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Goderich August 21 2011 F3 Tornado
Associated Files

Goderich Ontario August 21 2011 F3 Tornado

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Hamilton Spectator August 2011 Goderich Tornado

Paul McMullen
Hamilton Spectator

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THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

**High: 23
Low: 11 (evening)**

Breezy today, and expect an afternoon shower. But relax — the sun will peek from behind the clouds.
Details: Go 2



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DEVASTATION



PAUL McMULLEN, SPECIAL TO THE SPECTATOR

A violent tornado swept through Goderich Sunday afternoon causing extensive damage. For more photos and video footage visit thespec.com

Rebel forces sweep into Tripoli

Gadhafi loyalists switching sides

BY BEN HUBBARD
AND KARIN LAUB

TRIPOLI, LIBYA ♦ Euphoric rebels raced into the capital Tripoli Sunday with little resistance as Moammar Gadhafi's defences collapsed and his regime appeared to be crumbling fast.

Associated Press reporters with the rebels said they moved easily from the western outskirts into the regime stronghold in a dramatic turning of the tides in the six-month-old Libyan civil war. A rebel leader said the unit in charge of protecting Gadhafi and Tripoli had joined the revolt, allowing the opposition force to move in freely.

"They will enter Green Square tonight, God willing," said Mohammed al-Zawi, a 30-year-old rebel who entered Tripoli. Green Square has been the site of night rallies held by Gadhafi supporters throughout the uprising.

Earlier Sunday, the rebels overran a major military base defending the capital, carted away truckloads of weapons and raced to Tripoli with virtually no resistance.

The uprising against Gadhafi broke out in mid-February, and anti-regime protests quickly spread across the vast desert country with only six million people. A brutal regime crackdown quickly transformed the protests into an armed rebellion. Rebels seized Libya's east, setting up an internationally recognized transitional government, and two areas in the west, the port city of Misrata and the Nafusa mountain range.

Gadhafi's whereabouts were unknown. But he delivered a series of angry and defiant audio messages broadcast on state television. He was not shown in the messages. In the latest one, he acknowledged that the opposition forces were moving into Tripoli and warned the city would be turned into another Baghdad.

"How come you allow Tripoli the capital, to be under occupation once again?" he said.

"The traitors are paving the way for the occupation forces to be deployed in Tripoli."

Continued on A8

Tornado slams Goderich

A twister tore through the Lake Huron community crushing what Queen Victoria once called 'the prettiest town in Canada'

GODERICH ♦ Herb Marshall had only ever seen a storm like the one that swept across Goderich in the movies.

Downtown businesses, century-old buildings and several churches lost their roofs and upper floors Sunday as a tornado ripped through the town on the shore of

Lake Huron.

Environment Canada's damage survey team confirmed a tornado did touch down in their initial assessment and killed at least one person.

Images show downed power lines, trees and debris strewn across streets.

Police said there are reports of multiple injuries.

Marshall, the owner of the Park House Bar and Restaurant, was on the third floor of the building with his wife when the storm swept through the town around 4 p.m.

"(The storm) came up the hill off the lake, by us to the north and just

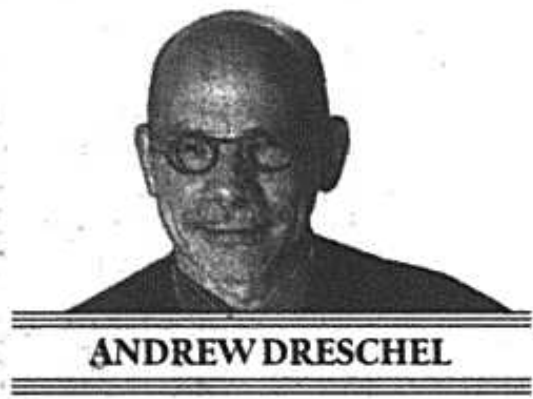
took everything with it," Marshall said. "I believe I saw a garbage bin up in the air going by."

"I've only ever seen this in the movies."

London OPP Sergeant Dave Rektor said the damage is widespread.

Continued on A5

City's agreement with Katz in limbo



ANDREW DRESCHER

Whatever happened to city council's highly touted agreement with the Katz Group?

The Edmonton-based sports and development company blew into town last summer dangling the prospect of an NHL team and operating both Copps Coliseum and the proposed Pan Am stadium. The bombshell landed in the

middle of facilitation talks with the city and Tiger-Cats over the west harbour location, further souring already bitter relations with the CFL team but fuelling hopes of a new game-changing partnership for the city.

By the end of the whirlwind visit, Katz proposed a non-binding memorandum of understanding

(MOU) which would give the group exclusive rights to attract an NHL team and manage all of HECFI, possibly sweetening the agreement with a \$1 million surety.

But the deal was never signed.

