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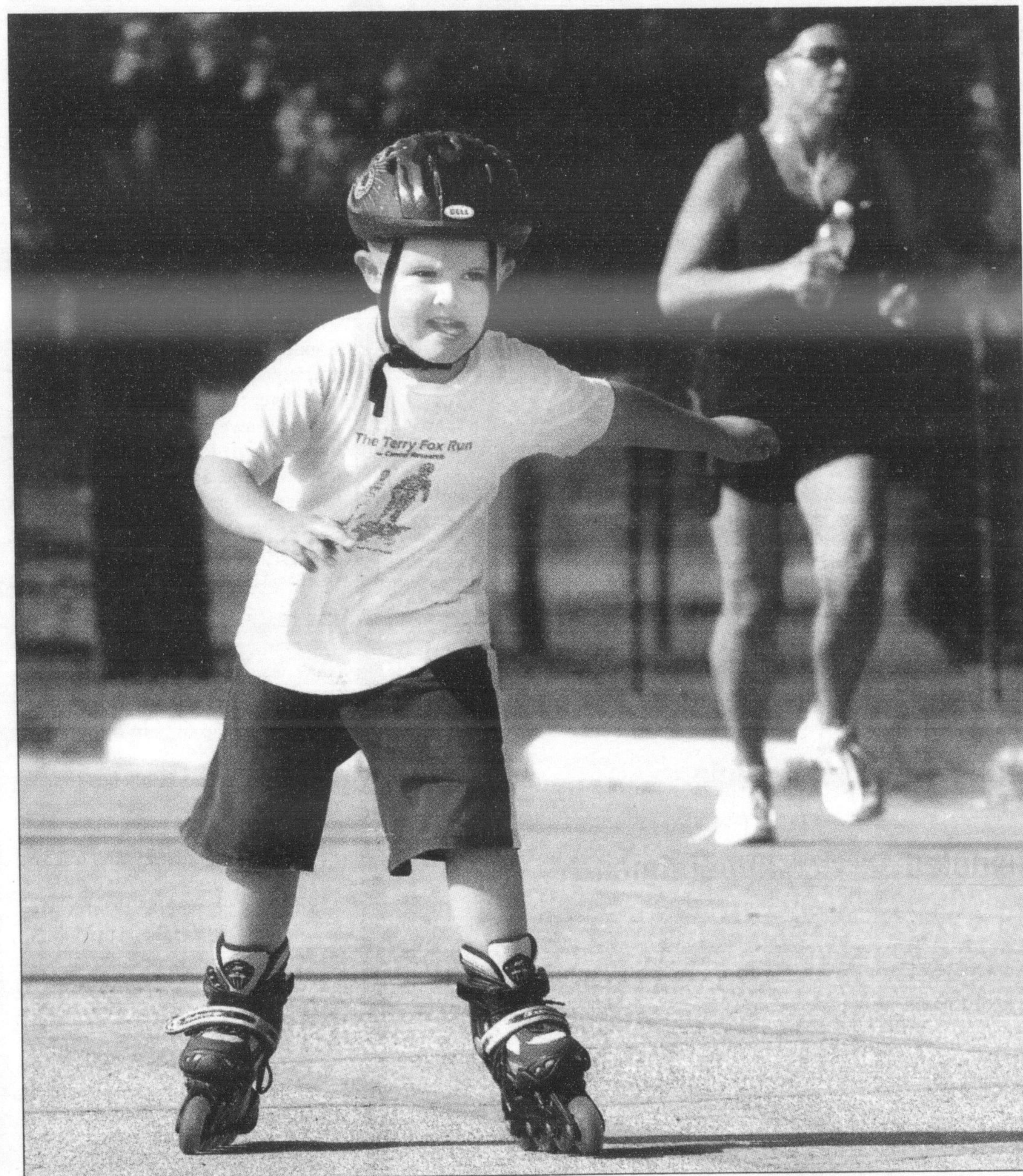
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A Metroland Media Group publication • Vol. 150 No. 54

Wednesday, September 16, 2009

44 Pages • \$1.00 (incl. G.S.T.)



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

BOUND AND DETERMINED: Hundreds came out for the 29th annual Terry Fox Run Sunday morning on the grounds of the E.C. Drury complex. Here, Joshua Keating, 5, covers the course on his Rollerblades. Over the years, the Milton event has raised \$650,000 for cancer research. See more photos from the event on page A5.

Family struggles to deal with loss

Court hears victim impact statements in teen's death

By Stephanie Hounsell
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Sleepless nights, listless days. Sometimes getting out of bed was too difficult with the knowledge her only sister was gone. And always there were the haunting images of Lauren's last moments.

"I re-live every second of what happened over and over, trying to make sense (of it)," said Nicola Cooper Monday morning in a heart-wrenching victim impact statement.

There were many tears as Nicola and her parents, Stuart and Deborah, addressed the court at a hearing to determine if the man convicted of leaving 18-year-old Lauren for dead at the side of the road will see jail time.

