

AROUND THE GTA

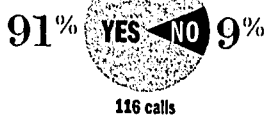
YOU ASKED US

WALTER STEFANIUK

Blood tragedy: 'Assign blame'

The report by Mr. Justice Horace Krever into Canada's tainted blood scandal doesn't assign blame to any individuals but says the provinces and territories should devise a scheme to compensate people infected with diseases through the blood system without having to prove governments or blood agencies at fault.

Thursday's question was: Should the Krever commission have assigned blame for the blood tragedy?



Yes. I think top executives of the Red Cross showed arrogance, insensitivity, incompetence and unmitigated lack of human compassion and understanding. They deserve to be held culpable for this incredible, incredible tragedy. Personally, I lost a sister and her daughter and it is no easy task to sit here and talk about it.

No. If blame is to be assigned, those who donated the blood should also be named because no doubt, in some circumstances, they knew they should not be giving the blood.

Yes. This is such a terrible tragedy it would make one cry. Those people in authority were well aware of the risks and put all those people in jeopardy.

It is the duty of the police to seek out possibly guilty individuals and of the courts to decide on their responsibilities. We abolished Star Chambers long ago.

Yes. Justice Krever had the authority. Why didn't he use it? I am a hepatitis C sufferer myself, for years.

Yes, but he'd have to be careful about it. It was not a judicial proceeding in the way of a criminal trial.

Yes. If this were any other country, the people responsible for this would be in jail. The trust that was broken is a disgrace.

Yes, and the government should pay every one of those infected compensation.

Yes. I think the people responsible knew exactly what would happen. They should be charged.

Yes. It should have assigned blame. That's what it was all about.

YES OR NO

The House of Commons finance committee recommends the "general surtax" which is levied on the first \$12,500 of income tax paid, should be cut by a third, up to \$125, when the federal deficit is eliminated. Meanwhile, others believe budget surpluses would be better spent reducing the national debt or improving health care or on social programs.

Should surtaxes be removed when the deficits they were designed to fight are eliminated?

Dial (416) 868-3900 with your yes or no by 10 a.m. tomorrow. Results Thursday.

CALENDAR

Scientists produce first self-sustaining nuclear reaction in makeshift reactor under football stadium stands at University of Chicago, 1942; Audrey McLaughlin elected leader of the federal New Democratic Party, the first woman to lead a national political party in Canada, 1989.

Birthdate of Jean-Charles Chapais, Father of Confederation, at Rivière-Québec, Que., 1811; Pedro II, last emperor of Brazil, 1825; Greek author Nikos Kazantzakis, 1883; Hungarian-born U.S. inventor Peter Carl Goldmark, credited with invention of colour television, 1906.

You Asked Us runs Tuesday through Friday. Call (416) 868-3900 to record your comments and questions.

BEST BETS

Today

3 DAYS OF CAMPUS JAZZ: It's the orchestra and choir at 8 p.m., a faculty concert at 8 p.m. tomorrow and student ensembles starting at 5 p.m. Thursday at York University's Junior Common Room, 014 McLaughlin College, 4700 Keele St., North York. Free.

IDEAL STOCKING STUFFER: The Lung Association's 1998 Golf Privilege Book offers free or reduced green fees and savings at 45 Central Ontario courses and driving ranges. To order, call Darlene Bennett at (905) 602-8388.

To submit major public events to Best Bets, fax (416) 869-4439.

TODAY'S BLOOD DONOR CLINICS

- James Cardinal McGuigan High School, 1440 Finch Ave. W., Downsview, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Toronto Blood Centre, 67 College St., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Royal Bank Plaza, Merchants Mall level, 200 Bay St., Toronto, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., by appointment only 974-9911.
- ManuLife Centre, 55 Bloor St. W., Toronto, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Metro Toronto

2 officers named in SIU case

Two Metro police officers have been named as subject officers by the provincial special investigations unit in connection with a 17-year-old youth's fall from the 11th-floor of a Scarborough apartment Saturday.

Constable James French, an officer for 21 years, and Constable Grant Burningham, a 12-year officer — both of 42 Division — could be criminally charged after being identified by the SIU as subject officers — those whose actions are likely to have caused death or injury.

Police reports said a youth, later identified as Anthony "Steve" Marriot, ran to the balcony when officers came into the apartment and fell over the waist-high railing. Marriot remains in critical condition at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre.

Police were called to the apartment near Markham Rd. and Eglinton Ave. E. for a reported stabbing. Instead, they found a man in a 14th-floor hallway who had been assaulted. Police were directed to an 11th-floor apartment, where the incident occurred.

