

Stouffville Says

By Hannelore Volpe

Which issues did you want to see addressed in the Throne Speech?

asked at No Frills in Stouffville 3 p.m. Monday

Rosina KOTNJEK



I would like to see health care addressed. For me, defence is not a priority because we are a peace-keeping nation.

Herb LEE



I would like to see the armed forces better taken care of. We can't depend on the U.S. to fight our battles for us.

June CRAVEN



The provinces aren't getting enough money from the federal government for things such as health care and education.

John SABOURIN



There should be more funding for the environment. Also, the northern part of Canada needs more doctors and services.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Love on blades

Gerry and Betty Acton, who have been married for 57 years, promote a valentine skate to be hosted by the Stouffville Adult Skating Club Tuesday from 8:55 to 9:45 p.m. at the Stouffville Arena. Admission is \$4 per person. Refreshments will be served. Call 905-640-1149.

Accused stabbed Gray 'out of fear'

BY STEPHEN SHAW
Metroland Staff

Did Cary Cleyndert act 'out of anger' or 'pure animal fear' when he stabbed Jesse Gray of Musselman's Lake eight times during a confrontation two years ago?

The fate of the 21-year-old Port Perry man rests in the hands of a 12-member jury, which is expected to begin wrestling with the question today after being given legal instructions by Superior Court Justice Robert Clark.

Mr. Cleyndert, who has pleaded not guilty to second-degree murder, was involved in a 'death fight' with an enraged Mr. Gray, who confronted him during a post-prom Uxbridge bush party in the early hours of June 8, 2002, defence lawyer Dirk Derstine said in his closing address to the jury Monday.

Mr. Gray 'clocked' Mr. Cleyndert in the head and continued punching him in a fight the defendant 'wanted no part of', the lawyer argued.

The Port Perry man testified he was trying to fend off the 244-pound Mr. Gray when he got tangled in his coat, slipped on a beer bottle and, fearing he was falling down, pulled a butterfly knife out of his back pocket while leaning backwards at a 45-degree angle. He re-enacted the scene for the jury in court.

That's when he says pure animal fear takes over. He believes he's about to get stomped and mutilated. He stabbed Jesse over and over again until Jesse stopped attacking... He was like a trapped animal and was just trying to get away... His dominant purpose is just to stop (Mr. Gray), Mr. Derstine said.

'He wasn't aiming to hurt him... He was intending to save himself... (The wounds) are inflicted during the course of a violent struggle by a person who I'm going to suggest is extremely frightened,' he said.

Mr. Gray, 24, whose father and uncle are prominent members of the Hells Angels, died after being stabbed eight times, including once in the heart, court has heard.

DEFENCE DIFFERS

The defence said Mr. Cleyndert flailed the knife blindly at Mr. Gray in desperation and should be acquitted on the basis he acted in self-defence.

The crown argued it was anger and not fear that fuelled Mr. Cleyndert.

He later created a 'poor-me defence' in hopes of dodging a murder conviction, prosecutor John Scott said in his closing address to the jury.

'In my submission, he's not

afraid of anything except responsibility... This man is trying his best to avoid responsibility for the horrible crime that has been committed,' he said.

'He is the author of this tragedy and he should be held accountable... This gentleman should be convicted of the murder of Jesse Gray, a murder that was unnecessary and a murder for which he is responsible.'

Court was told a rude comment Mr. Cleyndert allegedly made to Mr. Gray's girlfriend, Melissa Bell, led to the fatal clash in the Zephyr Road field during an annual bash for students of Uxbridge Secondary School. The party was attended by 500 dancing and drinking revellers.

During the dispute with Ms. Bell and her girlfriends, one of them splashed a drink on Mr. Cleyndert, who responded by spitting court heard.

Ms. Bell went and told Mr. Gray, who became 'mad as hell' and confronted Mr. Cleyndert, Mr. Derstine said.

The defendant knew of Mr. Gray's reputation of 'a tough guy from a tough family,' and tried to apologize to Mr. Gray and avoid a fight, he said.

Jurors can acquit Mr. Cleyndert on the basis of self-defence if they accept he 'reasonably' believed he was at risk of grievous injury or death.

Briefly

Carnival at lake for Valentine's Day

The Musselman's Lake Have a Heart Love the Lake winter carnival is making a comeback after a five-year absence.

The event will be held Feb. 14 from 1 to 4 p.m. near the Cedar Beach Pavilion on Ninth Line.

Residents can skate on a heart-shaped skating rink, see ice and water rescue demonstrations by Whitchurch-Stouffville firefighters and enjoy music, nature walks, horse-drawn wagon rides and marshmallow and hot dog roasts.

Town councillor Phil Bannon is organizing the event.

Weather postpones historical society decision

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Historical Society still exists, for now.

The annual meeting scheduled for Jan. 27 had to be postponed due to a snowstorm. The society's fate was to be decided that evening — whether to continue if enough people came forward to form a full board of directors or dissolve the society.

The meeting has been rescheduled for Feb. 26 at 7:30 p.m. at the Silver Jubilee Club on Main Street.

Nominations will be taken for all positions and everyone is welcome to attend.

The historical society is a separate entity from the Whitchurch-Stouffville heritage board committee and the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum.

Its volunteers want to keep the history of Stouffville alive through informative and educational meetings and walking tours, society member Tom Winters said.

Quoteworthy

'I feel like a new person since I got the transplant.'

Dan Pfaff, on the second anniversary of his double-lung transplant. See story on page 1.

Contacting Us

Have a news tip? Please:

- phone us at 905-640-2612
- e-mail us at jmason@yrng.com
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