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# TORNADO PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

T.O. 175 37275  
4855950

L.O. 176 46300  
4892250

# Two killed in Tottenham as twister wrecks 50 homes

TOTTENHAM — Two people are dead and at least 50 homes destroyed or damaged in this quiet and exclusive town after a vicious twister cut a swath through a subdivision south of here.

Late last night Tecumseth County was a fortress of police and emergency crews who had sealed off all roads into the town, submerged in darkness since about 5 p.m. when the tornado struck.

The storm chose its victims with deadly selectivity — uprooting trees, snapping hydro polls in half and wiping out entire farms while leaving homes untouched right beside others it demolished.

John Oldfield Sr., a local businessman in his 60s, was killed when his outdoor workshop was levelled less than an hour after he returned from buying a doornob at a local hardware store.

His home standing about 100 feet away was untouched as was his son's just 150 yards from the destruction.

About a mile away, Yvonne Rabbetts, a widow in her 50s, died when the tornado tore her log cabin home from its foundation and hurled the rubble against nearby homes — many of them large estates.

Dazed residents wandered the dirt roads last night unable to gauge the storm's ugly conquest in the darkness. The only light came from emergency vehicles surrounding the town and flashlights carried by dozens of police, firefighters and first aid crews summoned from nearby cities.

"I just cannot believe any of this. It's a devastating, horrible wreck," said Jim Golden, 32, whose home, just a mile away in Tecumseth, escaped unscathed.

"John (Oldfield) worked out in his shed a lot and he was just in

town and then this absolutely incredible thing just descended on us."

Golden said residents were devastated by the storm.

"People just don't know what to do. Some of them are going over to the community centre and trying to find members of their family."

About 20 miles north in a farm yard just south of Dundalk, Jim Livingston stood stunned before his turn-of-the-century Victorian home, which was sliced in two.

The entire side of the huge three-storey brick home was peeled off and left in a pile of bricks and mortar. An extension at the back of the house was sucked away and hurled in every direction.

Livingston's 22-year-old son Brent was sleeping inside the house when it was struck but managed to escape unharmed. There were no other injuries reported in the area.

Livingston's three cars were crumpled, their windshields shat-

tered and parts strewn beside a barn, which had been crushed by the force.

His family's clothing, furniture and appliances were tossed like toys into fields hundreds of yards away. Downed power lines were draped like limp string across acres of surrounding farmland and about a dozen demolished barns.

A mile up the street Steve Zderic, 49, stood in despair near the SkyLight Restaurant on Highway 10 — the family business he has struggled two years to build.

Five people, including his family and two customers, rushed through the small restaurant's back door when the twister punctured a large skylight in the roof of the main dining room around 4.30 p.m.

Zderic's wife Bosa, 38, was trapped in the family car as the gale swept it several feet into the air. No one was injured, but Zderic said he was "still shaking, scared and very, very disappointed."

# Orangeville plaza and homes levelled, scores are injured

Scores of people were injured and a shopping mall was destroyed when yesterday's tornado lashed Orangeville, 80 kilometres (50 miles) north of Toronto.

Mono Plaza in the quiet town was flattened, trapping scores of people beneath rubble, but miraculously no one was killed.

Damage estimates range from \$1 million to \$2.5 million.

Arnold Patterson, 65, owner of Patterson's Furniture store, was trapped with his wife and nephew when the violent winds struck Mono Plaza on the east side of Highway 10.

"It got very, very, black — it seemed like 9 p.m.," he said. "It began to rain hard, and two minutes later the wind came up and blew the windows and doors in like a freight train."

## Bingo parlor

"My wife Viola and I hit the floor and crawled around looking for something to get under. The plaza literally exploded when the tornado hit."

One worker was taken to a hospital with a broken leg, and three women received cuts.

The tornado struck about 4.45 p.m. Patterson said a bingo parlor next to his store normally draws 150 patrons on Friday nights. Many "surely would have died" if the tornado hit a few hours later, he said.

A search showed no one was trapped inside the wrecked plaza, said Ontario Provincial Police Constable Steven MacDonald.

The tornado followed a line along Campbell Rd., the winds hitting houses and uprooting trees as they roared toward the plaza. Only a jumble of twisted metal and concrete remained after the storm passed.