MUNK OKAYS contract changes

Peter Munk says the University of Toronto can make any changes it wishes to make clearer the agreement accompanying his gift of \$6.4 million toward a proposed centre for international studies.

In a letter to U of T president Robert Prichard, Munk, head of Barrick Gold Corp., said some people have recently "cast a deliberately misleading interpretation" on selected clauses of the contract.

Critics said some of the wording appeared to give Munk or his agents permission to dictate to the university how the centre is to be run, choose the staff and decide what the faculty can teach.

"Indeed, the principle of academic freedom and the right of freedom of expression has been the very cause which my personal donation and that of my companies is intended to support," Munk wrote.

Witness points finger at accused

A supermarket manager told court yesterday he believes Colin Lake was responsible for the brutal stabbing of Louis Ambas at a Scarborough boot store in 1995.

Nik Reznik, speaking through a Russian interpreter, said he is the manager of the Kingston Rd. Supermarket across from the Tom Houston Boot Store.

Two youths were arrested and charged with second-degree murder in Ambas' slaying. One of them, Colin Lake, is being tried in adult court and has pleaded not guilty to the charge.

Reznik said the two accused frequented his store almost every day but after the slaying they "disappeared."

Durham Region

Durham chair a tight race

The race for the chairmanship of Durham Region is so close that retiring Chair Jim Witty may have to cast a tie-breaking vote at regional council's inaugural meeting tomorrow.

While Pickering Mayor Wayne Arthurs seemed to have the job locked up last week, the entry of Ajax Councillor Roger Anderson to the race on the weekend has changed things, local politicians say.

The chair is picked at the start of each term by the elected members of regional council. With 28 members on this council, the winner will need 15 votes to win.

Witty says he has heard the race is very close and he is prepared to cast the tie-breaker if necessary. But he wouldn't say who has his support.

Witty, a former mayor of Ajax, supported Anderson in the recent municipal election as he tried unsuccessfully to unseat Ajax Mayor Steve Parish.

The last time a tie-breaker

On-the-spot friends



PAUL IRISH / TORONTO STAR

Olivia IHEME, 3, and Lucky, the Clarington fire department's dog, get acquainted at the McLaughlin Armouries in Oshawa as Durham Region police kick off their ninth Christmas food and toy drive yesterday. The tot's dad is a Durham officer. Donations of toys or non-perishable food items can be made at any of the region's police stations and most fire halls.

was required to pick a Durham regional chair was in 1978, when then-chair Walter Beath cast the deciding vote to re-elect himself over Allan Pilkey, who later became Oshawa mayor and a New Democrat cabinet minister.

Pickering names park after Diana

The Spencer family has given Pickering permission to name a new park in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Councillor Doug Dickerson had suggested the new youth park, next to the Town Centre recreation facility on Valley Farm Rd., be named in honour of the princess, who died in a car crash in Paris on Aug. 31.

Dickerson said the only stipulation made by the Spencer family was that the town use the correct title — Diana, Princess of Wales — in the park name.

He said he is pleased that the princess's family has given its approval.

"I am particularly pleased given that the family recently turned down a request from Toronto to name a new subway station after the princess," Dickerson said.

The Toronto Transit Commission made two written requests to the Spencer family to name the main station on the new Sheppard subway line the "Princess Station." But TTC chief general manager David Gunn said the Spencers rejected the requests.

Henderson joins Hall of Fame

Paul Henderson, the hero of Team Canada's 1972 hockey victory over Russia, is one of 12 new inductees to Pickering's Sports Legends Hall of Fame.

The official induction will take place in Pickering next May 2.

Others to be honoured include hockey stars Bobby Hull and Syl Apps, Toronto Argonauts superstar Dick Shatto, and Tony Golab of the Ottawa Rough Riders. Baseball representatives include former Blue Jay Ernie Whitt, along with James "Tip" O'Neil of Woodstock, a baseball star of the last century who holds the highest recorded batting average in history of 442 (walks

included), skating's Barbara Ann Scott, '60s track star Bill Crothers, Lake Ontario swimmer Marilyn Bell and legendary jockey Avelino Gomez. Also honoured are the 1958 Olympic hockey champs, the Whitby Dunlops.

The Pickering hall of fame will feature an outdoor "Walk of Fame" with bronze plaques erected to honour each inductee.

York Region

Boy, 14, injured while riding bike

BY SHAUNA HEMINGWAY STAFF REPORTER

A 14-year-old cyclist is in critical condition after his bike swerved into traffic on a main street in Georgina.