Council was supposed to vote on it the end of August, 2010.

Continued on A13

Westside's new owners will resurrect Lyric Theatre name

BY MATTHEW VAN DONGEN

Hamilton's historic Lyric Theatre is about to be reborn.

In name, anyway.

A year after the vaudeville-era building was torn down, the Lyric Theatre name is being resurrected

through the purchase of another venerable city performance venue, the Westside Concert Theatre.

On Friday, local theatre producers Rick MacKenzie and Patrick Brennan bought the 300-seat building, which started life a movie hall in the 1930s, from fellow Ham-

ilton arts stalwarts Colin Lapsley and Loren Lieberman, executive director of the Festival of Friends.

MacKenzie said he wants the King Street West theatre to honour the mandate of its nearly century-old namesake, which later became the Century Theatre, on Mary

Street.

"We want to anchor what we do in the spirit of vaudeville," he said, referring to the variety show performances popular in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

MacKenzie envisions at least one night a week reserved for variety

shows featuring emerging local performers who want to tread the boards. Larger music, theatre and dance productions will likely fill the new Lyric Theatre's weekend bill.

Continued on A4

CANADA & WORLD



12 dead in First Air 737 crash: **A6**

GOMONDAY



Schoolgirls get A's in fashion **Go 7**

SPORTS



Hamilton Serbians win Spec Cup: **SP6**

Inside today
Bridge/Chess Go 6
Business A10
Comics Go 9
Crossword Go 9

Dear Abby Go 2
Horoscopes Go 2
Local A2
Lotteries Go 2

Mutuals Go 8
Opinion A12-13
Sudoku Go 9
Weather Go 2



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CANADA & WORLD

Doctors' report card grades down

Canadians want more accountability to redress old wounds in health care

BY LAUREN LA ROSE

TORONTO — Most Canadians want greater input and accountability when it comes to patient care, including a formalized process to voice complaints about the health-care system, according to a new report.

In its National Report Card on Health Care in Canada, the Canadian Medical Association enlisted pollster Ipsos Reid to assess Canadians' attitudes toward the health-care system.

In findings from the CMA's annual report released Monday, 93 per cent of Canadians agreed that they would like their province to adopt a patient health charter, designed to ensure accountability and responsibility for the quality of

care received. Some 82 per cent of those polled agreed such a charter outlining patients' rights and responsibilities would make the system more efficient.

The survey found 87 per cent of Canadians agreed the patient charter should have a mechanism in place where citizens could complain about poor health-care service. Most polled also supported the inclusion of an independent ombudsman to voice such complaints.

Greater transparency of health-care operations within and between provinces and territories was also of importance to respondents.

Some 80 per cent of Canadians supported publishing the number of complaints to better see how ju-

risdictions were doing in relation to each other.

And 88 per cent supported a system allowing citizens who were not receiving adequate care to seek and receive treatment in another jurisdiction.

CMA president Dr. Jeff Turnbull said Canadians are expressing a desire for a health-care system better designed to meet their needs.

"Canadians are clearly telling us — as we've found with our dialogue as well — that accountability is very important," Turnbull said in a phone interview from St. John's, N.L., where the association kicked off its annual meeting on Sunday.

"They want to have the care that they get measured against those national standards and they want

to have that public, and they also want a means for redress when, in fact, they're not getting care that meets that national standard."

"I think that that's a very reasonable expectation that Canadians have," he added.

"They want to have value for their hard-earned tax dollars and they want to know that they're getting very good care right across this country — no matter where they are."

Turnbull said some provinces are now starting to receive data about the performance of their health-care systems, but that it's not as comprehensive as it should be, nor in a format to be able to make comparisons between jurisdictions. He said there remains "a lot of work to be done" in terms of making the

system accountable.

The CMA said this year's report card saw a similar decline in Canadians' perceptions of the federal government's actions in dealing with health care.

The report found 36 per cent of respondents assigned Ottawa either an A or B grade for its performance, down from 41 per cent last year. Some 38 per cent of those polled assigned similar grades to their provincial governments, compared to 41 per cent in 2010.

The report found 83 per cent of respondents said their health services either stayed the same or worsened since the last federal-provincial health accord was signed in 2004.

The Canadian Press

'I've only ever seen this in the movies'

Continued from A1

"We have extensive damage to the downtown core and we have a report of injuries," Rektor said. "I don't have the conditions of anybody who's injured at this point."

Police have blocked traffic from entering the core.

"We're going to be going through the buildings and looking for people and check just to make sure everybody's accounted for."

"I'm looking at the tops of century-old buildings that are absolutely demolished," said John Weese, as he stood in the town's main square. "It is just absolutely devastating. People are running around, people are looking for their pets."

He said the storm of rain, hail and heavy wind passed through in a matter of minutes.