About 20 cars appeared to have been picked up and spit out at random, creating scattered mounds of wreckage.

Richard Hanson, 42, said he was looking out the front window of his house when the twister passed through his backyard.

"It was like those films of hurricanes in the tropics, and things (were) moving horizontally by us — large things. I have big timbers in my yard."

Rob Patterson, 30, who worked in his uncle's store, said he watched from a window as the sky turned black and rain started pelting down.

"I saw debris floating in the air and watched as a roof went by," he said. "I just flattened myself down and waited for help. There was a tremendous bang and crash. Glass was flying all over the place."

Paul Hoadley, 19, of Orangeville, was in a field adjacent to the plaza when the twister hit. "All I could hear was a ripping noise and then an explosion, as everything started flying around," he recalled.

"It happened really fast — it was over in seconds. I just stayed down and started running for cover when it let up a little."

Federal Revenue Minister Perrin Beatty, MP for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe, was at the scene within hours of the disaster. He described the damage as devastating.

He plans to hold weekend meetings with local officials and will discuss financial assistance for the stricken region with his cabinet colleagues.

## Homes destroyed

The storm also destroyed several homes opposite the plaza.

Karen Lukins, her husband Lawrence and their three small children were huddled inside the kitchen of their small bungalow when the tornado struck.

"I saw something that looked like a roof fly over the house," the woman said. "We saw things flying through the air, and then my husband knocked me on the floor and shoved the three kids into the corner."

She said it was a miracle the family wasn't in the living room, which was showered by flying glass.

The tornado passed as quickly as it appeared, Lukins added.

Next door, the house of Fred and Devon Raymond, a blind couple, was demolished, and both had to be rescued by neighbors.

Lawrence Lukins said he rushed over to the house after the storm had passed and pulled the couple out from under the debris. Both were uninjured.

**GRAND VALLEY** — This town of historic brick homes looks like the aftermath of a place hit by a bomb. One entire street — Amaranth St. — was levelled, as were the public library, town hall and community medical centre, the only such centre in the area.

Two people were killed. Barry Woods was driving home in a pick-up truck when townspeople said he was "sucked right out of the truck."

And Tillie McIntyre, a visitor from Scotland, was found dead among the rubble of a flattened house.

Dr. Donald Mulder, the town's only doctor and also the coroner, said about eight residents were sent to hospital with injuries ranging from a broken leg to multiple, critical injuries.

### Many trapped

The most incredible story was the collapse of the town library in which at least a half dozen women and children were trapped.

Volunteer firefighter Holden Clarke said more than 50 residents scrambled through the rubble "going brick by brick" to rescue those trapped.

Catherine Moore, 4, was found after 40 frantic minutes in the very middle of the library, deep under tons of crumbled brick. Brad Wilson, 13, spotted the youngster's foot through the bricks.

"It was amazing. We found her under all that rubble and she just walked out," said Ida Marcotte.

Volunteer firefighters said as many as 50 people may have been buried under houses, but most were dug out quickly by residents.

"We started ripping and tearing and within an hour I helped dig out 20 people or more," said Ivan Jamieson. "It was just get them out and run to the next house."

Jamieson said he was in his truck when the tornado hit. "It picked the truck right up and turned it right around. I thought it was the end of the earth."

Residents complained they had no advance warning of the tornado. Forecasts throughout the day called only for thunderstorms.

Mulder said he was joking with patients before the tornado hit. "It got so black and I said the last time I saw the sky like that was when I was a kid and saw a tornado. I turned my back to the window and the roof went off and the ceiling came down."

Mulder was in his examining room with four young children and their mother, but all escaped with minor scratches.

An emergency shelter lighted by generators was set up in the town arena, where townspeople served coffee and doughnuts, handed out blankets and arranged overnight accommodation for the hundreds of homeless.

They were also appealing through ham radio operators for backup generators because area farmers needed help operating milking machinery.

### Went black

Tracey Miller, 21, was in the bedroom of one of the few houses left standing on Amaranth St. "I opened up the shutters to see the lightning and then everything went black. The house shook like it was going to fall in. All of a sudden the door came off the hinges, the windows all broke in. I was afraid to move. Branches were coming in the bedroom."