Halton Hills resident Stephen Alchin, 36, was found guilty in June by Justice Joseph Fragomeni of leaving the scene of an accident causing death.

Monday, the court heard from Crown attorney Craig Fraser, who asked for a prison sentence of 15 to 18 months, and defence lawyer Paul Stunt, who requested a conditional sentence without incarceration.

It was an emotional morning, with dozens of Lauren's friends

and family members in attendance to show their support.

Nicola, 23, a teacher in San Diego, told the court how hard it is to carry on, often struggling with guilt.

She recalled shopping road trips with her sister, jet skiing together and laughing so hard they could barely breathe.

"In the blink of an eye, this was all taken from us," Nicola said as she struggled to remain composed. "I miss my sister each and every day.

Deborah, too, spoke of the nightmare of the past three years.

"I awake every single morning to the realization that this is not a terribly bad dream," she said.

In the two years following her daughter's death, Deborah couldn't sleep, work or eat regular meals and more recently she has become paranoid that tragedy will again befall.

Lauren was struck from behind by Alchin's pick-up truck the night of July 13, 2006 as she rollerbladed on Second Line, steps from her house.

Alchin maintains he thought he hit a deer and that's why he didn't stop. But Fragomeni found Alchin knew he had hit a person or at least suspected it and yet continued driving to Halton Country Inn on Sixth Line where he was arrested the next morning.

Deborah told the court the bad memories of what happened just outside the family's home have

• see **SENTENCING** on page A9

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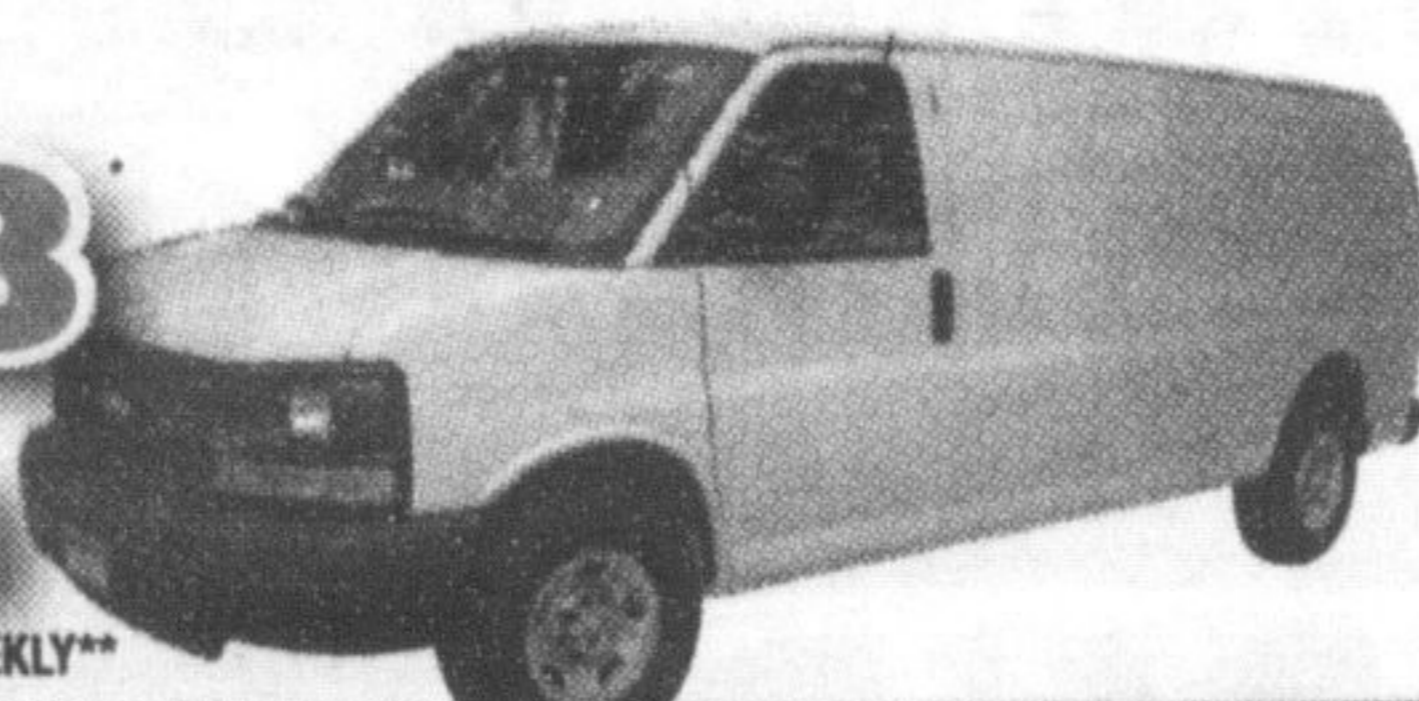
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