The hail was reported to be the size of a fist and smashed car windows.

Environment Canada said the storm was an F2 or F3 tornado, with winds as strong as 250 km/h.

Goderich was once named "the prettiest town in Canada" by Queen Victoria, and has always taken pride in its architectural heritage and in its distinctive urban design, with streets radiating out from an octagonal central square.

"The courthouse square is a complete disaster," retired police officer Nigel Tilley told Wingham's CKNX radio.



PAUL MCMULLEN, SPECIAL TO THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

A car is wrecked and a blue plastic chair from a building a block away is wedged in a tree in front of the courthouse in downtown Goderich.

Goderich resident Sean Carver watched the storm approach from his patio.

"The storm was quick, it blew through and it was gone," he said. "The so-called scary part is literally only about two minutes, half an instant, and then the winds go back down to about 80 km/h, but you know you're safe again."

He said residents are helping with the cleanup.

"We cleared out the streets ourselves, we just walked out there to get chainsaws and started clearing it," Carver said. "All you hear is

chainsaws. There's tractors driving around because you can't drive anywhere."

"The town actually comes together and everybody starts helping everybody. There's kids walking down the street with hack saws, teenagers just helping anybody that needs help."

Donna Lovell, a waitress the Candlelight Restaurant and Tavern who has lived in Goderich all her life, said the storm struck quickly.

"We didn't see anything and then all you hear is sirens. From what I understand it sort of literally tore

the town in half."

She said most of the destruction is in the area of Victoria Street.

"The roof of the church, I heard, is on the highway. There used to be a restaurant called the Burger Bar, there's no longer a Burger Bar," Lovell said. "I heard most of the (downtown) square has been damaged, all of the trees are down on the square — there's a lot of old trees up there. So there's major repairs, and they're not allowing anyone up on the square because there's a lot of gas leaks."

Candlelight owner Gus Balkou-

ras said his business is without hydro, but otherwise unscathed.

"I feel terrible. Terrible, especially with the people who have damage up town and destroyed properties," he said. "Mother Nature sometimes, it's very difficult to predict what will happen."

Andrea Ross, who works at the Cedar Lodge Motel in Goderich, says the storm was the most violent she has ever experienced, as the skies became very dark with huge clouds.

Hamilton Spectator wire services

Cause of fatal plane crash in Arctic unknown

Shock waves felt through Nunavut after 12 killed

RESOLUTE BAY, NUNAVUT — One was a six-year-old granddaughter. One was returning to his Arctic job from his sister's Newfoundland funeral.

One was the Winnipeg-based director of one of Canada's most important arctic research facilities. Others were flight crew based in Yellowknife and Edmonton.

As the identities of the victims in Saturday's Arctic plane crash trickled out Sunday, the pain of the tragedy spread from the remote hamlet of Resolute where the jet went down, across the North and to the entire nation.

"It's a bad time," said Aziz Kheraj, a local hotel owner and businessman who chartered the First Air 737 that crashed into a small hillside near the tiny community's airstrip, killing 12 and injuring three.

Kheraj had two granddaughters on the plane. One was among the dead, the other was flown to Ottawa General Hospital.

"We lost quite a few people on that plane, so it's pretty tough," Kheraj said. "We lost six staff."

Passenger Ches Tibbo, a carpenter from Harbour Mille, N.L., had been in a previous Arctic plane crash in 2008 and had been afraid to fly ever since.

"It has been totally devastating for this community," said Pam Parody Ghent, 41, Tibbo's next-door



The Drum dancer First Air 737-200, with its distinctive tail design, crashed at Resolute Bay on Saturday.



GILBERT HECHEMA, THE CANADIAN PRESS

neighbour.

Also killed was Martin Bergmann, the Winnipeg-based director of Canada's Polar Continental Shelf Project in Resolute, well-respected in Arctic science circles for his tireless advocacy of northern research.

While the RCMP have not officially identified any of the dead, they do say next of kin have been notified.

The impact of the fiery crash isn't limited to the community in which it occurred, said Nunavut Premier Eva Aariak.

"We have 25 communities in Nunavut and we always feel the pain and loss of those who perished as if they were part of our community," she said. "We have such a connectedness in all of our communities, so our hearts and thoughts go out to all those affected throughout and especially those in Resolute."

All four of the plane's crew are among the dead, and First Air offi-

cials struggled with their emotions as they answered questions Sunday.

"This accident is a tremendous tragedy for us all, throughout the entire North," said First Air CEO Scott Bateman in Yellowknife. "Our First Air family extends across the entire Canadian North and we're well aware that this tragic event touches the entire region and we all grieve together at this difficult time."

First Air has sent counsellors to provide support in Resolute, Yellowknife and other main stations in the airline's network. The Nunavut government has also sent counsellors to Resolute, as well as to other communities where the victims had family.