Miller said she joined the rest of her family in the basement where "we prayed like you wouldn't believe."

Marcotte, who manned the emergency shelter information desk for part of the night despite being nine months pregnant, said townspeople have already been warned they won't have hydro for a week.

Mulder set up a makeshift medical centre at the arena to give medical attention to people with minor injuries while residents stood over him with flashlights.

One of those who needed Mulder's help was Robin Berger, the town's only public health nurse, who had been caught between two glass doors when the medical centre caved in. Mulder removed a large wedge of glass from her neck, shaking his head in amazement that her injuries weren't more severe.

"We just can't believe it," Mulder said. "This doesn't happen. It's the kind of thing that happens on TV. Thank God we're all alive."

Berger's husband Lou was driving home from his job as a Kodak engineer in Toronto when he heard the news. He drove across sideroads to bypass roadblocks leading to Grand Valley.

# Grand Valley torn in half

By Brian McAndrew Toronto Star

**GRAND VALLEY** — Half a town is better than none for the 1,300 residents of this once-postcard village on the banks of the Grand River.

In relative terms Grand Valley was the hardest hit of all central Ontario towns where tornadoes touched down.

The grim statistics here were two dead, 69 injured (five critically), 101 buildings destroyed and another 200 damaged. The destruction left half the town's population homeless.

Tillie McIntyre, 76, visiting from Scotland, died when the couch she was sitting on was lifted through the roof, landing outside the home of her niece, Mary Fraser.

They were all lying on the lawn out

there," said Fraser's husband, Doug Hunter, recalling the devastation he found when he arrived home. "It was just a nightmare for them."

Barry Wood, 50, died when he was thrown from his pickup truck — forced from the road by high winds — on his way home to his farm just west of town.

The destruction swept out of the west, levelling everything in its path along tree-lined Amaranth St., heart of the village's historic "old town."

Kathryn Moore, 7, and her brother, Ricky, 7, were inside the public library when the tornado struck. She was rescued unharmed, except for a blackened eye, from beneath a pile of bricks and a bookshelf.

Ricky crawled outside, his left leg broken. They watched yesterday as other town children made their contribution to the clean-up, picking books from the library rubble.

Two churches lay in ruins. The roof collapsed at Trinity United Church and Rev. Dorinda Vollmer was stunned to find 11 stained-glass windows still intact.

Blankets and donated clothes piled up at the local arena as volunteers began the massive task of clearing debris from the streets.

Visiting Ontario Premier Frank Miller and Liberal leader David Peterson were amazed by the resourcefulness of town residents. "I haven't seen a sad face yet," Peterson said.

## Minister watches miracles, tragedies occur side by side

By Brian McAndrew Toronto Star

**GRAND VALLEY** — Rev. Wendall Leytham saw miracles and tragedies happening side by side as he witnessed the wrath of nature out of control.

Standing in this tiny village on the banks of the muddy Grand River, Leytham watched Friday as the tornado tore the roof from his downtown apartment.

Minutes later he was digging his way towards a shoe poking out from beneath a pile of bricks that was once the town library.

He was stunned when the young girl stood up, dusted herself off, and walked away after a heavy wooden bookshelf was lifted from her prone, crumpled figure.

"It was a miracle," he decided.

But miracles weren't enough.

A part-time funeral home employee, Leytham, 25, was grief-stricken as he collected the body of racehorse breeder Barry Wood, 50, who died when his pick-up truck was forced into a ditch just west of town.

Tillie McIntyre, 76, a visitor from Scotland, was the second person to die.

It was only yesterday Leytham found time to visit his Grand Valley Church of Christ. Erected of solid red brick in 1892, it came tumbling down in just two minutes.

Picking through the ruins yesterday, Leytham salvaged a stack of hymnals, bibles and a battered guitar case.

"You can replace a building but you can't replace people," he said in the din of chain saws along Amaranth St. where the tornado delivered its cruelest blow.

Friends worked with Kathy Mullis as she

gathered the remains of her belongings from her 85-year-old home, the first brick house built in Grand Valley.

The rear wall was stripped away leaving a doll-house view of the interior complete with a bookshelf teetering on the edge — but all the books neatly in place — and an iron standing on an ironing board.

