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Toronto Amber Alert ends in crash in Pembroke



The Toyota minivan involved in the Amber Alert eventually lost control on Paul Martin Drive in Pembroke and flipped over and struck a tree in front of Pemco Steel. Members of the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service and Pembroke Fire Department needed to cut off the side door in order to remove four-year old Julia Dela Cruz from the vehicle. The door and car seat remained at the scene later as members of the Special Investigations Unit conducted the criminal investigation. The driver of the vehicle, Mario Rodrigues, was also transported to hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

By R. Bruce McIntyre
Staff Writer

Pembroke -- An Amber Alert issued from York Regional Police Monday morning at 5:45 a.m. ended on the front lawn of Pemco Steel in Pembroke when four-year old Julia Dela Cruz was extricated from a van being driven by her 35-year old father after it crashed into a tree following a five-hour intense pursuit from numerous police detachments across the province.

The driver, Mario Rodrigues of Toronto, who managed to exit the vehicle on his own, was quickly apprehended by police and placed into custody. He was immediately transported to the Pembroke Regional Hospital (PRH) while members of the Pembroke Fire Department and

the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service worked feverishly for thirty minutes to remove the girl from the Toyota Sienna minivan.

Following her extrication, she was transported to PRH with non-life threatening injuries and airlifted by ORNGE to the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) for observation.

An Amber alert was issued which was broadcast not only in the Toronto area but in a wide-ranging area on Monday morning. Investigators stated Mr. Rodrigues traveled from Toronto to Aurora and forced his way into his ex-wife's residence in the early hours of the morning. He had separated from his partner, the little girl's mother. After allegedly breaking a window to gain entrance

to the home, he abducted the girl and fled the scene in the van shortly before 4:30 a.m.

Police initially believed he was headed to Toronto or Mississauga where he has family.

According to Constable Andy Patten of the York Regional Police, a national Amber Alert was issued. In a news release issued by the province's Special Investigations Unit, who became involved in the investigation since there was a chase which ended in a crash, the Toyota Sienna van was located in the Bancroft area a few hours later and OPP officers attempted to stop the vehicle.

The driver of the van was able to evade police and the SIU says several more attempts were made to stop the vehicle.

As the vehicle left Bancroft, it proceeded on Highway 28 while police called in a helicopter for surveillance. As well, OPP requested a Canine Unit be involved in the event the driver suddenly stopped the vehicle and fled into the densely wooded area.

There were numerous reports made to police of the vehicle traveling erratically along Highway 41 between Bancroft and Eganville. According to some witnesses, the vehicle was traveling in excess of 140 km/h on the 80 km/hr highway.

The vehicle entered Eganville shortly before 9:00 a.m. and trav-

eled through the town at a high rate of speed and continued northbound on Highway 41 to Pembroke. Along the way, members of the Bancroft, Renfrew, Killaloe and Upper Ottawa Valley OPP Detachments were involved in the alert. Although the vehicle was traveling at a high speed, the police were not observed chasing the vehicle in the village.

At around 9:30 a.m., the vehicle was travelling along Paul Martin Drive in Pembroke when it rounded a curve in front of Pemco Steel, lost control and crashed into a tree, flipping over and landing on its roof. The site of the collision was less

than 10 metres where employees routinely eat their lunch or take scheduled breaks on a picnic table. During the extrication of the victim, a number of Pemco employees were outside and commented they were fortunate they were not at the table as it was close to their regularly scheduled break.

Members of the Upper Ottawa Valley OPP immediately set up roadblocks at the intersection of Paul Martin Drive and Boundary/Mud Lake Road and at the driveway leading into the KI Plant, about 100 yards west of Pemco Steel.

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Councillors confront Mayor Farr

Mayor asked about expelling individuals from meetings

By R. Bruce McIntyre
Staff Writer

Eganville -- What is becoming an all too familiar pattern emerged at another North Algona Wilberforce Township meeting this past Monday.

Once again, a very testy and heated exchange took place at the council table resulting in a long period of silence.

During the council discussion segment of the agenda, Mayor Deborah Farr asked if there were any items councillors would like to bring forward. Councillor James Brose used the opportunity to challenge the mayor on her authority to expel individuals from meetings.

"I would like to know under what authority in the Municipal Act you have the right to ask someone to leave a meeting," he asked.

"I am asking for more detail," Mayor Farr replied. "So you are bringing up a closed session meeting in open now?"

Coun. Brose replied he did not indicate a particular meeting.

"I did not say what it was," he said. "I am just saying where is it stated you are allowed to ask a person to leave a meeting?"

Mayor Farr said she needed more detail as to what meeting this had occurred at.

"This requires more details as to what you are referring to."

Coun. Brose again questioned the mayor in regards to the Municipal Act.

"So I guess I am not getting an answer to my question," he said. "It is a very simple question. Under what authority under the Municipal Act and or a by-law to ask someone to leave a meeting?"