"There are many other relatives that are living outside of Resolute that are closely connected to the people involved in that tragedy," said Aariak. "Mental health service and counselling service is very,

very important for us to deploy in situations like this."

The cause of the accident remains unknown. Transportation Safety Board inspectors were on the site Sunday.

Hamlet residents and soldiers from nearby military exercises rushed to the scene of the crash Saturday afternoon in a desperate effort to pull survivors from the flaming wreckage.

Witnesses described how wreckage was strewn across a hill near the airport runway. One said the plane was broken into three pieces.

RCMP Constable Angelique Dignard said two of the three survivors — Kheraj's seven-year-old granddaughter and a 48-year-old man — have been sent to hospital in Ottawa.

The third survivor, a 23-year-old woman, remains in a hospital in the territorial capital, Iqaluit.

The Canadian Press

PM will pay his respects in Resolute

OTTAWA — The fatal crash of a jetliner Saturday in Resolute Bay has cast a pall over Prime Minister Stephen Harper's annual Arctic tour scheduled for this week.

The Prime Minister's Office has delayed his flight by 24 hours to Tuesday morning, and a planned two-night stay in the hamlet of Resolute has been put off.

Instead, Harper will fly into Resolute for a brief visit Tuesday to pay his respects before continuing on to Baker Lake, Yellowknife, Whitehorse and Haines Junction.

"Thanks to the herculean efforts of first responders, including members of the Canadian Armed Forces, lives were saved," he said.

On the south tip of Cornwallis Island, Resolute is about 3,500 kilometres north of Hamilton.

Twelve people died in the crash just outside Resolute's airport, with only three survivors.

The crash, say some, serves as a graphic illustration of why a greater government focus on the high Arctic is needed as the region opens up more internationally.

The trip, Harper's sixth straight to the north and high point of his year, is part of a government effort to exert Canadian territorial control over the rapidly melting Arctic, where a warming environment invites increasing international ship travel, mineral and gas exploration and scientific research.