"With all the rain and hail, I thought someone was getting a heck of a storm," she said grimly. "I didn't think it would be here."

Her son, Brent, 15, was home alone when the tornado struck.

"I was just talking on the phone and the line went dead," he said, standing outside the Amaranth St. house. "The windows blew in and then the TV blew past me. The sky was all black. It was loud, really loud."

There was little warning and no escape.

"People here didn't know what to do," said Leytham, who lived three years in Missouri, part of the U.S. midwest's tornado belt.

"They went outside instead of going to their basements," he said. "We knew there was going to be a storm coming but nobody knew it was a tornado."

The destruction along Amaranth St. was complete with the exception of three houses that somehow escaped with minor damage.

Massive trees that once made for a picturesque scene along the shaded street were uprooted, leaving gaping holes in the ground.

Strips of aluminum siding wrapped grotesquely around poles or became imbedded deeply into tree trunks.

Mark Erskine had just finished a \$5,000 kitchen renovation in his family's homestead.

Toronto STAR

JUNE 2, 1985

### **Holland Marsh warehouses ripped**

Friday's tornado left its scars on Holland Marsh, ripping roofs off homes and levelling 20 warehouses and an undetermined number of barns, Ontario Provincial Police report.

Trees were uprooted and power lines knocked down in the 4,000-hectare (10,000-acre) market gardening area that stretches north from Bradford to Lake Simcoe.

The storm also shattered many greenhouses and flattened crops, the OPP said. Cost of the damage has yet to be estimated.





- claire bickley, sun

BLIND TORNADO victim Fred Raymond of Orangeville sits among belongings

neighbors saved yesterday. He and wife Devon, also blind, were briefly trapped.

# Blind couple huddled as house shook

By CLAIRE BICKLEY  
Staff Writer

ORANGEVILLE — Unable to see the devastation the tornado left behind, Fred Raymond sat listening quietly yesterday as neighbors salvaged what they could from the blind man's home.

Raymond, 57, and wife Devon, 34, also blind, said they feel graced by a miracle to have lived through the unseen horror that reduced their bungalow to ruins.

Alone in the six-room house when the tornado hit, unable to see the darkening storm clouds, they relied on their other senses to survive.

"We could hear the wind picking up — it was a roar that kept rising. I was very silent — just listening. I knew something more than a usual storm was coming," Fred said yesterday.

"I knew enough to hit the floor and cover Devon with my body to protect her."

As the rubble of their home cascaded over the prone couple, only luck saved them. A heavy chimney which could have crushed them fell away from the couple.

Pinned under broken furniture and collapsed walls, they were pulled to safety by neighbor Larry Lucan.

"It was a force not to be reckoned with — it reckoned with us instead," Devon said, sorting through the few belongings left by the storm.

"The rubble was falling all over us. I kept thinking, when is the fatal blow coming?"

"We were there five or ten minutes. I kept saying to Fred, 'Do you think anyone will find us? Do you think they know we're here?'"

"Then we heard Larry's voice and it was like music to our ears."

The friends who helped Fred build his modest home over the past 20 years rallied yesterday to clear away its remains.

Friends found an apartment in town where the pair can stay for now.

# Tornado jeopardizes summer at camp for 180 deserving kids

By Al Sokol Toronto Star

The killer tornadoes that struck Ontario last Friday have added a sense of urgency to the first B'nai B'rith/Reena 10-kilometre (6.2-mile) fun run, which begins at 9 a.m. at Yorkdale shopping centre.

The Reena Foundation's camp east of Orangeville, which provides services for the mentally handicapped, suffered severe damage when the tornado swept through its Caledon Hills site.

Hardest hit was the million-dollar Irving Ungerman Sports Complex, officially opened last October. It was specifically designed to accommodate the physically disabled as well as be a centre for the mentally handicapped.

More than \$500,000 damage was done, only a portion covered by insurance. As a result, the camping season for 180 youngsters, scheduled to begin June 23, is in jeopardy.

The tornado ripped the roof off the Ungerman complex, damaged the dining hall, destroyed a number of cabins and eliminated the in-ground swimming pool.

The Reena Foundation is in desperate need of donations, trailers or tents for the camp children. Volunteers are required as well.

