

Gorski Consulting Website

Archived News - 2013 - September

September 30, 2013

Roadside Barriers and Death By Drowning – An Important and Hidden issue

In recent years in Southern Ontario we have observed a continued problem of occupants of vehicles drowning when the vehicle enters a body of water next to a road. Similarly we have also observed a continued problem with the lack of maintenance of roadside barriers, a failure to install roadside barriers where they are needed, and the installation of improper barriers for what is actually needed. For this reason we have prepared a detailed article about the issue to spur some public interest in this important debate. We invite to examine the full article on the Articles page of this website.

September 29, 2013

“Came Upon A Traffic Situation” – Police Explanation For Cruiser Rollover Understandably Raises Public Skepticism

While comments from some members of the public are indicative of their true lacking in many dimensions, the skeptical comments from others about the explanation why a police cruiser was involved in a rollover collision yesterday evening is understandable.

The official story goes like this:

Sometime around 2100 hours Saturday evening two officers in a police cruiser were “responding to an impaired driver call” when they “had to use an evasive manoeuvre” to “avoid a traffic situation”. The westbound cruiser rolled over in the south ditch of Courtright Line of Lambton County, Ontario resulting in both officers being trapped in the cruiser. Upon extraction they were transported to hospital where they were treated and released.

On the CTV News London website a commenter wrote: " 'Evasive Maneuver' to avoid a traffic situation. Could you be anymore vague?" Other comments were a little less kind and are not worth further repetition.

However, we agree that the general negative tone of the comments is justified. What was meant by the phrase "traffic situation"? What kind of traffic situation would require officers to take such emergency action that would result in the rollover of their cruiser? Well, the official news media may have decided that the public does not need to know, but we decided otherwise. So we travelled to the accident site this morning and reviewed the evidence.

Eventually, we expect to provide photos of what we found. In the meantime we can say this: The site where the police cruiser rolled over was a very straight and level portion of highway where the visibility ahead was essentially infinite from a driving point-of-view. Secondly, the roadway also contained no intersections of any driveways or other roadways from which vehicles could enter the road and interfere with the cruiser's travel. In fact, the only driveway was located on the south roadside over 300 metres east of the location where the cruiser came to rest. If a vehicle had entered onto the roadway into the cruiser's path at that location it would be difficult to explain why the cruiser ended up 300 metres past that location.

Thirdly, the cruiser left at least 220 metres of visible tire marks from where it came to rest. Consider this: If the rate of deceleration during that travel was similar to a situation where a driver applies light braking while approaching a traffic signal or stop sign (about 0.25g) then the cruiser's speed at the inception of the tire marks would be in the range of 118 km/h. Was this information provided to the public?

No wonder the public is skeptical when it is told that police had to avoid a "traffic situation". Was the speed of the cruiser the reason why this "traffic situation" was encountered? Was there some dire emergency about the impaired driver that necessitated the high speed?

So what actually occurred? Surely it is a good time to provide a reasonable explanation rather than cause persons to speculate. The public needs to know that police are not distributing fairy tales about their actions as both sides need to work together.

September 25, 2013

Phantom Motor Vehicle Fatality In London Suburb of Byron?

CTV News London displayed the following article on their website late this morning:

“Man dies in single-vehicle crash in Byron area

A man has died after a single-vehicle crash early Wednesday morning. It took place in the Byron area, at Boler Road and Commissioners Road around 12:30 a.m. Police say the vehicle hit a tree and the driver was pronounced dead at the scene. He was the lone occupant of the vehicle. The incident is still under investigation.”

The lack of detail the article caught our attention so we waited for those details that, so far, have not come. On what Street did it occur? What type of vehicle was it? Which direction was it headed? Who was the deceased?

The usual 6:00 p.m. newscast would normally confirm what was reported on the website however, as we listened to that newscast this evening, nothing was mentioned about the reported incident.

This is more unusual because the other major news-gathering organization in the City of London is the London Free Press (LFP) and they made no mention of the incident. One would think that if the fatality existed then both major news organizations would provide a similar story. So why is the LFP not mentioning anything about the fatality?

Did, or did not, someone die in Byron this morning? It appear to be simple and reasonable question.

UPDATE: September 26, 2013; 2330 Hours

As if defiantly, CTV News continues to maintain the short article on their website regarding the death of an unidentified driver at an unidentified location. Nothing new has been posted and the London Free Press continues to ignore the event as if it never occurred.