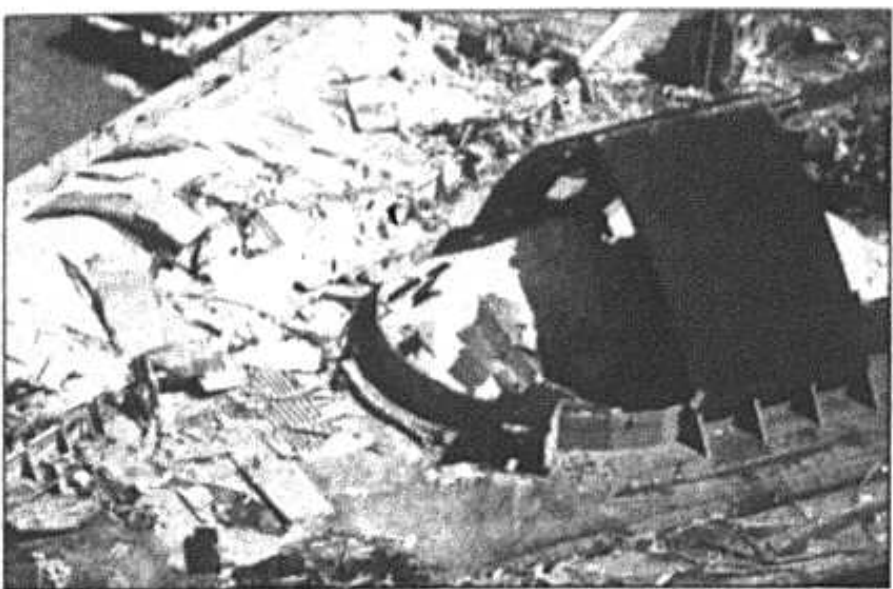
The Canadian Press

CANADA & WORLD



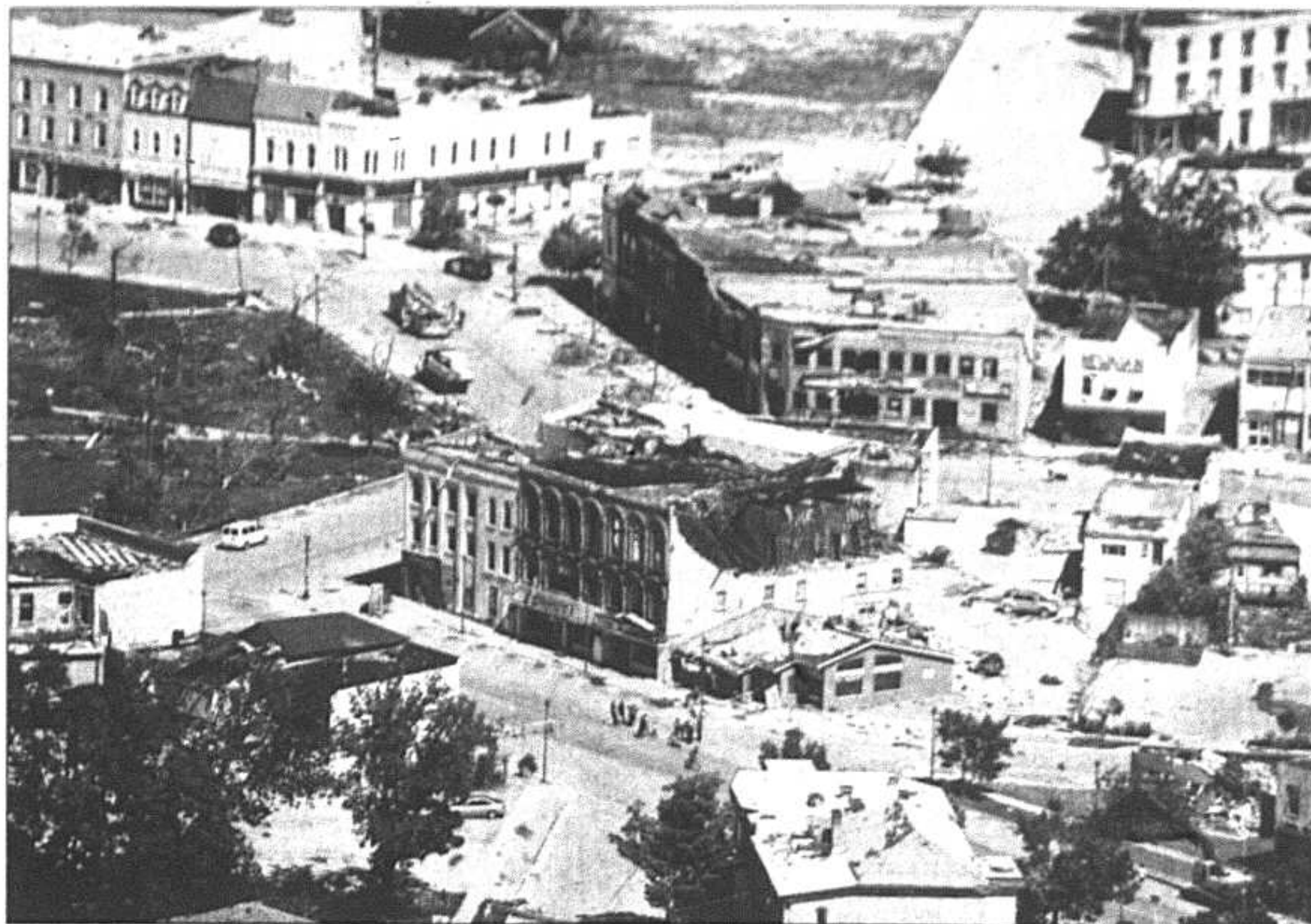
FRANK GUNN, THE CANADIAN PRESS

Flattened vehicles litter the ground in tornado-ravaged Goderich. The province is kicking in \$5 million for cleanup.



GEOFF ROBINS, THE CANADIAN PRESS

Severe damage is seen at facilities around Sifto salt mine after an F3-level tornado ripped through the facility.



GEOFF ROBINS, THE CANADIAN PRESS

Parts of Goderich sit in ruins Monday after a tornado ripped through on Sunday. Residents of the town dubbed the prettiest in Canada returned Monday to homes demolished by the most powerful tornado to hit Ontario in years.

'A very, very scary ordeal' in Goderich

Residents were given 12 minutes to prepare as deadly tornado bore down on town

GODERICH ♦ Residents of a town dubbed the prettiest in Canada returned Monday to homes demolished by the most powerful tornado to hit Ontario in years, dissolving into tears as the depth of the devastation sank in.

One woman said residents of the picturesque Lake Huron community of Goderich were in obvious shock and seemed paralyzed as to what to do next.

As daylight emerged, Debbie Hakkers, 49, crawled through the wreckage of her bedroom, sifting through the debris to fish out her jewellery box and laptop.

She rushed home from a shopping trip to neighbouring Port Huron on Sunday night to find her home torn apart, the roof ripped off and chunks of the walls blown clear across the street.

Her husband Gary, who was inside when the tornado struck at about 4 p.m., escaped with only a few scrapes, but the home they shared is in ruins.

"It's a total disaster," Debbie Hakkers said, wiping away tears as she surveyed the rubble. "It never really hit me until this morning

when I got up and came outside and I just cried."

At least 37 people were injured and a 61-year-old man was killed as winds of 280 km/h raged through the beach and port town of 8,000, ripping the roofs off historic buildings, turning trees into matchsticks and tossing cars around like toys.