"The campsite will never be rebuilt in time, but we can't cancel camp for these kids. Sunday's run was going to raise money to help furnish the complex. Now we need money just to keep the camp open," said Ungerman, a noted Toronto sports promoter and philanthropist.

Runners can make a contribution by entering the B'nai Brith/Reena race Sunday. The race-day entry fee is \$12, with registration at 8:30 a.m. at Yorkdale.

Others can send donations to the Reena/Irving Ungerman Sports Complex, 1526 Dupont St., Toronto, Ont., M6P 3S4.

THE TORONTO STAR THUR JUNE 6, 1985

NEAL ORANSFUELL



### Librarian buried

Elayne walks with me towards my house. At one point we nearly fall into a completely undamaged swimming pool. I notice how pretty the small ceramic tiles are.

I run into the house. A note from Thomas says he's gone out to help — Shann the librarian is buried in the library. I slip the fish into the pool and start back to see if I can help and to look for Thomas. But, oh God, I'm thirsty and there's no water in the taps. Everyone is thirsty. Shock dehydrates, I remember. Almost the only sound is people panting, even the children aren't wailing yet.

There is no water anywhere except the river, dirty brown. It looks as though it's boiling. All the hydro lines are down and someone says to me, quiet and reasonable, *be careful of the wires*. It clicks in my mind: no electricity, no water pumps.

I keep going towards the library and for the first time see that it's down. That heavy brick building! My eyes are narrowed against the sun, looking for Thomas. He sees me first.

"I've just read the most extraordinary book," he says. "*Heat*. It's about tornadoes." And then, "I knew you were all right because I saw the car by the Co-op. I turned out the headlights." And then, "Shann is okay, they got her out. Nothing but a cut wrist."

We pick our way down Main St. to get what we can carry from the car. I have a bottle of cider and a bottle of wine, a bag of groceries and a cold chicken I cooked the night before in Toronto, for a Friday night picnic.

### Media arrive

A helicopter flies low overhead. The media! I realize my sister will be frantic with worry. My daughter's at work in Toronto so she won't know yet; but her boyfriend will. I decide to phone them as soon as we get home.

The initial shock is wearing off now and we are both very tired. We start slowly towards home. Crossing Amaranth St. the shock is back. How to come to terms with the violence? So much damage in so little time. Huge maple trees look as though a giant hand has twisted them off, like picking a flower without a pair of scissors.

One house still stands, except its side is ripped off. The table in the dining room is laid for dinner, chairs neatly around it and a glass at each place. Upstairs the bathtub and basin hang at a crazy angle, but in the bedroom the bed is made.

The road has disappeared under the rubble and I'm disoriented. It's

hard to know which way is home and nothing is familiar any more. It's as though the place has been bombed and I get a quick mental image of bomb sites in London, seen in 1951.

Home! The house looks so undisturbed, except for the trees down. It looks almost less real than the chaos we've just left. Thomas points out one small hole in the roof, where something hit it, and that's the extent of the damage. Lucky! Magically lucky.

The ice hasn't melted in the freezer yet so I pour cider over ice and we sip our drinks in silence and pour others until it's all gone. It tastes so good, cold, wet, dry, wonderful Quebec cider.

The telephone is dead and I worry about my sister and daughter worrying.

Thomas tells his story. He was sitting on the front porch with Miz Charlotte-the-Cat, smoking a cigarette and watching the storm approach. Enjoying it. It got darker and darker and the lightning, forked, was very close. He could actually see it dancing towards him, hitting the ground in front of him. It was being created in very low cloud banks.

He thought "What is this? Kansas?" and then, louder than the thunder, he heard a growl, like an unimaginably large animal. With one accord, he and Charlotte headed for the cellar.

Halfway down the stairs, silence. He went back outside to look. The maple on the front lawn was slowly settling to the ground. Dust rose behind the house across the way, where the old pear tree had been decapitated. In about 10 seconds the tornado had been and gone.

Thomas and I decide to get the car and drive to Hillsberg to phone my sister and tell her we're all right.

Once again the trek across the rubble. But I'm impressed with how quickly help has been organized. Tractors and pick-up trucks are dragging trees out of the way, clearing the roads so that cranes and heavy equipment can get in. People have already been counted. We hear of one dead.

