

# Tragic car-train crash claimed six victims



Nurses and doctors from nearby Milton District Hospital attend to the victims in a tragic car-train accident in the first week of April. Six teenagers lost their lives and just two weeks ago, Halton MP Otto Jelinek announced that crossing gates will be constructed within the next year.

Milton grabbed national attention when six teenagers lost their lives when their car crashed head-first into a train at the Derry Rd. crossing just west of Bronte St.

The accident occurred at 11:23 p.m. March 30 when their eastbound car hit the second engine of a southbound CN train. The train's engineers said they felt no impact when notified in Dundas when it came to a halt.

The youngsters were all Milton residents. The car was driven by Chris Redden. The passengers were Joanne Vaar, who died 12 hours after the crash, and Kimberley Burns, Traci Snow, Sean Zardo and Bruno Gazzola. Thirteen-year-old Kelly Simon was also a passenger — in the back seat — and she miraculously escaped death and recovered from most of her injuries in a matter of weeks.

Within days of the accident, several organizations had put together committees to force the Canadian Transport Commission to install rail barriers at the crossing.

Led by Halton MP Otto Jelinek's pleas from the floor of the House of Commons, the push for barriers was strident but offered no concrete results while the Liberals held federal power.

Within just a few short months of the Progressive Conservatives' rise to power in Ottawa, Jelinek made good his promise and last month announced that barriers will be installed as soon as possible at the crossing.

Although barriers could have

## 1984 in review

prevented the crash, an inquest into the accident determined that alcohol played a large part in the accident which, they determined, could have been prevented.

Installation of rail barriers was one of seven recommendations. The others were:

— the ministries of education, transportation and communication, and the Solicitor-General develop a training program to emphasize that obtaining a driving licence "is a privilege and that there are many responsibilities that go along with it." So far, that recommendation has not been acted upon.

— additional emphasis on railway crossing safety should be incorporated in the Ministry of Transportation and Communication Driver's Handbook.

— a graduated licence for new drivers limiting the number of hours and the like. Not acted upon.

— a community group, under Mayor Gord Krantz's guidance, be formed to increase public awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving. This was acted upon and Mayor Krantz announced the formation of the group about three months later.

— two speed-limit signs be moved. Acted upon.

The jury deliberated for four hours after the two-day inquest which again drew national attention.



Federal Liberal candidate for Halton, Oriena Currie, was all smiles during the Sept. 4 campaign but her efforts proved fruitless as the Progressive Conservatives swept the riding and the country.

## Jelinek rides Tory crest

Riding a big blue crest which engulfed most of Canada, the federal riding of Halton voted overwhelmingly for the Progressive Conservative party during the Sept. 4 federal election.

Local MP Otto Jelinek maintained the grasp he has held on this riding since first running in 1979 by capturing 60 per cent of the vote.

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart," said Jelinek to his supporters, "I know you didn't work just for me or for the Conservatives but for Canada."

Jelinek's victory came as no surprise although the scope of the national PC party — 215 seats — was a small surprise. The breakthroughs in Quebec, spearheaded by leader Brian Mulroney's win in Beau Comeau, were the biggest in this century.

Locally, Liberal candidate Oriena Currie garnered but 22 per cent of the vote. She had a tough time in the nomination meeting to get the nod as the Halton candidate but faced stronger odds during the election proper. She won but a handful of ridings (in north Oakville) but was not overly discouraged by the turn of events.

"The timing could have made a difference," she said. "The lack of organization hurt us in the beginning. We didn't have enough preparation time. That was our only mistake."

Getting 15 per cent of the vote, NDP candidate Kevin Flynn said he felt a change in government would benefit the country and had few good things to say about former prime minister Pierre Trudeau.

"This is a rejection of the Liberals. I doubt anyone could have done worse for the country than Pierre Trudeau did."

Although Flynn's showing in Halton wasn't strong, nationally the party did well. At the final tally, the NDP elected 30 members which delighted NDP leader Ed Broadbent.

A fourth force in the election, Green Party candidate Chris Kowalchuk was a major surprise. From the first all-candidates' meeting, he announced that he felt he would lose the election. However, he found 1,354 people who voted his way, the most votes any candidate in Ontario received for a fourth-place finish.

## Police funeral draws 4,200

### Officer's death sparks call

A tragic event during the year was the shooting death of Constable David Dunmore in Toronto on Sept. 18. Const. Dunmore was investigating a call to a Queensway apartment building when he was ambushed by Gary White, 18. Dunmore didn't have a chance.

Two other officers were also wounded further down the road by White but both recovered from their injuries. White died in a gun battle which followed.

Const. Dunmore was a resident of Milton for 10 years and an officer with the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force for 11. He was married with three children.

Following the incident, more than 4,200 officers from all parts of Canada and the United States gathered in Milton Sept. 21 for what was called the largest police funeral of its kind in Canada's history.

The officers formed an honour guard the length of Main St. from St. Paul's United church to Ontario St. and lined four deep. Many businesses in Milton were closed on that Friday in honour of Const. Dunmore and his funeral procession.

His tragic death was one of several during the year for police officers. Coming just a few short weeks after the Progressive Conservatives' national election sweep, a renewed cry was heard throughout the nation to restore the death penalty for first-degree murder.

However, despite the obvious emotion of the time, the new government wisely deferred comment. It is known many PC members openly support the death penalty — includ-

ing Halton MP Otto Jelinek — although there are several high-ranking Cabinet ministers, believed to

include Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, who do not support capital punishment.



More than 4,000 police officers from departments throughout Canada and the United States turned out in September to attend the police funeral of Constable David Dunmore who was slain Sept. 18 in Toronto. It was the largest police funeral in Canada's history.

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