

Explosive situation is just averted in grass fire

A grass fire carried potential for disaster last week as flames burned quickly toward an explosives manufacturing plant, fire officials say.

Sparks spitting from a passing train set off the blaze on both sides of the railway tracks shortly after noon May 14 on No. 10 Sideroad, west of Guelph Line.

The blaze spread out of control both east and west through grass

and bush for more than nine hours, said Fire Chief Harold Penson.

The day-long ordeal grew potentially disastrous as flames came close to igniting the building at Nordex Explosives Ltd. on Second Line.

"It was within 50 to 100 feet away from the building when we got it stopped at 9:45 p.m.," said the fire chief. "That added to the tense situation we already had."

It took 21 firefighters, nine from Halton Hills, to knock down the blaze, Chief Penson said. The men brought water to the fire scenes in portable pumps they carried on their backs.

Grass fires ignited by passing trains are common, however, few spread out of control, he said.

In this case, high winds pushed the flames along the grass, which was dry on top, Chief Penson explained.

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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

New recruit

Four-year-old Alex Piemontese showed he just might have what it takes to become a police officer during National Police Week displays at Milton Mall Saturday. OPP Constable Steve Henry outfitted the little boy with a uniform and explained how a police motorcycle radio worked. Alex even jokingly brought along his own doughnuts.

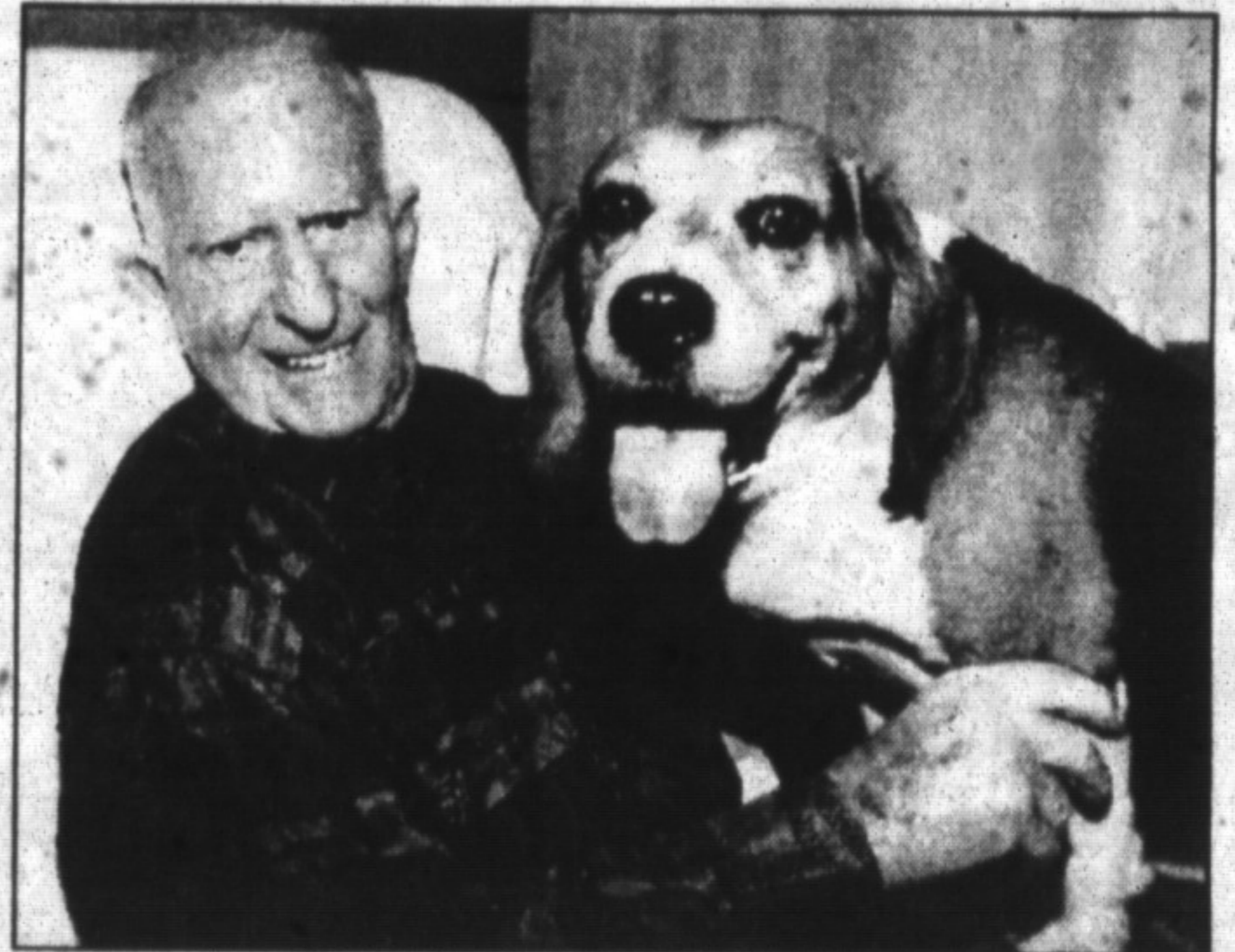


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

The beagle Top Notch, who helped save his owner James Thomson, recently earned a third honour from the Halton Regional Police Services Board.

Pooch may soon need trophy wall

By KAREN SMITH

The Champion

A local dog will soon need its own mantelpiece for its collection of awards.

The beagle Top Notch has received yet another honour for helping save its elderly fallen owner in July last year.

The devoted canine was handed an award from the Halton Regional Police Services Board after its barks led a search team to 75-year-old First Line resident James Thomson, who had been missing for five days.

"Top Notch saved his beloved owner's life," said Halton Regional Police Deputy Chief Ean Algar during the May 16 awards ceremony at police headquarters in Oakville.

Mr. Thomson, who suffers from Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, did not return home after taking Top Notch for a walk June 26. The dog's barks eventually alerted a search team, which discovered Mr. Thomson lying in dense bush and bog near a trail about 500 metres south of his Moffat home.

Volunteer searcher Lynn McBratney, a front desk clerk at the Milton police station, and her friends Kim Knox, Ross Knox, Jan Torrell and Cathy Comeau, all from out of town, were honoured with civilian awards for their role in the rescue.

"All of them deserve praise and thanks for their efforts in less than ideal conditions," Deputy Chief Algar said. "Their unselfish efforts caused a happy conclusion and no doubt saved Mr. Thomson's life."

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NEWSLINES

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Hospital slo-pitch fundraiser

Fancy yourself as a longball hitter who doesn't mind showing off? Got a good mixed team to put up against area competition? Or maybe you'd just like to play a little friendly slo-pitch in aid of a good cause?

The Milton District Hospital Foundation ball club is sponsoring a slo-pitch tournament from Friday, May 31 through

Sunday, June 2 at the Lions Sports Park (Thompson Road).

The tournament features two divisions of 12 teams, the men's slo-pitch side and the mixed slo-pitch competition, with a minimum of three women.

Entry fee for the tournament is \$200. The Milton District Hospital Foundation is a fundraising organization which aims to enhance the quality of care available at the local hospital. For more information or to sign up, contact Dunc Currie at 878-2382 (work) or 878-5998.

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