

Gorski Consulting Website

Archived News - 2016 – December

December 13, 2016

Car Strikes Pole & Catches Fire – Is It Real or Fake News?



Bruce Peninsula OPP reportedly indicated that this vehicle struck a utility pole and then caught fire. Is that what really happened?

With the amount of mis-information going around it is difficult to assess what is real and what is fake. However when CTV News is involved one would expect this national news carrier would be careful about reporting mis-information. And when CTV reports that they got their information from the Ontario Provincial Police then one would expect to rely on what Provincial Police have to say. Yet, something smells fishy...or smoky.

CTV reported that they received the above photograph from the OPP whereby the pictured vehicle crashed into a pole and then caught fire. Well OK, that would seem plausible, but then the photograph just does not seem right. Fires engulfing vehicles occur after a prominent impact where this a lot of crush and internal components, fuel

and wiring have a chance to go where they are not supposed to, or where they mix with something they are not supposed to. But the vehicle pictured in the above photo seems to show very little damage.

So then we obtain another photo of the vehicle taken from the OPP twitter site, as shown below.



Another view of the burned out vehicle. Where is the damage and crush that would correlate to the reason for the fire?

OK, there is a lot of evidence of consumption by fire, but again, where is the vehicle damage?

One should understand by now that CTV News, like almost all news organizations, like to hide the evidence of vehicle damage and crush for our “benefit” so that we will not be shocked by the violence that we see. So rather than inform us news organizations want the news not be disturbing as there may be family members who are affected by the publicity of the death of a loved one.

Well, there is some merit to that, but that also causes a problem when the truth of news needs to be confirmed. As per the above photos collision reconstructionists such as ourselves have considerable concern when we see a vehicle consumed by fire in a minor impact when the fire should not occur. As safety researchers working under contract to Transport Canada we have rung the alarm bells on numerous occasions that we are seeing far too many vehicle fires in situations where fires should not occur. And those fires are potentially very dangerous. If you are trapped inside of a vehicle in such a minor collision you would not like to perish in a ball of flames because no one thought it was important to make a vehicle that was fire resistant. We have written on a number of occasions that federal safety standards exist to protect the driving public from the occurrence of such fires. When such a blatantly improper thing occurs the police should be reporting it to Transport Canada and further onto NHTSA as a likely deadly defect. But we have absolutely no news that anything like that occurred. Comforting.

But there are other possibilities. The fire could have been deliberately set by the driver after the vehicle was crashed, or the fire could have been staged to destroy some kind of criminal act or evidence. But the OPP gave us no indication that this was the case, or at least that is the way CTV news reported it. So what really happened?

December 11, 2016

Late Arrival of Snow Causes Slippery Roads and Fatal Consequences



The front end of a school bus impacted the right side of a van on Bradley Avenue just west of the overpass to Highbury Avenue in south London on the morning of December 11, 2016.

The status of the occupants of a van whose right side was impacted by the front of a school bus on Sunday morning is unknown, but the situation could be dangerous if a right front occupant was present. Substantial crush at the right front door means that any person seated there could strike their head on the intruding hood and grille of the incoming school bus. While it is not advertised, it is well known to collision analysts that fatal injuries occur from such head contacts. This is why side air bags and curtains was installed in modern vehicles to prevent or lessen those consequences.

It is also noteworthy that the westbound van had just crossed over an overpass and Bradley Avenue was mostly snow-covered. It is highly likely that the van driver loss control on the overpass and rotated, counter-clockwise into the path of the eastbound bus. It should be well-known that road surfaces are more likely to freeze-up on an overpass and this can reduce the available tire force on the frozen surface.

This is also the likely cause of a fatal collision that occurred on Vanneck Road on the western outskirts of London, Ontario on Friday, December 9, 2016. A young male driver was steering slightly to the left as his vehicle followed the curve of Vanneck Road through the overpass. At this point the car rotated presenting its side to the front end of the van coming from the opposite direction. Again, a slippery road surface likely

contributed to the loss-of-control but other facts also existed. The junction between the overpass and south portion of the road was old and would have produced a jolt to the vehicle at the time when the tire force would already have been reduced by the steering input. Such a scenario is dangerous but not well explained. News media and the police had an opportunity to inform drivers of this dangerous condition but again, nothing was mentioned.



View looking north on Vanneck Road, just west of London, Ontario, at its left curve crossing a railway overpass. An 18-year-old driver, Jacob Black, was killed when his Toyota rotated into the path of a van just beyond this location.



View of a wheel imprint in the wall of the overpass at the area of impact on Vanneck Road.



View of the aged condition of the south junction to the overpass where the loss-of-control took place. With a low tire force such disruptions of a vehicle's motion can contribute to a loss-of-control.

It is a reminder that the public needs to ignore the propaganda and inform themselves of the specific dangers that exist under each collision scenario. Driving according to the

conditions is not wise advice. As we have indicated on numerous occasions there is no such thing as “The Conditions”. Conditions change, and often rapidly. This is the message, particularly in winter when snow and ice may be present. Snow tires may be of benefit but if you are riding near the threshold of slipping out of control then no tire is going to save you from your folly. Four wheel drive will also not save you if you drive like you need Eight-Wheel-Drive. The theory of risk compensation applies to many persons who constantly need the exhilaration of riding on the edge such that, when we make it safe, they need to make it more unsafe.

Again, we need to be aware of the phrase “rapidly changing conditions” not “the conditions”. Slow down and pay attention to your driving.

December 9, 2016

If We Care About Road Safety We Must Also Care For Alcoholics



Alcoholism is a road safety illness.

As we approach the Christmas season there is an increase in occasions where drivers' abilities can become impaired. The most obvious impairment is by alcohol consumption. Anyone in any community can make a mistake and sometimes that single mistake can be life-changing or ending.

However, in a large number of incidents drivers have been in an impaired condition many times over and have simply been "lucky" that neither they nor anyone else around them has suffered major consequences. Habits and patterns of inappropriate behavior take a long time to grow and an equally longer time to correct. While there are those who have the ability to correct their behavior there are also others who suffer from an illness that we know as "Alcoholism". Alcoholism can cause sufferers to drink almost anything; mouthwash, solvents, etc. that might contain alcohol. The pursuit of that quest is so strong that the consequences of impaired driving can be far removed from the sufferer's conscious.

The community's solution to impaired driving has often been misguided. While various sanctions including jail and fines seem to help in some situations, some of the time, they are not the ultimate solution. For hard core alcoholics and those driving themselves to alcoholism becoming MADD about their actions will not cure the illness. These actions must also be accompanied by genuine efforts to help those suffering from alcoholism.

In the vicinity of London, Ontario treatment programs have been talked about for a long time. The Southwest Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) is the bureaucracy that holds the purse strings and reporter Randy Richmond of the London Free Press provided the following quote from its chief executive, Michael Barrett:

“The South West LHIN is in the final stages of completing a review of the full spectrum of addiction services in the London Middlesex area. Further discussion and review with mental health and additional providers is expected in the coming months to determine key priorities and next steps”.

There are profound words written on the side of most London City Police cruisers that read “Deeds Not Words”. Yes, those are profound words. It takes many hours of course work to be trained to speak in double speak.

December 7, 2016

New Article Posted on Articles Webpage Discussing Heavy Truck Conflicts at Expressway On-Ramps

We have now posted an article to the Articles webpage of the Gorski Consulting website describing the results of our research into heavy truck conflicts at expressway on-ramps. This is expected to be the first part of a two part series. The second article is expected to focus on specific conflicts that were observed and what factors likely contributed to the problems. We encourage visitors to take a look and contact us via the Contact page if there are any questions.

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