

# That's My Line

# Fred Laurin Ambulance attendant

Fred Laurin is officially an emergency medical care attendant, or EMCA, but the ambulance attendant label still sticks. His father started the

business in 1956. Today Fred works with three brothers in Midland. I started to work here six years ago, after a year of training at Georgian College.

Previous to that I trained at Camp Borden for a year. I was enthused back then with the action-packed life it was supposed to be - the

lights and the sirens and so on. I was like any young kid. It was the way I was brought up. I watched and listened to the staff.

It's not the same job it was six years ago. There's been legislation and the qualifications to be met have skyrocketed. It's a good thing, going in the right direction, but it's difficult for an ambulance attendant to stay on top.

To get in you have to take a year-long course and then more upgrading. And there's a provincial examination every three years. If you don't pass it in two tries, you're out until you take retraining courses.

Up until the late Sixties the question was, Do you have your first aid certificate? Come with us! You could work in the ambulance field.

The trend today is towards training paramedics, who are allowed to start intravenous drip and administer certain drugs and monitor a patient under a doctor's orders.

You never get hardened. You learn to accept. For example, take a car accident in which four or five people are involved. One or two are still in the car, alive, and it will take half an hour to get them out. There's another person lying on the ground, dead, and bystanders see the ambulance attendants walk around the body. It doesn't seem to fizzle them.

The dead person could be someone we know and love but there are others we have to take care of first. The reality is that people do die every day. That's the way it is. I've never had to pick up someone I knew well, thank God. I've picked up people I went to school with, people I knew vaguely.

Television shows make the life look very glamorous. But on TV

everything happens under ideal conditions. It isn't like that at all.

The only movie I've ever seen that came close to reality was Mother Jugs and Speed. The technical advisor must have been a former ambulance attendant, because that movie came close.

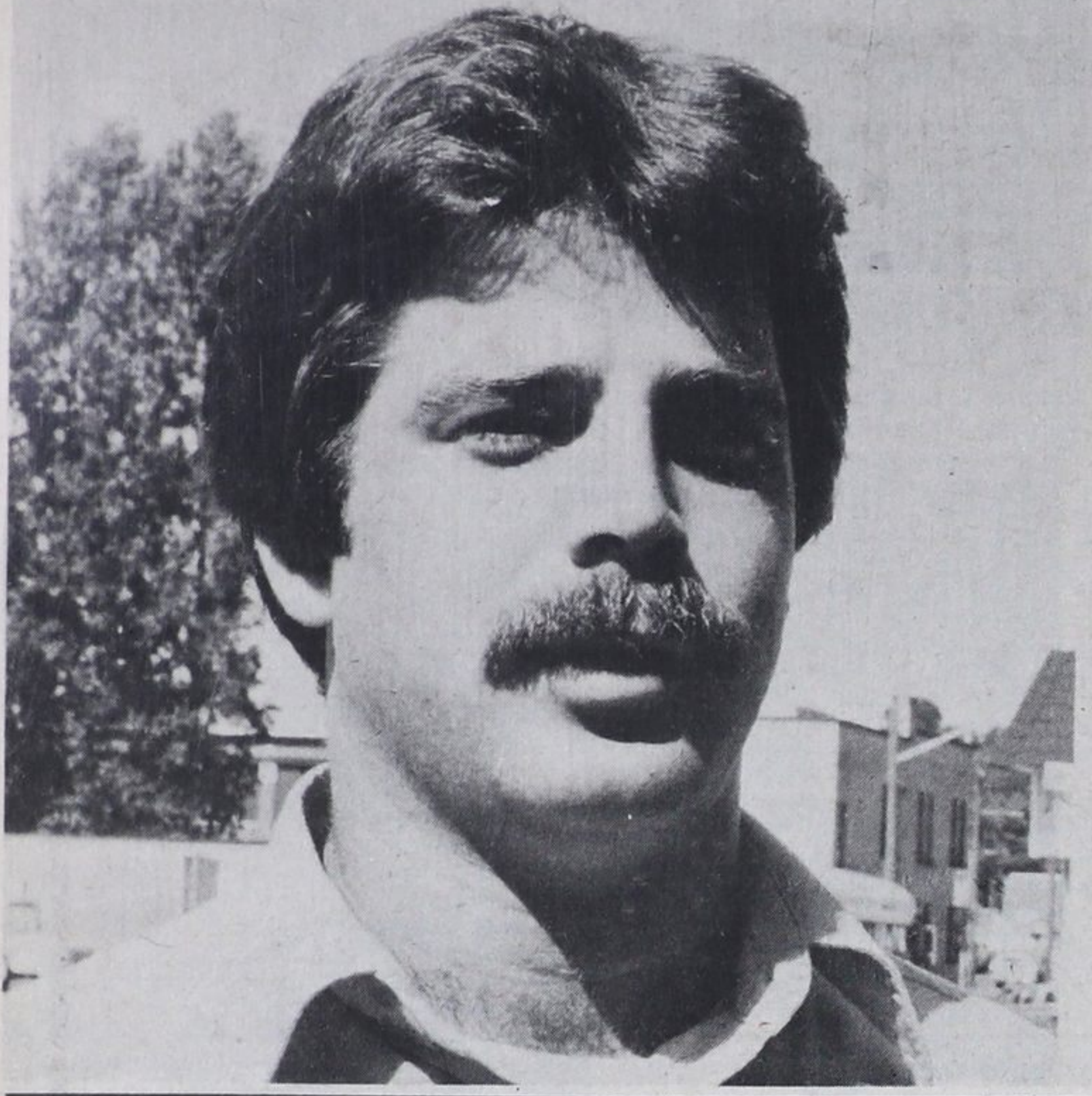
The usual doesn't follow suit. Sometimes we have to battle the environment, the weather. Or people. We get calls to take patients to the hospital who have been involved in domestic squabbles, or who have attempted suicide. Each call is handled individually - there is no rule of thumb.