Police identified the victim as Norman Laberge, 61, of Lucknow, Ont., who was working in a salt mine in the town when the storm hit.

After examining the damage Monday, investigators determined the storm was an F3-level tornado, and the province has allocated a \$5-million disaster relief fund to help with the cleanup.

"This is the worst damage I've ever seen," said Environment Canada's Randy Mawson, who has been investigating storms for 36 years. Winds carved a path about 500 metres wide through the town's centre, he added.

"To the south of that and to the north of that, if you go far enough, you'll see no damage occurring, but along that 500-metre path

through the downtown core, quite a bit of damage," he said.

The storm, which came nearly two years to the day after a tornado claimed the life of an 11-year-old boy in Durham south of Owen Sound, was the most powerful Environment Canada has seen in Ontario since 1996.

"Roofs are gone, literally gone and people are just devastated, they don't even know where to go or what to do," said resident Heather Johnston, who biked around felled trees and crumbled brick to get a look at the remains of her neighbourhood.

Johnston hid in the basement with her three grandchildren when they felt the storm hit. The fences around her home were ripped away, she said, but otherwise, there was little damage.

Her friends and neighbours weren't so lucky. One friend saw wood beams hurtle through the windows and smash into the walls of her house as it rattled in the wind.

"It was a very, very scary ordeal," Johnston said.

The mayor called the wreckage

catastrophic and declared a state of emergency. By early morning, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty had already activated its emergency plan for helping communities struck by disasters.

"I want to reassure the people of Goderich, you are not on your own, you've got 13 million people in your corner, think of yourselves as part of our large and extended Ontario family," McGuinty said Monday afternoon after arriving in Goderich to survey the damage. "If some tragedy befalls any one of us, we're all affected by it, we're all determined to help you fully recover."

McGuinty said the priority now is making sure everybody is safe and restoring power so people can return to their homes and businesses.

"We've come to the table with \$5 million at this point in time, we'll see where that gets us and we'll take it from there," he said. "I think we're going to have to bring a sense of patience to this."

Mayor Delbert Shewfelt vowed to repair the damage.

"Words are not enough (to describe the destruction,)" he said.

"It's unbelievable. That's all I can say."

Dave Phillips, senior climatologist at Environment Canada, said residents were warned of the looming tornado at 3:48 p.m. Sunday, 12 minutes before it hit.

He said such alerts are routinely issued between 10 and 15 minutes in advance.

Tornado warnings are communicated through a variety of channels, including radio and mobile applications. Warnings urge the public to immediately seek shelter, rather than securing their property, he said.

People are encouraged to take cover in low-lying areas and make sure their heads and necks are protected, Phillips said.

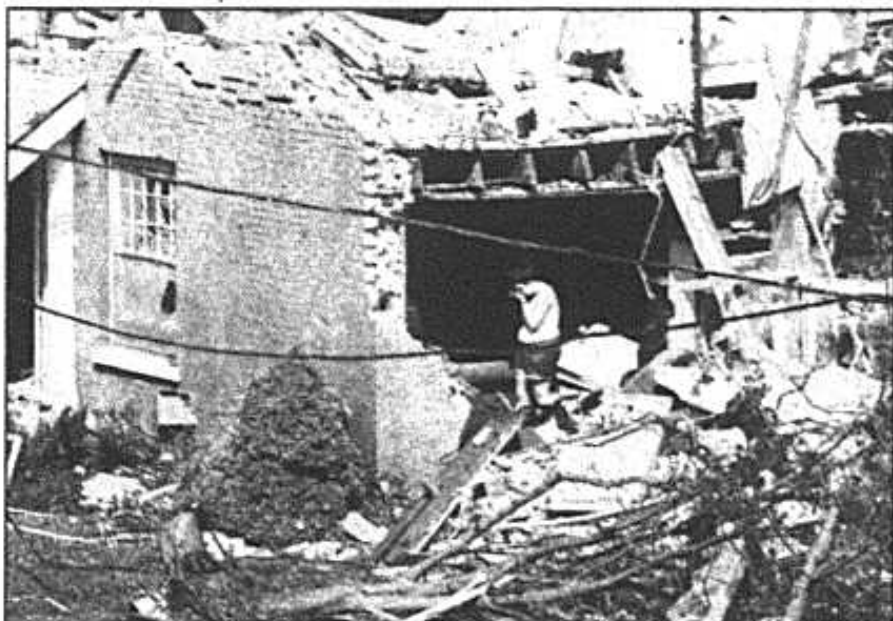
Goderich is a historically charming town known for its beautiful beachfront, wooden boardwalk and handsome architecture. According to folklore, it was Queen Victoria who dubbed it "the prettiest town in Canada," a motto the town does not attribute to her but has nonetheless adopted.

