

Rockwood woman charged after fire guts home

BY MAGGIE PETRUSHEVSKY
The New Tanner

A Rockwood woman has been charged with two counts of arson after fire gutted her home at noon last Thursday. Cindy Mae McKinnon, 40, of 243 Christie Street was rescued from her home by neighbours before Guelph/Eramosa firefighters arrived on the scene just after 12 p.m.

Two local men commended for rescuing woman

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One of two Rockwood men cited for bravery for rescuing a neighbour from a burning building is finding the whole thing humbling and a bit embarrassing.

Stan Sroka, 43, of Christie Street, saw smoke and flames coming from the house three doors over when he went out to vacuum his van around noon on July 22. The whole addition at the back of the raised bungalow was in flames.

He ran inside and alerted his wife to call 911, then raced to the burning house knowing that a family with two pre-teen boys lived in it. "There were no smoke alarms or anything. I just opened the front door and started yelling for them."

Although the house was full of thick smoke, it wasn't low and Sroka saw Cindy McKinnon lying about five feet from the front door.

He went back and called another neighbour, Bruce

Mazer to help him pull MacKinnon outside.

"As I was yelling she kept telling me James and Justin weren't in the house, but since she was only semi-conscious I wasn't sure she was thinking straight," Sroka said. He kept calling for the boys anyway.

Once they got her outside onto the lawn, they just waited for the Rockwood fire department to show up.

Sroka has high praise for the manner in which the volunteers got the fire under control and extinguished.

A Christie Street resident for the past six years, Sroka works in Mississauga and only knew MacKinnon and her family to wave at. Mazer is also a brand new acquaintance, thanks to the fire.

Being recommended for a Commissioner's Citation by the Wellington OPP because they rescued MacKinnon is "humbling," Sroka said, but discovering Monday that she has been charged with arson over the fire is "embarrassing."

Police are recommending Bruce Mazer and Stan Sroka for Commissioners Medals because they entered the bungalow and found MacKinnon. If they hadn't rescued her, she would not have survived, said a Wellington OPP spokesman, Const. Keith Robb.

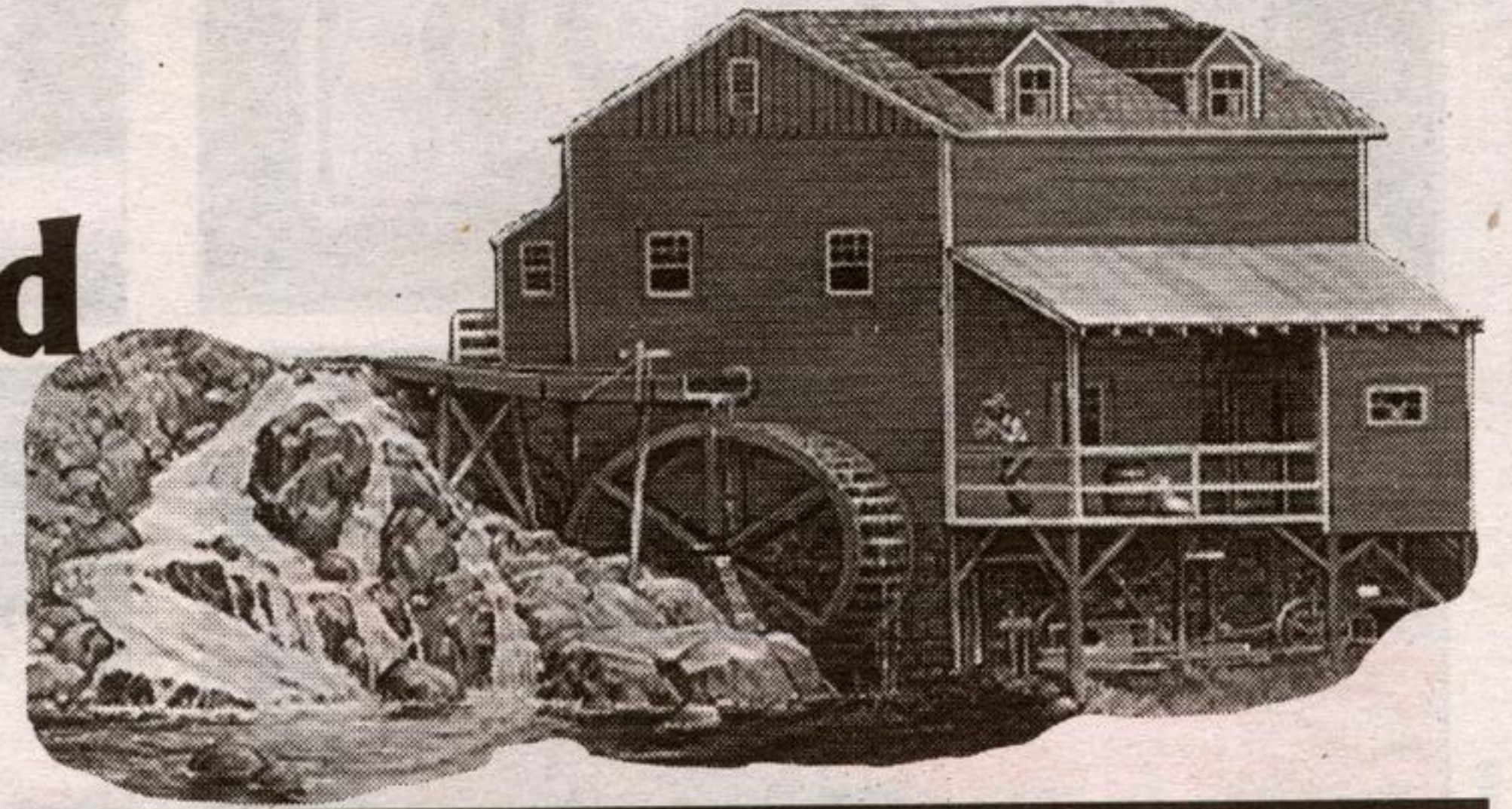
The house was fully engulfed in flames and heavy smoke when firefighters arrived, said department spokesman Kim Hodgson. He estimated the loss to be "at least \$200,000"

