

Arson has not been ruled out

... Lafontaine school fire

A fire at about 2 a.m. Sunday morning at Ecole Secondaire LeCaron-Ecole St. Croix complex in Lafontaine has rendered two classrooms inoperable and may have caused extensive structural damage to a confined area of the school.

The fire of undetermined origin, began in or near a wall in a north east corner of a basement nursery and spread upward from ground level, causing smoke and some structural damage to a second room, situated directly above the nursery.

Pressure created by heat from the brief fire caused floors to buckle and an interior wall of the nursery to belly out more than an inch. In addition, several floor joists between the ceiling of the nursery and the upper room were burnt and damaged, raising the possibility of serious structural damage.

Details

Though details were sketchy, it appears the fire was noticed at about 2 a.m. Sunday

morning by some youths returning from a party nearby, and an alarm was turned in to Tiny Township fire station.

Fire Chief, Guy Maurice dispatched the Lafontaine fire brigade and the firefighters had the fire out within 20-30 minutes.

Following their quick work, O.P.P. investigation began and according to a statement from investigating officer Maurice Lapointe, the call to the Fire Marshal's Office was standard procedure when "normal causes for the fire" could not be immediately determined.

Monday morning saw temporary cancellation of classes for all LeCaron students and the beginning of an investigation by John McKenzie, of the Ontario Fire Marshall's

branch in Bracebridge.

With the assistance of Constable Lapointe, McKenzie took numerous photographs and several samples of charred remains as evidence, to be sent to the Centre for Forensic Science in Toronto, for testing.

Investigation

Though the only comment Mr. McKenzie would make was that "the fire is still under investigation," there are several aspects of the fire that have led some to speculate that arson may have been involved.

For example, the fire seems to have started at an outside wall and in an area where there are no electrical fixtures. Furthermore, the secluded corner of the complex where the fire

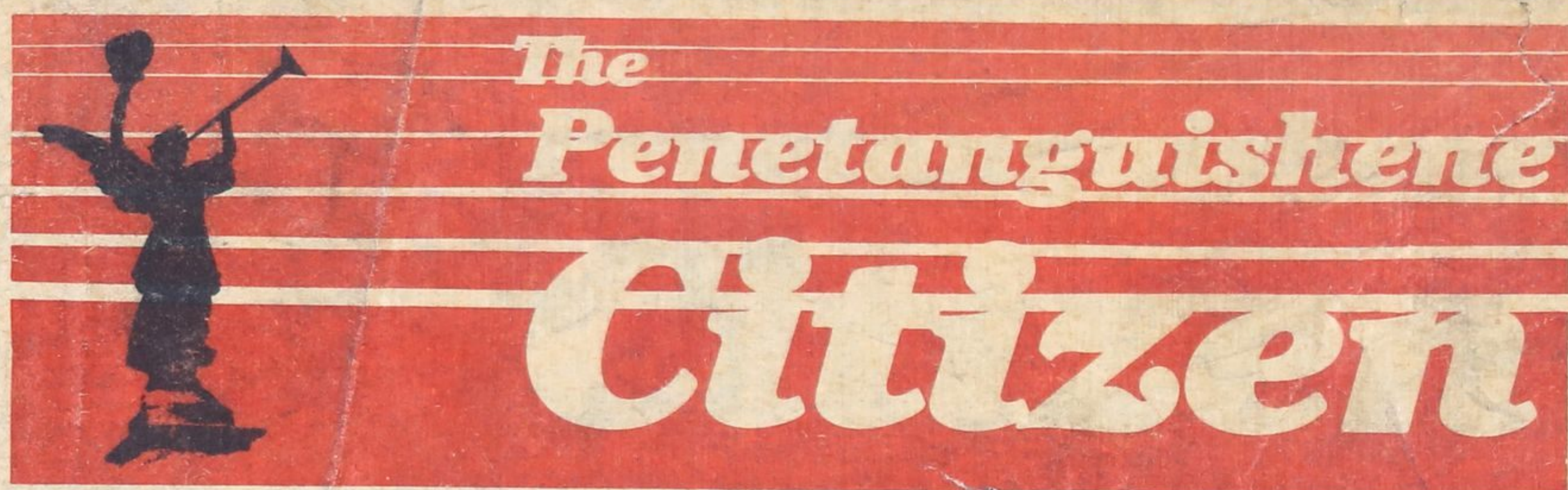
was located, the inconclusive police investigation and the summoning of a Fire Marshall official have all given rise to nervous thoughts about the fire's origin.

