

DNA helped convict driver

From page 1.

attended schools in Whitchurch-Stouffville, Markham and overseas.

He enjoyed drama and art, skiing and swimming and was very good with younger people.

He was going to Grade 12, Mr. Bobbett said. "He never quite got there. It's kind of a loss of dreams in many ways."

The family strained under the weight of Matthew's death.

His parents separated and several members of the family pursued counselling, Mr. Bobbett said, adding laughter has helped.

"It beats crying," he said. "You can't walk around angry all the time."

What little gratification he received came from the short time needed to convict Mr. Hassan, which he said was less than three hours.

The trial heard how witness Phil Harding was travelling home from a cottage when he noticed a vehicle coming up behind him on a two-lane stretch of Hwy. 48 near St. John's Sideroad, the day of the collision.

'It's taken away from me a lot of hope for the future.'

Mr. Harding testified before he saw the car coming up behind him, he had seen several teenagers walking along the side of the road.

He has no doubt the vehicle behind him collided with the people on the road, he told jurors.

He also testified he saw the headlights of the vehicle that had been following him go dark after the collision.

Another witness called in the case described seeing a damaged blue 1980s Ford Mustang near the site of the collision.

OPP Insp. Scott Naylor was named case manager for Matthew's file in 2006.

Despite what he called "lots of physical evidence at the scene", which included two crucial DNA samples found on broken glass from the car's windshield, police were unable to identify the driver following the collision.

Undercover work and other investigative techniques eventually revealed a new twist to police, he said.

While Mr. Hassan was driving the car every day, he wasn't on the ownership because he couldn't afford to insure the Mustang, Insp. Naylor said.

Mr. Hassan and a friend agreed that he would drive the car, but the friend would pay the insurance, with the

promise of reimbursement by Mr. Hassan, Insp. Naylor alleged.

For a while, OPP "didn't know Mr. Hassan existed", he said.

The car was reported stolen after the crash, he added.

"We didn't forget about Matthew," he said. "Nobody won in this."

Meanwhile, Mr. Bobbett described the loss of a child as the most significant a person can experience.

"It changes who you are," Mr. Bobbett said. "It's taken away from me a lot of hope for the future."



Matthew Bobbett was 16 when he was killed after being struck by a car north of Ballantrae eight years ago.

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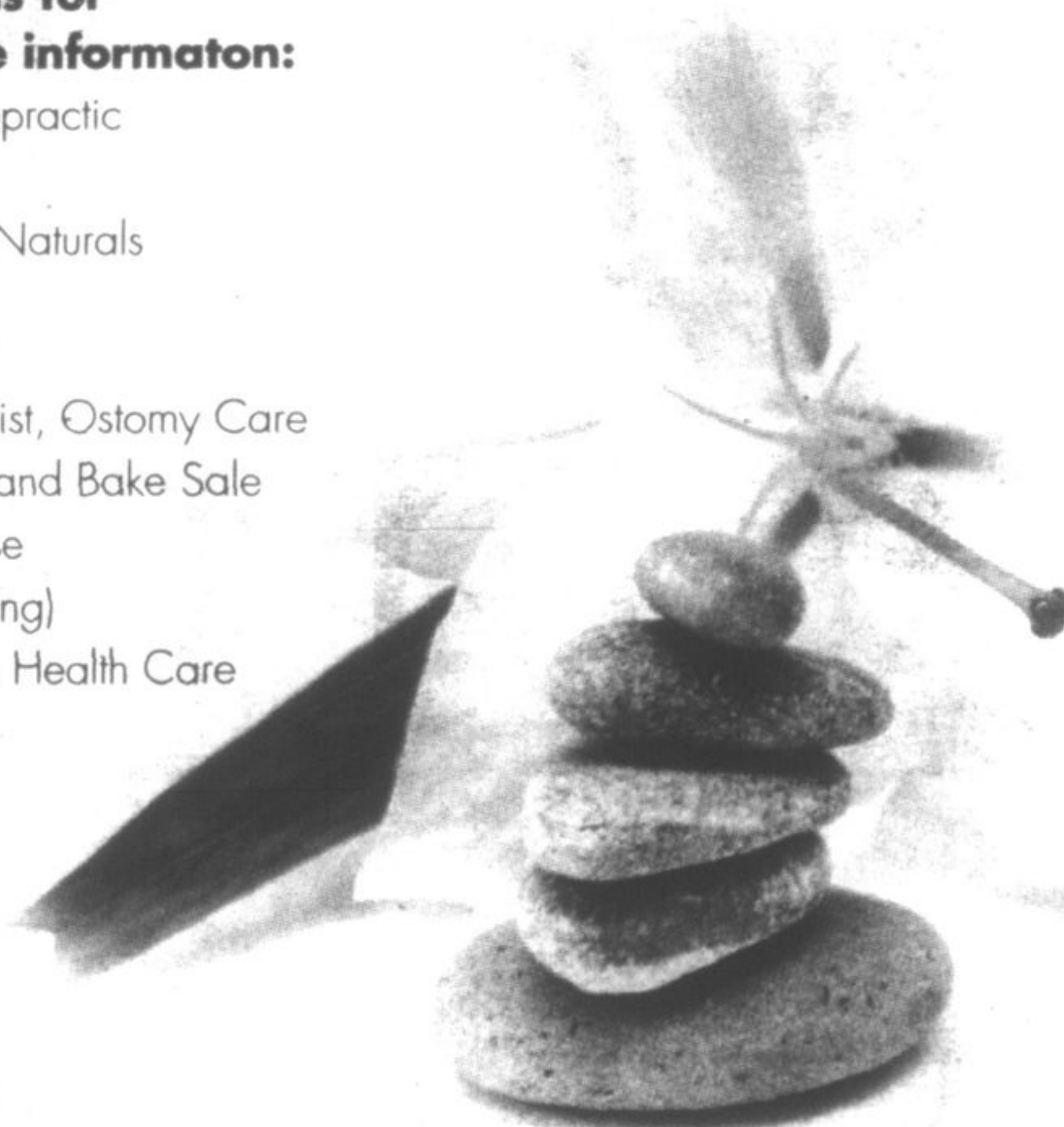
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