

# Barrie residents recount devastating 1985 tornado which left 8 dead



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Kevin Shaw takes a break amidst the ruins of his home in Barrie, Ont., on June 2, 1985. CP Photo/ Tim Clark

On May 31, 1985, a massive tornado ripped through the city of Barrie. The event devastated the city and is burned into the memories of survivors.

According to media reports from 1985, the tornado formed southwest of Highway 400 at around 4:30 p.m. before making its way through the city.

The Tornado destroyed countless homes, left eight people in Barrie dead and injured hundreds of others.

The tornado measured as an F4 on the Fujita scale, generating winds exceeding 330 km/h. The tornado ripped through homes near Patterson Road and Crawford Street, causing mass devastation.

 **LIVEWORKSHEETS**

Sandy Kelly was 18 at the time, and lived on Patterson Road in the Ardagh area with her father, stepmom and sister. She still remembers the "total chaos," of that

day, 33 years ago.

"You could tell something was wrong because the sky was really dark," she said.

She had been working at a restaurant in Holly, and says the hydro had gone out, forcing her and a co-worker to close early.

It was a co-worker who told her a tornado had caused damage near her neighbourhood. "We got in the car and sped off," she said. "It took us a long time to get back there because of the devastation in the area."

When she arrived home, she found her stepmom and sister standing outside of the house. "They weren't allowed to go back in because Consumer's Gas was worried that there might be explosions because of the damage," she said.

She says houses all around theirs were damaged. "Hydro poles, debris, roofs on houses gone, it was complete devastation."

"I still remember, there was a house about six houses down from us, that the wind had picked up a car and meticulously placed it up on top of the treetops across the road, it was just crazy," she said.

The next day, Kelly and her family received news that her younger sister's classmate had passed away as a result of the tornado. He was trying to retrieve his bike from outside when the extreme winds swept him away.



With torn houses all around them, neighbours, volunteers and friends take time out for lunch on June 2, 1985. CP PHOTO/ Tim Clark

Long-time Barrie resident, Lori Anderson, says she, too, will never forget that day.

Anderson says she remembers the power went out as she was leaving work. "We were driving down Fairview Road, just by the raceway. The traffic was moving slowly because the lights were out and it was a four-way stop. I looked over to the left and you could see the debris flying in the air as the tornado approached. We put our heads down and the tornado hit."

Anderson says the four side windows of their car were destroyed, and the vehicle was lifted and turned around.

She says the  is filled with  and debris,  a short period  the destruction was unbelievable."

Anderson says the houses on Debra Court had all been destroyed. "As we drove through Allandale, trying to find a path out, everyone was just wandering around lost."

"I will never forget the sounds of all the sirens," she said, "I still to this day panic in storms."

### Comprehension

1. When was the tornado?

Month

Day

Year

Time

2. What area of Barrie was affected by the tornado?

northeast

northwest

southeast

southwest

3. Where was her neighbour's car?

on the road

on top of the roof

upside down in the driveway

on top of some trees

☐☐☐☐☐☐

4. What are some of the words used to describe the tornado? (check all that apply)

Unbelievable

crazy

horrific

total chaos

mass devastation

devastating

5. How fast were the winds in the tornado?

km/h

Finish!!