The Canadian Press



MELISSA TAIT, THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Victoria Street Church, located on the streets around the square in the centre of Goderich Monday.



MELISSA TAIT, THE CANADIAN PRESS

A Goderich resident takes a break while collecting personal belongings from a house on St. Patrick Street.



FRANK GUNN, THE CANADIAN PRESS

A man and woman react to the devastation as they clean up a tornado-ravaged house.

Emergency landing in north two hours after Nunavut crash

RANKIN INLET, NUNAVUT ♦ Another First Air jet had to make an emergency landing in the North about two hours after one of the airline's Boeing 737s crashed near the airport in Resolute Bay.

Transport Canada documents show a First Air 737-200 — the same model that crashed — landed safely in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, on Saturday, the same day 12 people were killed and three were injured in Resolute.

The report says that shortly after the second plane took off for Winnipeg, it turned back and landed with one engine. The crew requested emergency vehicles be on site for the landing. Fire, police and maintenance crews were called out. Everything appears to have gone according to plan.

Neither Transport Canada nor First Air immediately responded to requests for comment, but the airport manager confirmed the details of what happened.

"Approximately 30 to 40 kilometres out, they declared an emergency because they had to shut an engine down. They turned around and came back," Jason Todd told The Canadian Press.

"It landed without incident and

everyone went home. Everything went very smoothly."

Todd said Transport Canada officials happened to be on site. They had come in the previous day when they had problems with their aircraft.

Todd said he didn't know what was wrong with the engine. He had yet to receive a report from First Air. The plane was still in Rankin on Monday. He said he can't recall another single-engine landing in his four years managing the airport.

The cause of the crash in Resolute is under investigation. The plane's black boxes have been flown to Ottawa to be analyzed.

The plane, which had been chartered by a local hotel owner to bring in supplies from Yellowknife, went down on a hillside near the Resolute airport and broke into pieces. Witnesses report that there was fog in the area when the plane was trying to land, but investigators say it could be months before a cause is known.

The four crew members and a six-year-old child were among the dead.

The Canadian Press

Panel urges docs to discuss user fees

'Insurance schemes' also encouraged as solution to health-care woes

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. ♦ A contentious report from an advisory panel to the Canadian Medical Association says it should consider everything from user fees to franchises and "various insurance schemes" to bolster Canada's flagging health-care system.

"Be open to discussing a range of ways of funding services along the entire continuum of care with the goal of improving access," says the report released Monday as about 300 association delegates met in St. John's.

"While there is no unanimity on the best ways to fund a national health care system, such mechanisms as user fees, franchises and various insurance schemes are widely used elsewhere by governments across the political spectrum."

Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq, who spoke to the meeting Monday, stressed that the government supports the Canada Health Act which prohibits user fees.

Still, she said she would consider the 10 recommendations made by the six-member panel, which includes former Quebec health minister Philippe Couillard and econ-

omist Don Drummond, a Matthews Fellow on Global Public Policy at Queen's University.

"Of course I'm open to any suggestions ... to look at how we deliver health care in Canada," she said.

She said Ottawa will work with the provinces and territories to renew the 10-year, \$41-billion health accord which expires in 2014. She offered no timelines for the start of those talks, however.

A patient-centred approach with improved fiscal and outcome reporting will help transform the health-care system as the population ages, Aglukkaq said.

She also said governments and doctors have a leading role to play.

"Although we are still in our planning stages, I can tell you that we will be working collaboratively with the provinces and the territories to renew the accord," Aglukkaq said. "And there will be a clear emphasis on accountability. This way, Canadians will be able to know that we are achieving real results in improving the system."

New Democrat and Liberal health critics at the meeting pounced on Aglukkaq's comments, saying she offered no detail

on what accountability will mean.

The 10-year, federal-provincial funding accord reached under former prime minister Paul Martin was touted as a deal to transform health care. But problems persist in an unwieldy system that has been criticized for a shortage of countrywide reporting and performance benchmarks amid long wait times and rising drug costs.

Critics point out that lofty talk of national home care and pharmaceutical programs that could ease pressure on hospitals and cut redundant spending has amounted to little more than talk.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper promised during the spring election campaign to maintain yearly federal escalator funding of 6 per cent a year until at least 2016, but has said little beyond that. His Conservative government has also tended to stress that health care is mainly a provincial responsibility.

Outgoing association president Dr. Jeff Turnbull said the advisory panel was asked for its input as the association crafts an action plan as part of accord renewal talks.

The Canadian Press

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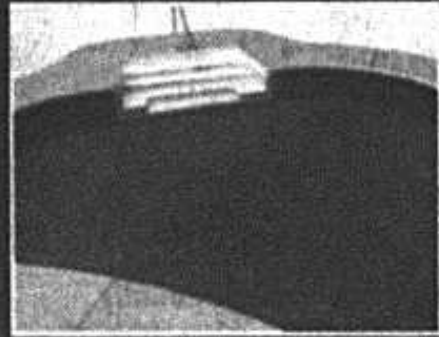
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Carpool popularity growing

LRT and all-day GO will reduce car reliance

Continued from A1

Workers in those three cities had the longest commutes — at 33, 31 and 30 minutes respectively.

