

"Without the Cancer Society, things would have been a lot harder for both John and I. We don't use all the services that are available, but it's sure nice to know they're out there if we need to tap into them."

- Elaine Zammit

Cancer Society helps Milton man battle against his illness

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
Special to The Champion

December 7, 1994 is a day John and Elaine Zammit will never forget.

That was the day Mr. Zammit was diagnosed with Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia. The bad news came just 24 hours after a biopsy of two small lumps discovered on the back of his head. Having put off a checkup for several weeks — much to the frustration of his wife — he finally accompanied their four-month old son Anthony to his immunization appointment and had the situation explored.

Their worst fears were realized when the bad news came in the very next day. "Being a nurse, I knew something was wrong because John has always been so healthy. When we got the news, I thought he was going to die," said Ms Zammit, who lost her mother to ovarian cancer in 1983.

Now for the good news.

It was only one month after being diagnosed with leukemia that Mr. Zammit went into remission, a condition he maintains today.

The 30-year-old Miltonian is now on the final stretch of a two-year treatment program and appears to be winning his battle with the disease.

And while he still has to contend with regular checkups, intensive treatments and of course the ever-present fear of a relapse — thankfully, he hasn't had to go through it alone.

Along with his wife, Mr. Zammit says he has received tremendous support from the North Halton Canadian Cancer Society Unit's Milton Branch — which is currently in the midst of its annual Cancer Month campaign.

"It's very comforting to think of all the support the Cancer Society has given me," he said.

The Milton branch, he said, provides him with transportation to and from his numerous appointments at

the Chedoke-McMaster Hospital in Hamilton — with volunteer drivers often waiting for hours to bring him back to his Childs Drive residence.

In addition to this, supplies are also donated for his regular dressing changes — required for his intravenous line.

And as the couple are quick to add, there are several other patient services available for them to tap into should they require it. These include help around the house with the Home Care Services

Board and the Living With Cancer support group that meets every other Thursday at St. Paul's United Church.

"Without the Cancer Society, things would have been a lot harder for both John and I. We don't use all the services that are available, but it's sure nice to know they're out there if we need to tap into them," said Ms Zammit, who stressed the combination of the support from the Cancer Society and their own families, plus her husband's positive attitude and determination to persevere, are what make the situation more bearable.

Mr. Zammit says he has learned to appreciate life a little more and that he simply tries to deal with things one day at a time, with constant attention to maintaining a proper diet and an overall healthy lifestyle.

"The quicker you go into remission after you've first been diagnosed — and the longer you stay in remission the first time — the less chance of a relapse.

• see MILTON on page 5



John Zammit

Wallace

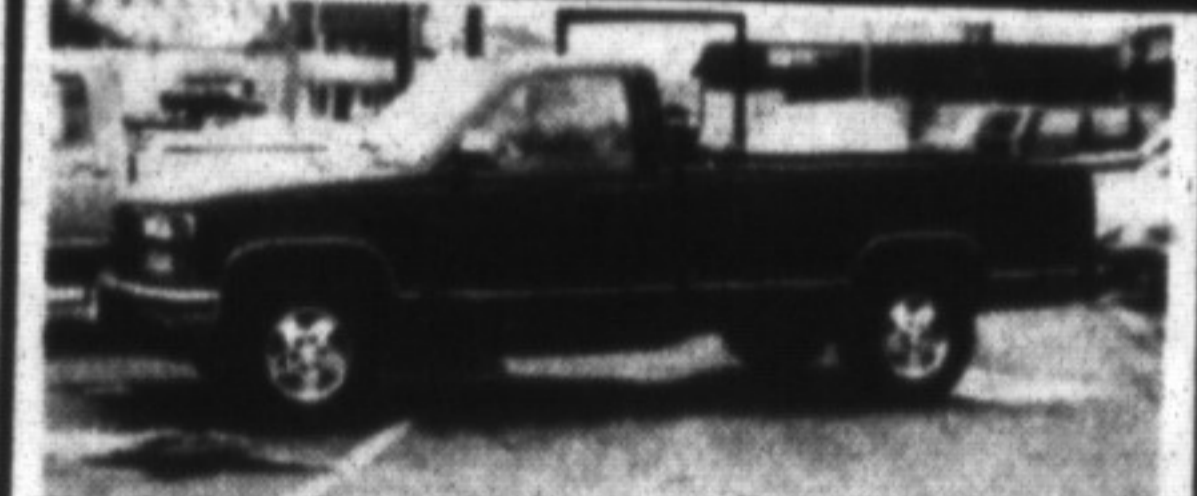
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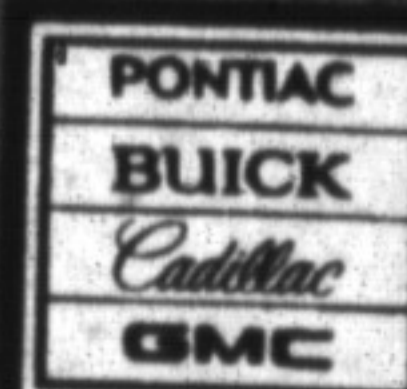
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