

An amazing recovery

By BRENDA LITTLE
STOUFFVILLE — Mrs. Reta Laushway, Park Drive North, Stouffville, has come a long way since that tragic day back in the summer of '84 when she fell from a chair onto their cement porch. She suffered a fractured skull and brain damage.

Three weeks later, when she came out of the coma, Mrs. Laushway couldn't speak and couldn't move her right arm or leg. Nor could she recall anything of what happened. Today, after delicate surgery and months of therapy, she speaks fluently, has full use of both arms and legs and remembers everything but names.

"The improvement's remarkable," says husband Ken, "we're very lucky."

Although Mr. Laushway believes in luck, he's quick to give credit where credit is due.

"The staffs at the hospitals where Reta was treated; (Sunnybrook, Riverdale and York Central), were wonderful," he says.

"They couldn't have been better."

When Reta first came out of her coma at Sunnybrook and was placed on the 14th floor, Ken had no idea what was going on. He was puzzled by what was happening and in awe of the machines and equipment that filled the ward.

His questions were soon answered, however, by Mrs. Laushway's physician.

"Dr. Rhodes, the surgeon was terrific. He explained everything to me," says Ken. "Every day he would tell me what he was doing and what I could expect."

"Reta was there 3 1/2 months," he continues. "There always seemed to be someone with her, a nurse or doctor, night and day, helping out with everything imaginable."

Mr. Laushway was also touched by the doctor's personal concern.

"He would always ask how I was," he says. "I was back and forth to the hospital over 100 times in those three months."

Following Mrs. Laushway's re-

lease from Sunnybrook, she was admitted to Riverdale where she spent two more months. While there, she received constant therapy on her right arm and leg.

Ken credits Dr. James and numerous other therapists who worked with his wife for the fact she has full use of both limbs today.

"They were a great group," he says, "they were always around when we needed them."

Reta still goes back once or twice a year to visit Dr. James.

"He just likes to check up on her," says Ken. "She went last fall to see him and will go again this spring."

Outside of periodic visits to Riverdale, Reta is no longer receiving formal therapy.

After leaving Riverdale, she became an out-patient at York Central about a year for speech therapy. Her final visit was Jan. 9.

"The change from the time she first went there to now is remarkable," says Ken. Six months ago she couldn't speak at all. Now she speaks fluently.

Early last fall when Reta became disturbed about having to go in so often, the therapist surprisingly didn't object. She knew the best thing was general conversation, not therapy.

She approached Marian Boardway, Marguerite Murphy, and Lorna Wagg, members of Mrs. Laushway's church, and asked them each to visit her one day a week, just to talk. Reta now has someone to talk to on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Although Mr. Laushway gives the Richmond Hill therapists a great deal of credit, he's eternally grateful to Dr. Button, Mrs. Boardway, Mrs. Murphy and Mrs. Wagg, also to Innis Nolan, a close friend many years.

"Coming to Stouffville 45 years ago was the best decision I ever made," says Ken appreciatively.

"Reta's improvement has been due, in large part, to their close communication with her," he says. "They're responsible for tremendous improvement in her general conversation."

Mrs. Laushway can now converse fluently with anyone. Her only setback lies in not being able to remember the names of people or things.

"She gets very frustrated with herself because she can't remember names," says Ken. "But she's getting better. She now says people's names in general conversation. She just can't recall them when she's asked to."

Excluding this problem, Mrs. Laushway's doing remarkably well. She does most of her own housework and, although she can't understand the recipes, does a great deal of cooking.

"She also goes out for walks," says Mr. Laushway. "She's come a long way from the wheelchair at Sunnybrook. I must have logged 4,000 miles, pushing her up and down the hallways there. It's hard to believe I had to coax her out of her room at first."

"She now walks to beat the devil," he chuckles. "She had a friend visit just last week and when they went out it was my wife's friend, not my wife, who got tired."

Although she does a lot of walking, Mrs. Laushway can no longer lawn bowl, a sport that brought both her and the town a great deal of fame. About 12 years ago, Mrs. Laushway along with team members Dorothy Wagg and Eleanor Crossen won the Canadian Lawn Bowling Title.

Today, however, she would have trouble lifting the balls, Ken says.

A few months after Reta's fall, Ken assumed she would never golf again either.

"It's a funny thing," says Ken, "when I told the doctor I thought I'd sell her clubs, he just looked at me and said, 'don't throw in the towel yet.'"

The doctor's optimism was not unfounded. Reta played golf 20 times last summer.

Ken has also seen great improvements in his wife's reading abilities lately.

"She reads more of the paper nowadays," he says. "She also reads more of her letters and can even tell me what they say."

Because she's improving steadily, Ken wants someone to come in and help her do handicrafts. Before the accident she made numerous things for her home and for others.

The living room, in fact, is almost entirely decorated with Mrs. Laushway's creations. She made the crocheted table cloths, the rugs, the wall hangings, the tapestry chair covers, the pillow covers and many other items.

"With a little help maybe she'll be able to pick up her crafts again too," says Ken.

If improvements in her health and speech are any indication, there's no doubt that, with ongoing assistance, most activities for Ken and Reta Laushway will soon be back to normal.



