

Wife says she saw spouse slip mentally after stroke

By KAREN SMITH
The Champion

A retired firefighter explained to his wife over the telephone from jail that he couldn't control his impulses to set fires after he went on an arson rampage through Milton.

"I couldn't understand it," Amy Hayden testified before Ontario Court (provincial division) in Oakville Wednesday.

Mrs. Hayden told court she asked her husband, Richard Hayden, when he called from Maplehurst Correctional Centre why he set the fires that caused more than \$800,000 damage.

The former City of York firefighter, who suffered brain damage from a 1994 stroke, said he

was experiencing urges to perform the acts and couldn't control them, Mrs. Hayden testified.

Mr. Hayden's lawyer Fred Forsyth has raised a defence that his client, charged with six counts of arson and three of break and enter, isn't criminally responsible for his actions due to mental illness.

Although Mr. Hayden has pleaded not guilty to the charges, he hasn't contested evidence that he torched vacant buildings such as barns and churches in town between April 7 and 29.

However, assistant Crown attorney Amy Stevenson is attempting to prove that Mr. Hayden knew his crimes were wrong and appreciated the nature and quality of his acts.

The mental disorder defence under the

Criminal Code of Canada states that the suspect must, at the time of the crime, have suffered from a disease of the mind that "rendered the person incapable of appreciating the nature and quality of the act or of knowing that it was wrong."

Court has heard the 57-year-old Churchill Avenue man admitted in a police interview he set the structures afire with gasoline, and later returned to the scenes to watch firefighters battle the flames because he missed his old job. After being arrested, he told police he knew he was in big trouble and asked to go home.

However, two forensic psychiatrists have testified that Mr. Hayden's brain has steadily deteriorated since the stroke and his ability to fully

understand the acts were wrong was hampered. Mrs. Hayden also told the court that she and friends all noticed that her husband hasn't been the same since the stroke.

She said while returning from a trip to Florida in April, 1995, shortly before he set the fires, her husband asked her to pull off the highway every five minutes so he could have a cigarette.

His wife of 23 years also noticed after the stroke that her husband started to walk with a shuffle and had irregular tongue movements.

Mr. Hayden is currently incarcerated in a psychiatric institution in Brockville, near Ottawa.

Mrs. Hayden's testimony completed the evidence in the case. The trial will continue at a date to be set July 9 for final arguments.

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NEWSLINES

Classic car show in Georgetown on Father's Day

Car enthusiasts are pulling their collectors' models out from under their winter wraps to dust them off and prepare for car shows this summer.

The ninth annual Classics Against Cancer Car Show will be held Father's Day, June 16, at Cedarvale Park in Georgetown.

As the show features one of the biggest and best displays of antique, classic and modified cars and trucks in southern Ontario, prospective entrants should book early, since space is limited. Entry fees are \$25 per car.

They will be aiding a good cause, as all proceeds go to the Canadian Cancer Society.

Anyone requiring more information and an entry form can write to Classics Against Cancer, 10 Oak Ridge Drive, Georgetown Ont. L7G 5G6, or call (905) 877-2203 or (416) 798-7889.

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Hydro to union:

Sign or face lockout

By BRAD REAUME
The Champion

Milton Hydro has issued an ultimatum to its unionized employees. They will be locked out at 4:30 p.m. today (Friday) if their union does not accept a management contract proposal by that time.

Electrical fire causes big damage

Approximately \$35,000 in damage was caused to a Middleton Crescent home after fire broke out at about 11:15 p.m. Monday.

A couple and their two children were home when the blaze started in the garage. An occupant of the semi-detached home heard a crack and noticed a flash in the fuse box, fire officials said.

The couple tried to extinguish the blaze with a garden hose, but "it just got worse," said Deputy Fire Chief Dave Krantz of the Milton Fire Department.

Fire spread to the front of the house and up into the attic, he said.

It took about 30 minutes for firefighters to knock down the blaze. No one was hurt. Only smoke damage was caused to the adjoining unit.

Faulty electrical wiring is suspected as the cause of the blaze.

The action was taken in response to a letter in which the Power Workers' Union told management they would "call a strike only when it is most appropriate to the needs of the members of the bargaining unit."

Unwilling to have the operation of the local utility hanging on a union decision, the Milton Hydro Commission acted, and set the date. Employees will feel the full effect of the lockout only on Monday morning. If the union does not sign, management will be on call to handle any problems over the weekend.

"They are trying to provoke us. It's intimidation tactics," said Dave Shier, staff officer with the Power Workers' Union. "We'll wait until Monday and see what they do. If we are locked out we will picket. At that point we could call in a Ministry of Labour mediator."

Bargaining had reached a stalemate with what Milton Hydro general manager Don Thorne characterized as several minor issues outstanding. He did say the hydro commission and the Power Workers' Union had major philosophical differences. Some contract issues were related to those differences.

"I don't want the public to think badly of our employees. I think highly of them," said Mr. Thorne. The union, however, is

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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

On the lookout

The summer brings the start of police bicycle patrols in local parks and wooded areas. The mode of transportation allows officers fast and easy access to secluded areas to help combat alcohol offences, trespassing and vandalism. Here, Constable James Barnes of Halton Regional Police heads down the stairs near Rotary Park.

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