Johnathan Rogers of Willowbeach, near Sutton, was riding his bike in the bicycle lane along Metro Rd. around 11 a.m. Saturday when he moved into the path of a car.

The vehicle, travelling in the same direction as the boy, had just pulled out to pass him, police said.

The boy was rushed to York County Hospital with a serious skull fracture and a broken back and later transferred to Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children.

"I don't know why this kid went out in front of the car," said Sergeant Will James of York Region police, adding that the boy wasn't wearing a helmet.

"It's kind of a mystery to everybody." The driver and her young son were not injured.

Police are warning kids to obey basic safety rules — such as riding as close to the curb as possible and wearing reflective clothing and a helmet — when biking.

Home for aged to open Jan. 12

Residents of a new 100-bed home for the aged in Maple will start moving in Jan. 12, officials say.

The \$11.8 million region-sponsored facility is on Keele St., north of Major Mackenzie Dr., and will be called The Maple Health Centre.

It's now in the final stages of construction.

Dr. Helena Jacek, the region's medical officer, said the centre is arranged differently than a traditional seniors' home.

She said all common facilities are clustered around a form of an indoor "town square," with rooms located off corridors that look something like streets.

Signposts

Landmarks: Benares Historical Home

Benares Historical Home, 1507 Clarkson Rd. N. in Mississauga, was built in 1857 by Captain James Harris and his wife Elizabeth Harris, a British army officer, sold his commission to get enough money to buy the 81-hectare farm which, at the time, stretched from the QEW to the CN rail line, and east from Clarkson Rd. to Lorne Park Rd. The house now sits on 2.42 hectares of land and is more symbolic of the World War I era than the period in which it was built. Around 1913, electricity, central heating and indoor plumbing were installed and the home was restored to reflect this era.



SOURCE: Benares Historical Home

Peel / Halton

Teacher steering car that killed

BY CAL MILLAR STAFF REPORTER

A teacher was steering the car that crushed a student to death inside a shop classroom at an Oakville high school, police say.

Several students at Queen Elizabeth Park Secondary School were pushing the Chevrolet last Friday when the engine somehow started and the vehicle shot forward, pinning Benjamin Clement against a wall lined with wooden cupboards, Halton Region police said yesterday.

Police have not identified the teacher and said the accident is still being investigated.

Benjamin, 15, was pronounced dead at Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital about two hours after the morning accident.

A funeral mass was to be held today at 10 a.m. at St. James Church on Morden Rd.

The family has requested that donations be made to a Christmas wish fund in Benjamin's name at any Royal Bank branch.

Sergeant Frank Phillips said mechanical tests are being conducted on the car at a local garage and police also want government experts to examine it to make sure nothing is overlooked.

The local coroner, Dr. David Schooling, said he will wait until the police investigation is over before deciding whether an inquest should be held.

Banned teacher seeks to return

BY FRANK CALLEJA STAFF REPORTER

A Mississauga high school teacher who reported to work during the teachers' strike was told yesterday he will have to meet the school board's conditions before being allowed to resume his job.

Steven Twist said in an interview that he met board officials and a teachers' union representative, and asked for a letter outlining the conditions of his return.

"I want to return to my students, but I want to understand fully what the criteria for my return to class will be," Twist said.

The 34-year-old math teacher at Westwood Secondary School said he believes he is being disciplined for his decision to talk to a reporter on school property during the two-week strike last month, after staff members were warned not to do so.

Peel Board of Education spokesperson Brian Woodland said board policy prohibits him from discussing personnel matters publicly.

Twist said he is at home with full pay and benefits under the board's sick leave provisions. He said he has a total of 190 sick days to his credit.

School board looks for charity

BY CAL MILLAR STAFF REPORTER

Halton's school board plans to set up a foundation to raise money for services not funded by taxes.

The money could be used to establish bursaries, fund breakfast programs, buy extra equipment or to run development courses for teachers, superintendent Brenda Kearney told the board in a report.

Kearney said a charitable foundation would receive gifts and endowments, and provide tax receipts.

Board members were told there's been an increase in donations to the school board, and staff members want a system that provides accountability and follows Revenue Canada guidelines for the issuing of tax receipts.

Board members also endorsed the establishment of a non-profit corporation to operate non-credit courses.

Education director Dusty Papke said the board would compete with other educational facilities in the region and operate the courses to raise additional revenue.

"We have a government right now that is saying every student is being funded on a number of dollars," Papke told board members. "There has been every indication if you generate revenue beyond that amount it will be deducted from the grants you get."

"We are saying there is a way to do it so that our students will still get the benefit of any revenues we generate through non-credit programs," Papke said. "Our students will benefit from that and not be punished."