene," he said.

But he didn't find anything.

Court heard Palmer told him he was a rear passenger in the car and that one of Wood's friends had been driving, but

* see ACCUSED on page A4

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ASK DOLLY

Dear Dolly, Please write all our clients and thank them for the Christmas goodies they brought in to our hospital. Tell them that they are all very kind, and that the pies, chocolates and treats were very much appreciated. Signed "Your Mom, Debbie"

Dear Humans: Hmmm! So why did I not get even a sniff of the Christmas goodies? Actually, my Mom was being kind not giving me treats. Chocolate can be very poisonous to a dog, and it should never be given as a treat. Human food and treats can make you fat, then you get sore knees, hips, and dental disease, having to take a whole bunch of horrible medicine. I just hate going to the Vet, even though she is my MOM!! Signed "Dolly" Hawkins.

IF ONLY PETS COULD SPEAK.

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