RETA LAUSHWAY

Neighborly Notes

By JIM THOMAS

A rain check

It's unlikely Premier David Peterson will make it to our Strawberry Festival after all. Chairman Jim Kidd (old a recent Committee meeting) had been in touch with M.P. Greg Sorbara and was told Mr. Peterson sends his regrets — too many things going on that weekend. Maybe he'll send his wife!

Citizen of '86

The Tribune will again sponsor the Citizen of the Year award at the 1986 Strawberry and Canada Day Festival. Nominations are now being received. A choice plus supporting reasons for that choice should be mailed to The Tribune, Citizen of the Year, Box 40, Stouffville or brought to our Office at 54-56 Main Street West.

Coffee-donuts

The Adult Skating Club will celebrate St. Valentine's Day with a special event, Tues., Feb. 11 at the Rec. Centre. Persons 25 years and over are invited. Admission is \$1.25 (members), \$2.50 (non-members). Coffee and donuts will be served at the evening's conclusion. Folks rebitten by the skating bug are reminded of weekly outings every Tuesday from 8 to 9 p.m.

Bow-tie missile

Uxbridge Twp. Councillor Cal Avery and bow-ties have become synonymous — for good reason. In the heat of a recent debate over alleged political patronage, I'm told Councillor Cal, The Mayor of Island Lake, whipped off his bow-tie cravat and hurled it across the table. Had the tie been the customary kind, the angry Ward representative might have hung himself.

Sonin tribute

Speaking of Councillor Cal Avery, thousands (maybe millions) heard the birthday tribute delivered Jan. 25 by Ray Sonin on CFRB's popular "Calling All Britain's Show." The timing was perfect in that Cal and a group of family members and friends were in the midst of a party celebrating the occasion. The actual date was Feb. 29 but the Saturday get-together was more convenient.

Top citizen

Congratulations to Dr. John Denison of Mount Albert, East Gwillimbury's 1986 Citizen of the Year. Dr. Denison will be honored at an awards dinner, Feb. 15 in the East Gwillimbury Community Centre. Tickets are available by calling 898-1479.

Dual birthdates

Congratulations to Janice Berger and her mother, Muriel Ross, of Cedar Valley, R.R. 5, Newmarket on the occasion of dual birthdates, Jan. 30. A family gathering was enjoyed in the evening. Muriel Ross, Councillor Margaret Marshall, says she missed dropping by in the afternoon. Mrs. Ross is 84, Mrs. Berger is 50. They reside in separate homes but only a short distance apart.

Roller-coaster

Wonderland doesn't open until May. However, if you want a preview of a roller-coaster ride, drive down the 9th Concession of Markham between 18th and 19th Avenues, you'll get the thrill of your life, particularly if your car's front-end shock absorbers are a bit weak.

Spring fever

Watching the town's snow removal crews in action Monday night, it's hard to believe spring is just around the corner. To get yourself in the mood, however, the place to be is Garden Festival '86 and the Pool and Spa Show, (Feb. 8-16) at the International Centre, Airport Road, Toronto. Chairman of the Flower and Garden Show Committee is Casey van Maris of Parklane Nurseries, R.R. 1, Gormley. After talking for a time with Casey, there'll be an opportunity to strike up a conversation with lovely Karen Martin, Miss Garden Festival '86. If that's not enough, she'll even invite you in for a swim, if you agree to buy the pool!

Filling a void

Youth dances in the gymnasium at Summitview School are undoubtedly filling a recreation void in Stouffville. The events are well attended and the kids are well behaved. On behalf of the young people, I say thanks to Julia Flewes, Lynda Wagg and Daphne Goldman for all the effort they've put into this program. The next dance is Fri., Feb. 14 from 7 to 10 p.m.

Seek kin

Several years ago, Corky Cargill, then residing at 105 Winlane Drive, Stouffville, was accidentally killed in a motor vehicle accident outside of town. Apparently there's a savings account in Mr. Cargill's name in the Bank of Nova Scotia at 4877 Steeles Avenue West, North York. The manager there would like to close it out and is seeking a next-of-kin. This information came to me via an area resident of the same name but no relation.

Tweedsmuir books placed on display

By EVELYN MILSTED GORMLEY — The Tweedsmuir History curators of York Centre Women's Institute, are hosting a display of District Histories in the Community Hall at Vondorf, Monday, Feb. 17 from 1:30 to 4 p.m. Admission is one dollar. Refreshments will be served.

Mr Cecil Banks is a patient in York County Hospital, Newmarket. He is also receiving treatment at Sunnybrook Hospital, Toronto, travelling back and forth by ambulance. His many friends

wish him a speedy and complete recovery.

Dr. Daniel Edmundson of Fremont, California, enjoyed dinner, Wednesday with Mrs Evelyn Milsted and Charleen.

The closing services of the week-long 'Spiritual Growth Series' with Dr. Henry Ginder of Pennsylvania, will be held this Sunday, (Feb. 9), at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m., in Heise Hill Church.

News from the Gormley community is always welcome. Please give me a call at 889-9063.

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