and said the property was insured.

McKinnon was taken to Guelph General Hospital, then transferred to the Intensive Care Unit at Hamilton's Chedoke-McMaster with smoke inhalation and minor burns.

McKinnon was charged following an investigation by police and the Ontario Fire Marshall's Office. She appeared in Guelph court for a bail hearing on the charges Monday.

The Rockwood MILLER



CHRISTIE ST. BLAZE: Rockwood / Eramosa firefighters pour water on the McKinnon home as flames engulfed the structure last Thursday. Cindy Mae McKinnon, 40, was rescued from her home by two neighbours and hours later charged with arson. - John Clifford photo

During the summer, EWAG in Rockwood is open Monday to Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Come visit us at 106 Church St., for great deals, and friendly service, including free Internet access, as well as fax, laminating and photocopying service for a small fee for those needing it. Due to the Civic Holiday, our office will be closed Monday, August 2, and will re-open Tuesday morning at 9:30 a.m.

With July coming to a close, The Encore Shop's Half Price Sale will be ending on Saturday, with all items on sale for 1/2 price. Beginning Tuesday, August 3rd, the thrift store will feature its always popular Stuff-It Sale. Come into the store, and "stuff" a grocery bag for only \$6.00. All items are up for grabs, with the exception of all hand-made, brand-new, and selected items. We continue to carry a large selection of clothing for infants, chil-

dren, men and women, as well as paperback novels, children's books, small toys, and other items such as jewellery. Please feel free to drop off any donations of gently-used clothing, as well as paperbacks, and small toys during store hours, Monday to Friday 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

EWAG is looking for students to be on our "Senior Helper" list. If you are in Grades 7 and up, and would like to help with odd jobs, such as grass cutting and weeding, please call the EWAG office and we will add your name to the list.

Do you have little ones? EWAG and Ontario Early Years programs are in full operation throughout the summer. Our popular "Tot-Time" continues to run on Tuesday and Thursday mornings (9:30 - 12 noon) at Rockmosa Community Centre (downstairs). Also every

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Thursday in July and August, a picnic lunch will follow after Tot-Time from 11:15 to 12:00. So bring your lunch and blanket and join us for a picnic outside the Rockmosa Community Centre.

Join us on Wednesdays for My Baby & Me, an ongoing program for parents to gather with their new babies from birth-12 months. Come on out and have fun meeting other new parents, share information, join in discussions and listen to guest speakers. Join us at Rockmosa Community Centre (downstairs) from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

For those of you who don't mind getting a little messy on Wednesday, August 4, our one-time only program "Messy Play" will be held from 10:00 to

11:30 a.m. at Rockmosa Community Centre. Come join us and get messy with lots of sensory fun!!! Explore with bubbles, shaving cream, pudding, finger paint, and lots more! Be sure to wear old clothes.

Suitable for ages 2+."Tea Party" is our final one-day program of the summer. It will be held Wednesday, August 18 from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Come in your finest, and join us for a yummy snack of cupcakes and berry teas. Call and register early!! Please contact Jane or Jacqueline at 856-2113 for further information, and to register for any of these programs.

EWAG is looking for responsible volunteer drivers who would be willing to take seniors to medical and

dental appointments. The VON is the first contact for people to try and get transportation to medical, dental and shopping, but sometimes they are not able to provide this service. Therefore we need a few folks who are willing to provide transportation if necessary. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer driver, please call Lynn at the Rockwood office or Gillian at the Erin office, at 833-9696.

Are you a Senior? Is there an activity or event that you would like to see happen in our community? Give us a call at EWAG and give us your input. Programs will be planned in September according to what folks in our community need. We will try and meet those needs, but we need to hear from you. Also, if you are looking for an extra hand around the house or in the yard, please give us a call, and we will try to find a student in the community to help you.

Food Bank is available

to those in need in Rockwood, on Tuesdays between 9a.m. and 1 p.m. Please call ahead to make an appointment with Gillian at 833-9696. If you would like to make a donation to the

Food Bank, we are always accepting donations of non-perishable food items. We are in need of: instant coffee, tea, jam, fruit juice, cereal, canned fruit and shampoo. All donations are greatly appreciated.

Our new EWAG office in Rockwood is located at 106 Church St. (behind St. John's Anglican Church) in Rockwood. Our phone number is 856-2113. Our e-mail address is ewag2@sentex.net. Please remember that we offer fax, laminating and photocopying service for a small fee for those needing it.

We also carry government forms such as Social Insurance, OHIP and Canada Pension. Free Internet Access is also available at no extra charge.