As a consequence, we attended the area of Boler Road and Commissioners Road and found nothing at that intersection that would suggest that a tree was struck or a fatality occurred. We even expanded our search to nearby streets but all this resulted in no evidence of a tree impact in the area. In our 33 years of studying motor vehicle accident sites we cannot recall a situation where, upon being notified of a fatal accident location, we were unable to locate that site.

UPDATE: September 27, 2013; 1120 Hours

CTV New London has not removed the article regarding the death of the driver in "...in the Byron area". No further information had been provided other than was originally posted on the morning of the apparent collision. The only interest in the story appeared to be a couple of commenters who posted to the CTV site noting that there are no trees at the Boler and Commissioners intersection and then a second comment that it was not stated whether the vehicle was a commercial vehicle.

It appears to be a testament to the general apathy that a person's life could be taken with no explanation and with no public interest. What if this was not a motor vehicle accident but something else? For example, it is not a stretch of logic to consider that a homicide can be disguised as a motor vehicle accident, or other issues might be involved. The lack of public involvement in being informed about the death of an individual should be disturbing.

September 19, 2013

Embryo Ontario Motorcyclist May Not Appreciate Speeding Charges Are A Life-Saving Favour To Him

The London Free Press reported today that numerous complaints had been lodged with police in the Woodstock to Embro area in the last few months regarding a speeding motorcyclist but police had been unable to catch him. Police indicate that they were finally successful in capturing the rider today, Thursday, September 19th, 2013 when a police mobile radar unit clocked him travelling over 220 km/h in a 80 km/h zone. Police noted that the man matched the description of the rider who had been seen speeding on the previous occasions.



Example of a motorcyclist conducting a passing motion on a rural roadway where the solid line prohibits such passing.

Ryan Heather of Embro Ontario was reportedly charged with two counts of dangerous operation of a motor vehicle, flight from a police officer, breach of probation and racing a motor vehicle. While Mr. Heather may be considering his misfortune the opposite is true. He can be thankful that he was caught before he killed himself and/or took someone else's life. He should be thanking the many neighbours who reported his activities and the police who bothered to protect his life. The details and validity of the allegations against him will be determined by the courts but if proven true he can be thankful that someone intervened in his life before there was no life in him.

September 18, 2013

Multiple Fatalities in Ottawa Area Via Rail Collision With Double-Decker Transit Bus

At least six passengers of a double decker transit bus were killed this morning, September 18, 2013 when the bus travelled through a safety gate and reportedly struck the side of a Via Rail train on the outskirts of Ottawa, Ontario.

While information is still scarce, news media fail to focus on key facts to the collision. As an example, there appears to be major crush or deformation to the left front portion of the bus while there is minimal crush or deformation to the right front corner. While some of that can be explained due to the acute angle at which the railway tracks met with the roadway, the curious fact is that, at the final rest position of the bus, there is no evidence of any rotation as a result of the impact. The fact is clear that this bus is very long and its centre-of-gravity should be near the centre of its length, or a long way away from the point of application of the force applied by the train. There is no doubt that the train had some forward velocity because it came to rest a short distance down the track. So with the train passing by the front end of the bus this should have created a fairly large moment arm, even if the train was not travelling quickly, and this moment arm should have resulted in the rotation of the bus. So why is there no apparent rotation?

There is no doubt that there is substantial deformation to the left front of the bus but if there is no rotation then the severity of the change-in-speed of the bus is laid into question. So why did so many persons die while a number of others sustained serious injuries? That is a problematic question that news media appear incapable of asking.

UPDATE: September 21, 2013; 0815 Hours

As the facts begin to reveal themselves, we have also had an opportunity to examine a photo showing a closer view of the front end of the bus. No one appears to recognize that the front wheels of the bus are turned substantially to the right, or in opposition to the direction of force applied by the train. Such a rotation of the front wheels would not occur from the impact. Thus, it is conceivable that the driver was steering to the right prior to impact and that he was not in some kind of comatose state. This could also help to explain why there appears to be minimal or no counter-clockwise rotation of the bus since the bus could have been on an angle to the right with respect to the road length when the impact occurred and it was swung back to the left to a straighter position by the train impact. Regardless, the train's reported impact speed of about 47 mph should have resulted in substantial rotation of the bus **If the structure of the bus was of**

sufficient strength to resist that impact force. To us, that is a question that is not being thought of by anyone in the news media.