### Saturday morning, June 1

First light brings the sound of heavy equipment and helicopters. I go and sit in the car with the radio on, waiting for the CBC news. For some reason I want to hear what the outside world is being told.

I'm fidgety. There's a sort of suspect excitement about being in the middle of a disaster and it fights with black depression when you actually look on the desolation.

Finally the news comes on and I learn for the first time that Orangeville and Barrie have been hit too. Especially Barrie. A reporter says he's just flown over Grand Valley and it looks as though a nuclear bomb has hit it. I feel very unsettled. Thomas is still asleep. I want human contact. I walk out to see what's happening and also to see if there's anything I can do to help. After a while I'm told to go home, there is nothing I can do.

It's too windy to build a safe fire so I light the kerosene stove and start heating water for coffee.

# THE MIDWEEK Banner

VOL. 28 NO. 7

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ORANGEVILLE, ONTARIO, WED., JUNE 5, 1985

3 SECTIONS—38 PAGES

## 20 years spent building, 30 seconds spent ruining

By DONNA QUARTERMAIN  
Banner Staff Writer

What took more than 20 years to build, was ruined in less than 30 seconds.

A tornado that ripped through southern Ontario Friday afternoon took with it a home built by blind 57-year-old Fred Wilkins.

It was something that signified years of hard labor and unmeasurable pride.

Wilkins and his 34-year-old wife Devon, a correspondent for The Orangeville Banner were just sitting down to eat an early dinner around 4:30 p.m. when the tornado hit.

"We had heard thundering and lightning all day so the storm really didn't concern us," recalled Devon. "All of a sudden we heard a roar that seemed to increase in intensity and then there was a bang. Next thing I knew we were on the floor."

Devon said she was lying sideways on the floor, unable to move because a heavy board had fallen on her leg, and her husband on top of her.

"Initially we thought the dining room window had blown in, but I remember Fred saying the roof had come off," she said. "We were on the floor and didn't want to get up until it was gone."

The couple lay rain-soaked on the floor of their devastated home, only feet away from a concrete chimney that collapsed under the pressure.

"We were soaked within seconds, it was like a torrent of rain. Just 30 seconds and it was over," she said. "I remember feeling the initial wind but I don't remember any other wind after that. I was fully conscious but maybe I was too scared."

"I don't like thunderstorms even at the best of times."

As the horrendous winds torn down the walls and lifted the roof off the small bungalow the couple remained on the floor for 10 minutes.

"I kept asking Fred, 'Do you think anyone will find us?'" she recalled. "I just kept wondering when the next bunch of debris was going to fall. I felt like I was living on borrowed time."

Neighbor Larry Lukins came to their rescue.

"His voice was music to our ears," she said. "He had to clear some of the rubble away to help us out."

But despite the loss of their home, Devon maintains they're just lucky to be alive.

"With the whole house falling down on you like that it's a wonder we're alive to even talk about it," she said. "The chimney fell only four feet away from us — we were that close from making it."

Following the storm, her husband, with the help of neighbors, spent hours recovering articles and searching for important papers.

Fred began his venture to build the bungalow in 1965 with the help of his father, who has since passed away.

"His father helped him lay the blocks for the foundation and they had to work as a team because his father had a heart condition," Devon explained. "Fred did the heavy lifting and his father guided his hands."

Wilkins was working on building



One lone wall was all that remained of the devastated home,

littered scattered in the front yard by the tornado.

several rooms in the basement, as "he did a little project every year when time and money allowed."

He moved into the home in 1971 and the couple was married in 1978.

Despite the severity of their loss, Devon has managed to maintain her sense of humor. She confides the entire week just wasn't going her way.

"On Wednesday I had to go to the dentist for several fillings and I felt a cold coming on that day — and now this."

But despite the severity of the storm, Devon said their loss wasn't as great as expected.

"Would you believe that the curio cabinet with all of our dishes in it was still standing? We lost one television, the dining room table and several armchairs. Our clothes are pretty dirty, but they can be cleaned."

Devon said this weekend was to mark the end of her two year radio course at Humber College of Applied Arts and Technology.

"My electric typewriter got a lot of water, but I do have a manual one that I lent to one of my friends," she said. "I still have one essay I have to do."