In Toronto and Vancouver, it took public transit users about 20 minutes longer than car users to get to work. In Montreal, the difference was half that, about 10 minutes.

Although the study didn't offer any information specific to Hamilton, Topalovic points out the survey didn't include of carpools — a key factor, especially in cities such as Hamilton, where carpooling is gaining popularity.

"In Hamilton, our carpooling program is growing," he said. "We've gone from working with four employers to working with 12. Hamilton's largest workplaces are subscribing to these programs ... carpooling has a high uptake."

The city's plans for LRT and all-day GO service to Toronto should also boost the number of commuters who use transit, said Topalovic.

"In Ontario especially, we haven't really invested in rapid transit infrastructure in the last 40 years. If you didn't invest in our roads in the past 40 years, how would they look?" he said. "Cars have become the convenient mode because we made them the convenient mode."



HAMILTON SPECTATOR FILE PHOTO

Until his retirement in December, Burlington's Virgil Duff took the GO train to his job at the University of Toronto every workday for 41 years.

The keys to attracting people to LRT and all-day GO will be convenience and frequency. Even having to check a public transit schedule is an inconvenience, Topalovic said.

If Hamilton's current plans for LRT and GO become a reality, commuters can show up knowing

that a new train will be available in minutes.

"When a schedule no longer matters, it almost becomes like a car," Topalovic said.

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GO Transit increases train and bus options for commuters

GO Transit has increased and adjusted train and bus service schedules in the Lakeshore West corridor serving Hamilton, Burlington and Oakville.

Starting Saturday, Sept. 3, two new train trips will be added weekdays between Aldershot and Union Station and some existing train trips will be extended to Aldershot and one to Oakville.

The 3:15 p.m. westbound train from Union will now make all stops

to Aldershot. Schedules for buses connecting with trains on the modified routes have also been adjusted.

Seasonal Niagara Falls GO Train service will end on Sept. 6, but operate over the Thanksgiving long weekend, Oct. 7 to 10.

Changes to the Niagara Falls GO bus service include one new Friday trip, eight new weekend bus trips and changes to some existing bus trips.

Sunday and holiday bus service between Aldershot and McMaster University will resume Sept. 3.

GO has added one new weekday westbound run on the Hamilton-Toronto QEW bus, as well as 11 new Friday eastbound trips.

Specific schedule information can be found at GO Transit's website or call 1-888-438-6646 or 1-800-387-3652 TTY.

The Hamilton Spectator

Tornado warnings issued as powerful storm rolls over city

A powerful thunderstorm rolling through Hamilton last night left thousands without power.

According to a Hydro One spokesperson, about 3,500 homes in Dundas and Ancaster were blanketed in darkness Wednesday night, as the city was slammed with high winds and heavy rain. Pockets of East and Central Hamilton were also without power at 9:30 p.m.

The OPP closed Eastport Drive after pieces of metal started falling from scaffolding on the Burlington Skyway.

Authorities said no city streets were flooded, although there were reports of hydro wires down or hydro poles catching fire in various parts of the city as well as downed tree branches.

"There's quite a bit of ponding around, but haven't heard anything about flooding," said OPP

Constable Graham Williamson.

Williamson also said the roads were clear of crashes, as of 10 p.m.

Just after 9:30 p.m., Environment Canada placed the Hamilton area under a tornado warning. The agency also issued a severe thunderstorm warning earlier in the evening, but both were lifted by 10:30 p.m.

As of 11 p.m., Hamilton remained under a tornado watch.

In Halton Region, there were no serious crashes or flooding to report, but authorities said there were "all kinds of trees down" in the Burlington and Oakville areas as the storm pressed eastward.

The Weather Network had reports of a possible tornado touchdown on Brant Street near Dundas Street in Burlington. Those reports were unconfirmed.

A hydro transformer was also reportedly downed at King Road and

North Shore Boulevard East, while pockets of north Burlington and the area around Mapleview shopping centre were without power.

Most of southwestern and central Ontario was placed under twister watches and warnings late Wednesday afternoon.

Wednesday evening, Environment Canada said one possible tornado was heading toward the Teeswater and Mildmay areas.

Another was heading toward the Lake Huron shoreline near the Kettle Point and Grand Bend areas, as well as the Pinery and Ipperwash Provincial Parks and the Parkhill area.

The storm threat began on Lake Huron in late afternoon and is predicted to continue marching east across the province through the night.

The Hamilton Spectator

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