

THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

High: 22
Low: 11 (evening)
 Monday may be just right: Not too hot, not too cold. Risk of a t-storm. Details: **Go 2** •



MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2008 ♦ THESPEC.COM ♦ THE VOICE OF OUR COMMUNITIES SINCE 1846

St. Joe's boss faces a giant challenge

Emergency room backups plague hospitals across the province. And St. Joe's is one of the worst-hit. The mandate for its CEO? Solve them all.
Andrew Dreschel: A13



Playoff

Tiger forces 18-hole showdown with spectacular putt.

SP6



'We've lost a Hamilton icon'

Jack Pelech loses his battle with colon cancer. And amateur sport in our town loses one of its most passionate and loyal advocates.
Obituary: A4



Man tossed overboard takes swim of a lifetime

BY PAUL MORSE

PORT COLBORNE ♦ In a stunning feat of survival, a Welland man swam 13 hours to shore in only shorts and a T-shirt after he was knocked off his sailboat without a life-jacket into Lake Erie Saturday night.

From his hospital bed in Port Colborne yesterday, Paul Epp, 47, said simply, "That swim sucked." Then he clutched the hands of his wife Sandrina, and his 11-year-old son Peter, and let the silence sing his love.

It was only because he could not bear the thought of never seeing them again that he struggled to break the surface each time it would have been so much easier not to.

■ ■ ■

Paul Epp loves the water. Saturday was too beautiful a day to pass up a chance to shake off the week, so the hydraulics technician took his 29-foot Enchantress out of Port Colborne with a stiff breeze beckoning and a day of pleasant sailing ahead.

An experienced sailor, Epp called Sandrina on his cellphone around dinnertime to tell her the weather was gorgeous and that he'd be heading back shortly. With older son Peter off on a sleepover and younger Michael, 10, already fast asleep, Sandrina slipped into bed and nodded off.

Just before midnight, her phone rang, yanking her from sleep. A voice she didn't recognize said "Hello, who is this?"

Then the line went dead.

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Eight nautical miles off Port Colborne, Sergeant Jack Van Zile of the Chautauqua County Sheriff's Marine Unit in New York State, stared at the cellphone in his hand and cursed the loss of signal. He and Deputy Tom Block had spotted a sailboat moving erratically through the water and went to investigate. When they realized no one was in the boat, they boarded.

The Enchantress was empty.

All they found was one shoe stuck in the starboard sail's traveller system. Then they spotted the cell. They knew they had to make a difficult phone call.

Continued on A5



RON ALBERTSON, THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR
Paul Epp of Welland didn't have his life jacket on, but survived.

HOT 'N' HEAVY HITTER



KAZ NOVAK, THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

Richard Wright is as comfortable on the field as he is posing on book covers.

BY LARRY MOKO

To fans of the Intercounty Baseball League Hamilton Thunderbirds, he's outfielder Richard Wright.

But to readers of Harlequin romance novels, he's Mr. Right.

The 30-year-old native of Batawa, near Trenton, is a frequent model for the racy covers of the romance books. His trim physique and classic good looks make him a regular when it comes to depicting readers' fantasy

image of male heroes.

Wright has posed in military uniform, in a suit on the dance floor or shirtless in jeans. On a recent cover he's a U.S. navy SEAL "with the mission of a lifetime."

"I've got a couple of dozen of them out there right now," the professional model and actor said of his book fronts.

The centrefielder says most of his team-



COURTESY HARLEQUIN

Richard Wright poses on a Harlequin cover as a navy SEAL 'with the mission of a lifetime.'

mates are unaware of his occupation. They haven't noticed his cover shots — where he appears in various costumes and situations — on bookstands.

"I told a couple of guys on the team and they thought it was pretty cool. Surprisingly enough, they didn't give me any grief over it."

Continued on A3

C. diff investigations common worldwide

But not in Ontario — and not at Joseph Brant hospital where 62 patients died

BY JOAN WALTERS

Scotland's health secretary says there is "a compelling case" for an independent inquiry into C. difficile, which has killed 16 and infected 54 at one hospital there.

Nicola Sturgeon said yesterday she is giving serious thought to arranging a forum for broad questions to be asked on whether appropriate protocols, procedures and systems were in place.

As in many health institutions around the world, it appears that Scotland's Vale of Leven Hospital did not understand the scope of C. diff until after the fact, according to Scottish opposition politicians.

The same thing happened at Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital in Burlington, where a 20-month outbreak killed 62 patients.

'I just think there's going to be a day of reckoning for them.'

— Conservative Leader John Tory

CEO Don Scott has said the hospital was not aware that a new C. diff strain had entered Jo Brant at the time it was attacking patients.

Ontario Health Minister George Smitherman is under pressure to do a full investigation of C. diff. He has said a coroner's review of the deaths in 2006 in Sault Ste. Marie has provided plenty of information for the health system to fight C. diff.

Opposition critics say the patient chart review done by experts in the Soo is not the type of inquiry needed. They want a more thorough examination of the health system.

There has also been pressure for Smitherman to find out how many patients have died, something he says he simply does not know.

The Spectator has reported that at least 264 C. diff patients have died at seven hospitals since 2006.

Conservative Leader John Tory on the weekend called the Liberals arrogant and complacent.

"I just think there's going to be a day of reckoning for them," Tory said after Premier Dalton McGuinty told Liberals at their weekend annual general meeting he will win a third straight majority in 2011.

Tory said the Liberals are "shrugging off" the deadly hospital superbug outbreak, and that a formal investigation is necessary.

In Britain an inquiry that reported in 2007 into C. diff deaths at a handful of health centres found hospital boards spent too much time balancing books and too little on infection control.

In Wales, an inquiry began after less than a dozen deaths. In Northern Ireland, a two-part inquiry is under way after 51 deaths.

In France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the United States, officials have taken the broad investigative action that Ontario rejects.

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— With files from Hamilton Spectator wire services

MuchMusic Video awards

Rain proves to be the party-pooper

Go 3



Gem of a company loses its lustre

Lees, off Barton East, is the oldest jewellery manufacturer in Canada. But the end is looming. Cheaper offshore product is forcing the company's sale. Asking price: \$595,000.

Paul Wilson's StreetBeat: Go 7



Inside today

Bridge/Chess
 Business
 Comics
 Crossword

Go 4
 A10
 Go 9
 Go 9

Dear Abby
 Horoscopes
 Local
 Lotteries

Go 2
 Go 2
 A2
 A2

Mutuals
 Opinion
 Sudoku
 Weather

Go 8
 A12/13
 Go 9
 Go 2



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