She said she still expects to graduate June 21 with her classmates.

Monday morning Devon said they are trying to reach their insurance broker in Burlington.

Their home was fully insured, worth about \$70,000, but the couple doesn't know if they will rebuild. They are presently staying with friends in Orangeville.

"It's possible we will rebuild but we don't know yet," said Devon, who went to emergency Sunday to have her leg examined. "We finally got a chance to talk to each other Sunday."

The couple said they want to thank everyone who has helped them through the last two days.

"I want to say thank-you to everyone for the efforts," Devon said. "They have really helped us to put our lives together so much quicker than we thought."

# THE MIDWEEK Banner

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VOL. 88 NO. 7 ORANGEVILLE, ONTARIO, WED., JUNE 5, 1985 3 SECTIONS—30 PAGES

## Tornado lasted a 'lifetime'

By DONNA QUARTERMAIN  
Banner Staff Writer

Viola Patterson says the tornado that took seconds to destroy the 70,000 square foot Mono Marketplace seemed to last a lifetime.

"The noise literally consumed your whole body and sounded like jet engines taking off," said Patterson, wife of Arnold Patterson, Orangeville's Reeve and owner of Patterson's Fine Furniture. "It only lasted seconds but it seemed like a lifetime."

Arnold Patterson was just one of many businessmen with stores in the plaza who saw their whole livelihood carried away by the storm in just seconds. He lost over a million dollars as a result of the disaster.

"I haven't shed a tear yet, although I've felt like it," Viola Patterson told The Banner Monday morning.

She said she and her husband and their nephew Robert were in the store during the storm that's been deemed Ontario's worst disaster.

"I remember Arnold called me to go to the window to see the sky and it was darker than I've ever seen it. It was only around 4:30 and it looked like it was 10 at night," she explained.

She said her friend Jean Turnball had just left the store when it started to rain and hail. Patterson waved at her friend who drove back into the parking lot but didn't leave her car.

"We saw debris floating through the air, there were chunks of roofs," she recalled. "You say to yourself there's something wrong because it's so unusual. The curio cabinet was moving like a pendulum and waving like a tree."

The three had moved away from the window when the tornado bombed the plaza.

"It came so fast and there was no time to get to the door and like the proverbial mother I just yelled for everyone to hit the floor," she said.

Patterson said she can't begin to describe the sounds that enveloped them.

"Glass was breaking everywhere and the front door kept opening and shutting — I'm sure that's what saved our lives," she explained. "I'm remember thinking to myself, 'Oh my God what's going to happen', but you're not frightened because there are too many things happening."

I think it's a sixth sense that keeps you thinking of anything you can do to save yourself. We were in the midst of our livelihood."

Immediately after the storm, she said her friend Turnball had managed to get out of her car and she met them at the front door covered in blood from superficial wounds.

"There was also a young man, I had no idea who he was, but he said he had just got out of his car and I felt like putting my arms around him and saying, it's OK you're alive," she recalls. "He was shaking like an Aspen leaf."

She said the police were on the scene immediately and the three headed up to the office to save what they could.

Monday morning she said they can't get into the store until they receive approval from the building inspector.

"It's imperative we save what we can because our goods are so perishable," she said. "Our future is still up in the air this morning."

This is the second blow of disaster for the Patterson's as fire swept through their store on Broadway seven years ago.

Willy Edelbrock, a German native and owner of Mono Marketplace, had just left the plaza for Camilla when the storm was falling on the area.

"I left for Camilla and when I came back 15 minutes later the plaza was gone," Edelbrock said. "I've never seen such a pitch black sky in my life."

Edelbrock, one of the brothers in Edelbrock Brothers Incorporated, said construction on the plaza began in 1959 and carried out in stages within the next 15 years.

He said 10 people were in the marketplace when the tornado, including his daughter Elizabeth who manages the fleamarket.

She was painting at the back of the store when the tornado swept through the plaza and her father says by some miracle she's alive.

"Debris fell on her and I looked at the whole she crawled out of and I couldn't even get in there," Edelbrock said.

Edelbrock said his son Karl was on the floor of his pick-up truck for the duration of the storm and only suffered from minor cuts on his hands.