Mayor Farr asked Coun. Brose to give a specific date and time when she asked him to leave a public meeting. Coun. Brose did not answer her question.

Councillor Dave Plumb continued the line of questioning.

"I think the question is where specifically is it in the Municipal Act that you can ask somebody to leave a meeting," he asked.

Mayor Farr replied in similar manner to Coun. Plumb as she did to Coun. Brose.

"And I am asking you when did I ask someone to leave," she said. "And I am asking you when did I ask you to leave a meeting?"

Coun. Plumb again repeated his question as to the mayor's authority.

"I am just asking a simple question as to what authority under the Municipal Act does it give you to ask someone to leave a meeting?"

Mayor Farr asked Coun. Plumb to repeat his comment.

Coun. Plumb again asked the mayor to provide the legislation that allows her to ask someone to leave a meeting.

"I am asking you at a public meeting to repeat your comment, you made another comment."

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A celebration of culture

Tyson Commanda and Kaylee Brooks showed off their regalia as part of the Pikwakanagan Pow Wow held at the Makwa Centre on Saturday. The event was organized by the Grandmothers of Pikwakanagan to show their solidarity for an end to the Agreement in Principle (AIP) that was voted on last month. Story on 10.

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End of the line for Amber Alert in Pembroke roll-over Monday



The Monday morning Amber Alert issued for Mario Rodrigues resulted in a number of provincial police forces being involved in the capture of Mr. Rodrigues. Constable Darcy Nicol of the Killaloe OPP Detachment talks with OPP Canine Officer Brent Lingley of the Sturmont-Dundas-Glengarry OPP as the Special Investigations Unit conducted an investigation at the site of the crash. Const. Lingley was requested in the event the accused stopped along Highway 41 and fled into the heavily wooded bush.



The Toyota Sienna minivan driven by Mario Rodrigues that left Aurora early Monday morning lost control and crashed into a tree on Paul Martin Drive in Pembroke around 10:00 a.m. in front of Pemco Steel. He had allegedly abducted his four-year old daughter, Julia Dela Cruz, who was extricated from the vehicle after the side door was cut off by members of the Pembroke Fire Department. Her car seat was cut out and she was removed. Mr. Rodrigues was immediately apprehended by police at the scene.



Members of the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service and Pembroke Fire Department lifted four-year-old Julia Dela Cruz on to a stretcher following a 30-minute extrication. She was transported by ambulance to Pembroke Regional Hospital with non-life threatening injuries. She was later airlifted by ORNGE to CHEO for observation. Her aunt later told members of the media on Monday afternoon the child was shortly to be released from hospital and would be returning home to be with her mother.

From front First Responders extricate girl

According to members of the Pembroke Fire Department on scene, the driver of the vehicle was able to exit the van on his own accord. He was quickly apprehended by police and placed in a cruiser. He suffered no life-threatening injuries and was transported to PRH.

While he was being transported, firemen secured the location and began extrication. The van, which was upside down, suffered exterior damage to the side where the girl was strapped inside her car seat. Firemen needed to remove the side panel door of the van to reach the girl and eventually were able to remove her from her car seat. It took about half an hour to extricate the child.

Paramedics and firefighters placed her on a board, and along with her Minnie Mouse doll, carried her to a stretcher beside the ambulance where her vitals were taken and placed on a monitor. She was secured and transported by ambulance to PRH and was airlifted to CHEO a few minutes after her arrival.

Dave Ostroski of the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service confirmed both patients suffered no life-threatening injuries at the scene of the crash. Acting/Captain Chancy Colquhoun praised the efforts

of all first responders on scene for the successful extrication of the four-year old girl.

"They did a great job getting that little girl out," he said. "When we arrived on scene it became apparent we needed to use the jaws of life and a saw to remove the side door to reach the girl."

He had praise for all the first responders on the scene. "Both our guys and the paramedics did an incredible job keeping her calm during the rescue," he said. "We were relieved that she did not sustain much more severe injuries."

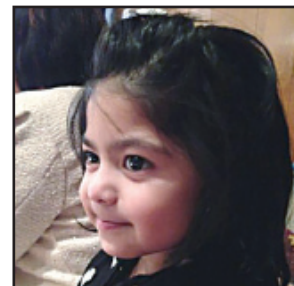
Const. Shawn Peever, Community Services Community Services and Mobilization Officer with the Upper Ottawa Valley OPP Detachment, stated local OPP became involved when it became apparent the suspect was heading into the Pembroke area.

"Following the collision on Paul Martin Drive, we closed the roadway to traffic and vehicles were diverted along alternate routes," he said. "With numerous police forces involved, the investigation will be ongoing."

