

Stouffville Says

By Hannelore Volpe

Do we need an additional national holiday? Which month or date?

asked at A & P in Stouffville, 3 p.m. Monday

Kristine DE CARIA



We need one in every month. The U.S. has more holidays than we do. They even get two days off for Thanksgiving.

Ed MAZUR



Any extra holiday should be on a Friday or a Monday to help all the people cope with stress in the workplace — call it Mental Health Day.

Erin TICKNOR



One in the middle of winter would be superb, maybe Groundhog Day to ponder the groundhog's weather prediction.

David WEST



I think we should have Robbie Burns Day off to learn a little history and also to coincide with February's Literacy Month.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Winter picnic

Horses feed on hay in the fresh snow on a farm alongside Hwy. 48 near Vivian Road in Whitchurch-Stouffville Tuesday. More snow flurries are expected today.

Crown witness feared bikers, Jesse Gray murder trial told

BY STEPHEN SHAW
Metroland Staff

A buddy of accused killer Cary Cleyndert feared being falsely blamed for the fatal stabbing of Musselman's Lake resident Jesse Gray and that biker friends of the victim would be "coming after me," court has heard.

Kelly Hoare told the Superior Court of Justice he later burned and buried his jacket after realizing it was stained with Mr. Gray's blood.

The Crown witness said Monday he had jumped in to assist his friend after a fight broke out between Mr. Cleyndert and Mr. Gray during a large post-prom field party on Zephyr Road in Uxbridge, June 8, 2002.

"I just wanted to help out my friend. I didn't want him to lose (the fight)," Mr. Hoare testified at Mr. Cleyndert's second-degree murder trial.

Mr. Hoare tried to grab Mr. Gray in a choke hold, but was pushed back by Mr. Gray's friend, John Bacon, who told him to "stay out of this."

Mr. Gray, 24, eventually fell to the ground after being stabbed eight times — once in the heart — by the defendant, court has heard.

Mr. Cleyndert, 21, of Blackstock, has pleaded not guilty to the charge of murder

and his lawyers are arguing he acted in self defence.

As a large crowd gathered around a dying Mr. Gray, several partygoers began accusing Mr. Hoare of inflicting the victim's injuries, a jury was told.

"I was scared... People said everybody was blaming it on me. I remember John Bacon saying, 'You were there, you were there,'" he said.

'He said he had hurt (Mr. Gray) and he wanted to get outta there.'

"I was afraid of whatever happened being blamed on me, and the fact that I had jumped into the fight."

He feared friends of Mr. Bacon or Mr. Gray would be coming after me.

When asked by defence lawyer Dirk Derstine why he was so afraid, Mr. Hoare replied Mr. Bacon had a reputation as a "local tough kid, and apparently he knew people from the Hells Angels and that scared me, too."

Mr. Hoare said he didn't know who Mr. Cleyndert was fighting at first, however, he later came to wrongly believe it

was John Gray — Jesse's father — who he also knew to be connected to Hells Angels.

The jury was told earlier in the trial Jesse Gray's father and uncle are prominent members of the outlaw motorcycle gang.

In the aftermath of the stabbing, Mr. Cleyndert looked dazed and scared, said Mr. Hoare. "Cary kinda looked shocked. He said he had hurt him (Mr. Gray) and he wanted to get outta there," he said. Mr. Hoare ran off with his girlfriend through a farmer's field and hitchhiked his way home to Oshawa.

The young man said he later noticed his jacket had blood on the sleeves, which he assumed was from Mr. Gray.

"I burned it and buried it," he said, adding he dug a hole in his backyard.

During further cross-examination Mr. Hoare agreed with the defence suggestion Mr. Gray had the upper hand on Mr. Cleyndert early in the fight.

"Cary looked like he was getting the worst of it and you jumped in so Cary wouldn't lose too bad. And he was losing," Mr. Derstine said.

"Yes he was," the witness responded.

Prior to the party, Mr. Cleyndert had been showing off to friends, including Mr. Hoare, a butterfly knife he was carrying as "protection."

Briefly

Seniors accused of being in Mafia; man charged

A Whitchurch-Stouffville man has been charged after two local seniors claim they were subject to a strange pattern of harassment since last July.

Both female victims, one 72, the other 83, told police a man has been yelling and screaming at them over the phone and sending strange e-mails claiming they are members of the Mafia since he returned from a trip to the United Kingdom last summer.

Police say one of the victims had contact with a man, 47, while he was overseas because, "he was lonely and she felt sorry for him."

Upon his return the harassment began, culminating in a confrontation at one of the victims' homes last week when a man again accused the women of being in the Mafia, claimed they were both conspiring against him and called them witches.

"One of the women said she was afraid to come home after dark," said police spokesperson Kathleen Griffin.

A Whitchurch-Stouffville man has been charged with two counts of criminal harassment.

—Martin Derbyshire

GO Transit wants bridge

Will the extension of Stouffville's Hoover Park Drive and Park Drive mean GO Transit will put in a level crossing, an overpass or an underpass? That will be the subject of a public meeting next month.

Whitchurch-Stouffville council delayed a decision Tuesday when staff recommended the town hire a lawyer to support developer Lebovic Enterprises in its position on the matter at an Ontario Municipal Board hearing which began today. Staff had also recommended that Lebovic Enterprises pick up the cost of the town lawyer, estimated at \$65,000.

GO Transit wants a bridge or underpass constructed when Lebovic Enterprises builds 1,444 homes in the area. Lebovic wants a level crossing.

—Joan Ransberry

Quoteworthy

'...the Gordie Howe hat trick'

Pro hockey player Brandon Sugden on unique feat. See story on page 1.

Contacting Us

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