He estimates his loss at more than \$1.5 million and said he's waiting for the building inspector to examine the area before he can estimate his total loss.

More than 50 vendors who had their goods at the fleamarket saw years of collectible items perish.

"It (a tornado) can strike anywhere, anytime, but it's too early now to tell," he said. "It still under police investigation and the building has to be checked."

★ More tornado news

★ Special meeting

★ Junior Northmen play

★ Disaster relief news

# THE MIDWEEK Banner

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## Phone calls told of nearby disasters

I slept through it.

While tornadoes swept through the area and in a matter of minutes ravaged the homes, businesses and lives of countless people just a few short miles away, I was in another world, fast asleep.

And when I woke up, the sun was shining, the skies were calm, and all seemed well with the world.

Until the phone rang.

A friend from Woodstock, having just heard the 6 p.m. newscast, calling to see if I had further information on the tornado that struck Orangeville.

A what? Where? There must be some mistake.

But those initial newscasts, at first garbled and lacking in detail, confirmed it was no mistake, but a horrible, cruel reality.

When something as devastating as the storms that tore through this area last week happens, you expect some sort of warning, some sign other than tornado warnings issued from the weather office.

I'm not sure what exactly that warning would be, but it just doesn't seem possible that you can fall asleep on your couch on a wet and miserable afternoon, and wake up to find cross country death and destruction has occurred in the course of the few minutes you were napping.

Had it not been for that early evening phone call — before the phone lines went out — for me, Friday might have ended as just another wet and miserable day off.

Saturday morning brought the return of phone service and a barrage of calls from concerned friends in various parts of the country wondering just how extensive the damage was — friends whose concern soon turned to incredulous surprise when I had to explain how I'd missed the storm, and, unable to contact any of the other Banner staff members to that point, didn't know much more about the damage done than they did.



### Off the record

JOAN CAVANAGH

My parents, who know little more about Orangeville other than the fact it's their daughter's latest mailing address, were relieved and mildly surprised to see me, in one piece, waiting for them at the airport Saturday afternoon.

On a long-planned vacation in Ontario from their home in Edmonton, my Dad brought along a copy of Saturday's Edmonton Journal, the front page full of pictures and copy detailing the destruction in Grand Valley, Barrie and Orangeville as a result of Friday's storm. Since the paper came out in Edmonton just as they were boarding the plane bound for Toronto, they weren't sure what to expect upon landing in Ontario.

But with the sun shining brightly as we travelled along the Q.E.W. to St. Catharines, it seemed hard to believe the skies had been anything but clear and sunny across the province the day before.

That seems to sum up the reaction most have to what happened on Friday — hard to believe.

Hard to believe it could happen so fast, cause so much damage in such a concentrated area without so much as a broken tree branch or other sign a few hundred yards away from the path of destruction. Hard to believe it could happen with so little warning, and leave with just as little warning, after causing millions of dollars worth of damage — not to mention the losses that can't be measured or replaced in dollars. Hard to believe there weren't more lives lost.

Hard to believe somebody could sleep through it.

## Insurance companies ready for the deluge

In the wake of Friday's disaster, insurance companies have prepared for the expected onslaught of personal property claims.

Emergency field offices have been set up by some insurance companies in those areas suffering the greatest loss after Friday's tornado, and an estimated 200 companies serving the effected areas are sending adjusters to the scene to advise property owners and speed up settlements.

Most homeowners' insurance policy include windstorm coverage, which covers damage to the dwelling and ruined property, and many policies include coverage to pay for additional living expenses incurred as a result of having to live elsewhere because the home is unfit for occupancy.

In order to get a settlement for property damage as a result of a wind storm, an insurance adjuster must inspect the site and assess damages. If the house is completely destroyed, the adjuster can advance funds to cover the cost of temporary accommodations, food, clothing and other personal needs.

If the home is repairable but damages are estimated to be above the individual insurance company's claims limit, a contractor would assess the work required, and construction could begin at the company's authorization.

In the case of motor vehicles, the adjuster will assess the damage, and if repairable, the insurance policyholder is usually responsible for taking the vehicle to a repair shop after the vehicle is appraised by the insurance company.

If the vehicle is not repairable, the company assesses the actual cash value of the vehicle and pays the owner a cash settlement.