Shortly after noon on Monday, the Province's Special Investigation Unit (SIU) issued a media release stating the SIU was notified by the OPP and invoked its mandate to lead the investigation. The SIU is a civilian agency that investigates incidents involving police that result



Tire tracks show the direction of the van as it lost control on the bend on Paul Martin Drive, struck a steel sign and flipped over and crashed into a tree on the lawn of Pemco Steel. The crash occurred only a few meters from a picnic table where employees routinely eat their lunch.



Four-year old Julia Dela Cruz, seen here in a photo from the Amber Alert, was abducted from her mother's home in Aurora at approximately 4:20 a.m. Monday. She was the subject of the Amber Alert that ended in a crash in Pembroke. She was injured and airlifted to CHEO.



A nationwide Amber Alert was issued for 35 year-old Mario Rodrigues of Toronto after he forcibly entered his ex-wife's residence in Aurora, just north of Toronto, and abducted his four-year old daughter. He was later apprehended after his minivan crashed into a tree in front of Pemco Steel on Paul Martin Drive in Pembroke.



After the Toyota vehicle fled members of the Bancroft OPP Detachment, the Eastern Ontario OPP Division requested a helicopter be dispatched to follow the minivan as it made its way from Highway 28 to Highway 41 to Pembroke. The helicopter assisted members of the Bancroft, Killaloe, Renfrew and Upper Ottawa Valley OPP monitor the vehicle which at times was driving more than 130 km/hr.

said Julia's mother, who had been in hospital as well, was due to be released.

"It is traumatizing enough," she said. "I feel good Julia is going to be ok and I want to thank the police, Amber Alert and media for their help, but I think it is time to go home now."

in death, serious injury or allegations of sexual assault.

Three investigators, two forensic investigators, and one collision reconstructionist have been assigned to probe the circumstances around the collision, the Special Investigations Unit said.

High Speed of Vehicle

Allan Gaudette, a resident on Mud Lake Road, was driving northbound on Paul Martin Drive and was passed by the vehicle.

"It was a red light and it passed right through driving really, really fast," Mr. Gaudette said. "He was really speeding along the road when all I saw was a big pile of dust suddenly around the bend. When I drove up I saw the van upside down and the police arrived really fast."

As of press time, the condition of Julia Dela Cruz was unknown, although she had earlier been reported to have non life-threatening injuries. Her aunt, Josie Tait, spoke to the media on Monday afternoon, saying the little girl was expected to be released from hospital soon. She also

Renfrew tells residents to clean up property or pay for others to do it

By-law targets negligent property owners who could face fines or additional costs on tax bill

By R. Bruce McIntyre
Staff Writer

Renfrew -- Clean up your mess or we will do it for you, and you will pay for it.

That was the message delivered last week at Renfrew town council when a by-law was passed authorizing a local company to force negligent property owners to start cleaning up litter and debris that is becoming an eyesore for the community.

During a presentation on the town's by-law enforcement policies, the issue of negligent property owners was raised as one of the responsibilities of the contracted municipal law enforcement services.

The town's Economic Development and Tourism Committee worked with the by-law enforcement service (MLES) to help spearhead the new by-law. The

new Clean Yards by-law will have designated timelines and financial penalties for property owners who fail to comply with issued written warnings.

During the drafting of the new by-law and revisions to its existing Property Standards By-law, sections of the Building Code Act and the Provincial Offences Act were incorporated in order to make enforcement easier for the town.

If the town receives a complaint from a member of the public, a by-law officer will be dispatched to make a written report on the property. If it is deemed to be in contravention of standards listed within the by-law, then a written warning is issued.

Property owners who do not comply with orders could be eligible to a set fine (Provincial Offences ticket) and costs added to their taxes for work done by the town

to correct the contravention. Applicants would have to make an appearance in the provincial court to stand against the charges.

When an order is made, the property owner may make an appeal to the Property Standards Committee and the committee may confirm, modify or rescind the order. If the owner does not agree with the committee's decision, the owner may appeal to the Superior Court of Justice.

For MLES owner and operator Jim McBain, the purpose of the by-laws is to promote a proactive approach to maintaining good standards on properties.

"This really is about public education and letting people know it is important to maintain a good exterior image of your property," he said. "Renfrew is one of eight municipalities we deal with and they are all trying to encourage residents and business owners to keep their

properties clean. Our officers will be very proactive and will be dealing with the most difficult properties first. We would much rather work with the property owners than taking it upon ourselves to get it cleaned up."

As Mr. McBain explained, the Clean Yards by-law eliminates the previous two-week appeal process and it now has a 48-hour order to clean up the site. If a site is deemed to be in serious disrepair, a by-law officer will issue a warning order with instructions and strict timelines. After the 48 hours, if an agreement can be reached between the owner and by-law enforcement for the work to be done, then that will be negotiated.

If the owner ignores the order, then arrangements to clean up the site will be made and the costs will be added to their tax bill. That is in addition to a \$200 fine already imposed.

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