The possibility that the bus driver steered before impact suggests that he might have been aware of the train and the impending impact and, if so, then that lays out a whole set of new questions.

September 4, 2013

Questionable CTV News Propaganda Of Rail Safety In London

In the evening news cast of the London CTV News this Thursday, September 4th, 2013 there appeared a news story that caught us by surprise to the extent that it was not news at all but pure propaganda, while also disturbing.

The news story centred around reassuring residents of London Ontario that rail traffic in the City is safe despite the fact that the story indicated that about 100 trains pass through the City of London every day. Obviously it was meant to re-assure residents that the deadly train explosions in Lac-Magantic of Quebec on July 6, 2013 were unlikely to be repeated in the City. The news story then went on to interview various important people in the City, the Mayor, the Chief of Police, the Fire Chief, all explaining how wonderfully safe everything was. It almost made one snuggle up to a teddy bear.

This caught our attention because, in mid-August, 2013 we had received a complaint from a local citizen that a part of the CP railway truss spanning Western Road in London, had caused a significant piece of lumber to fall onto the road. When we investigated we confirmed that indeed this had occurred and we even wrote a news article about this on this webpage (Just look back to August on this webpage). Our point is that we telephoned the CP Police about this and then we received a telephone call from what we believe were the local maintenance personnel for CP in London and we were assured that someone was going to inspect the truss immediately. So that sounded good.

But we went back to the truss that afternoon and found no change. No CP personnel investigating...the piece of wood still missing from the truss and lying in the brush next

to it. Interestingly, the CP personnel never even asked us where this fallen piece of wood was located so that presumably they could look at it and determine why it had fallen.

Then on August 28th, 2013 we returned again to the truss and found the same conditions as before. As if nothing had been done. So this time we actually climbed onto the truss to explore why the wood had fallen. The photo below shows a westward view of the truss with Western Road located below it.



View upon climbing onto the CP rail truss on August 28, 2013 to explore why and how the wood had fallen.

If you follow the most right rail in the above photo you will find a number of wooden “spacers” that appear to be on a diagonal, pointing downward, and exist between the railway ties. Presumably these spacers are there to insure that the railway ties do not move out of position. So if you follow that right rail in the above photo, and you see all those spacers, you will come to a point where suddenly one of the spacers is missing –

that is the one that fell onto the road. The photo below shows a closer view of the area where the spacer is missing.



Closer view of missing “spacer” between the railway ties of the CP rail truss spanning Western Road in London.

As we looked more closely at the spacers still attached to the truss we observed that there was a metal bracket at each spacer location that was anchored to the top of the railway tie and then (presumably) was also anchored to each spacer, as shown in the photo below.



View of metal bracket that is anchored to the top of the railway tie and (supposedly) is also anchored to the “spacer” preventing it from falling onto the road.

If a proper inspection was done by CP rail representatives then they would want to be assured that the spacers were actually solidly attached to each of these brackets. But one of the important matters would seem that they look at the wooden spacer that had fallen and it is not clear that they actually found that block of wood because it was still lying where we last saw it.

So what are we to think? CTV news has prepared this propaganda item that reaches a large segment of the population of London yet we have heard not response from CP that they examined the truss to reassure us that there is no danger to the public.

Gorski Consulting Busy With New Assignments

As usual, when the number of new news items and articles dwindles that is a sign that we are busy with new, paying assignments that must take precedence. Such has been the case again these past few weeks.

We have continued to monitor various road locations in southwestern Ontario. This includes sites such as the S-curve on Clarke Road north of Fanshawe Park Road in north-east London, Ontario. We have been documenting this site extensively for the past four years. Each fall brings the problem of an excessive edge drop-off for northbound traffic at the north end of the S-Curve. The photo below shows the procedure we have used over the years to document this problem.



View of procedure used to measure edge drop off on Clarke Road north of Fanshawe Park Road (Circa Aug 2011).

We have been keeping a record of the number of collisions at this site as well as the number of loss-of-control events that have likely never been reported to police or any official agency. Such work is important when we try to understand that official records of how many loss-of-control “collisions” occur are likely to be greatly under-estimated as many single-vehicle collisions are simply not reported.

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