In a year we go out on the road 1,800 times. But a lot of calls are squeezed into the summer months. In each of June, July and August about 200 calls will be answered.

About 55 per cent of trips are transfers, from homes to hospitals, or hospitals to hospitals. Some would be routine, the others emergencies. Sixteen per cent of calls follow acts of violence, suicides. Twenty-five per cent are motor vehicle accidents. The remainder are medical emergencies, heart attacks, and so on.

I've noticed that in the past few years the number of motor vehicle accidents has really dropped. The speed legislation and alcohol laws designed to affect the impaired driver have been really effective. Seat belts have really saved a lot of lives, too.

I know of a few cases where not wearing a seat belt has saved someone's life, but I also know of a hell of a lot more cases where the wearing of seat belts has saved lives.



## Collair moves closer to commuter flights - again

COLLINGWOOD—Collair Ltd., the commuter air service based here, may be a step closer to re-activating its short-lived passenger air service routes between Muskoka, Collingwood and Toronto Island. Last December the three-point service was grounded after only a month's operation when the necessary licensing for the St. Catharines airport was turned down by the Canadian Transport Commission (CTC).

Two weeks ago Collair Ltd. was told its license application had been granted for St. Catharines' operation by the CTC. In considering Collair's request for the St. Catharines link, the CTC also looked at a proposal from another applicant, Markplan Associates of Toronto. They too were attempting a similar service between Toronto-Trenton-Belleville-St. Catharines-Niagara.

Markplan was given permission by the CTC to operate the northern portion (Toronto-Trenton-Belleville) of its application. With the CTC approval for the St. Catharines link, Collair

Ltd. will not put its commuter service back into action again until another application to operate out of Fort Erie is also approved by the CTC. That application is currently before the Commission.

### Midland a Stop

If Fort Erie is added, the company could then go ahead with its original intention to launch a daily commuter service between seven Ontario destinations including Collingwood, Muskoka, Parry Sound, Midland, Toronto Island, St. Catharines and Fort Erie.

However, a favourable decision from the CTC does not mean a license is automatically granted. There are other regulations set by the Ministry of Transport on the aircraft, flight manuals and routes that will be used.

After the original three-point service was suspended last December 17, Collair sold its Twin Otter aircraft this spring to the Haitian government for commercial air service.

The suspension of the commuter service last fall in no way affected charter service, maintenance and the flying school operated by Collingwood Air Service, a separate company.

The Canadian Transport Commission has given Collair Ltd. two years to activate the proposed commuter air service.

## Wymbolwood regatta success

by Andy McDermott

Saturday's 35th annual regatta staged by the Wymbolwood Beach Association Inc. held in front of the White Surf motel, through the courtesy of Mrs. Blair, was notable for two unexpected events.

For the first time in the 35 year history of the event no winner could be declared in the egg toss between adults members of the association. Every egg was broken long before the final toss distance was established.

Chairman Ralph Champion blamed the problem on the use of eggs from a city supermarket instead of using those bought from nearby farms. "They just can't stand the strain, I guess," he said.

More excitement of the day was provided when everyone of the 250 present were forced to get down on hands and knees to search through the sand for a thousand dollar ring lost by one of the young women participants. Fortunately, Mike Koscec came up with the lost item after a 20-minute search.

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