Testing

Officials all emphasized on Monday however, that until forensic testing is completed and studied, any suppositions or comments as to the cause or nature of the fire are pure speculation.

What is not speculation though is the disruption of learning for the youngest of the school's pupils. Principal Adrian Lamereux was already making preparations on Monday to turn a cafeteria into a temporary classroom for the tykes and suggested a possible shuffling of some older students to accommodate the nursery pupils.

According to police the results of forensic testing may take several weeks to be made available and in the interim, reconstruction will commence at LeCaron.



Vol. 13, No. 45, Folio 89

Wednesday, November 5, 1980

48 pages, 25 cents



Fire's cause being probed

Ernest F. Bell, left, of Bell and Saunders Insurance Adjustors, John McKenzie, centre, of the Ontario Fire Marshall's Office, and Constable Maurice Lapointe, right, of the Midland OPP collect and examine

samples of burnt wood, at the scene of Sunday morning's blaze at Ecole Secondaire Le Caron in Lafontaine. The investigation into the mysterious fire is continuing.

Tiny Twp. wants facts re spending

by Adrienne Graham Gardner

Tiny Township council has asked their clerk, Guy Maurice to obtain an audited statement from the Tiny Tay Peninsula Planning Board showing funds spent up to the date of Tiny's pull-out from the Area Board.

This action is in response to a letter from the Area Board requesting funds from Tiny.

When the audited statement is received, Tiny will determine their share, and "pay accordingly", said Councillor John Butler at the October 29 meeting of Tiny Council.

Wyevale Pines Water

"A humanitarian gesture" has been made to the only family occupying a home in Wyevale Pines subdivision by temporarily hooking their house up to the water system, although the system has not been finally approved. The developer had been given building permits, but no occupancy permits, since the water system showed sand in the well.

However, the developer had allowed one family to occupy the home they purchased. Three other families were sold homes, and were due to move in within the week according to developer Stefaniuk, in spite of a lack of occupancy permits.

In an earlier presentation this summer to Tiny council, Stefaniuk had asked that the water system be activated "for landscaping purposes only". Deputy Reeve John Lackie expressed his disappointment with the developer, saying "we've been had" and indicated that Tiny would make no further exceptions for the subdivision, until the water system is approved by township engineers.

Advance polls vary in coverage area

Turnouts at advance polls held last weekend were up slightly from the 1978 advance polls in Penetanguishene and Tiny and there was a dramatic increase in voters at the advance polls in Georgian Bay District.

In Penetanguishene, 80 persons voted this year as opposed to the 75 that utilized advance polls in '78. The figure of 80 represents just over two per cent of the 3,896 eligible voters in this year's election.

In Tiny Township, last weekend's advance poll marked the first of two that will be held there. The second advance poll will be held on Saturday, Nov. 8.

Of the 14,885 eligible voters in Tiny, 149 voted in advance, or about one per cent. This is up slightly from the 106 voters in the 1978 first advance poll.

The most active advance polls showed up in the Georgian Bay voting area, with a full 1,487 of the 7,500 eligible voters turning out. The figure represents over 11 percent of eligible voters of the area and is a marked increase from the 1978 advance poll figures of 607.

The municipal elections in all areas will be held on Nov. 10, less than a week away and all citizens who haven't already cast a vote will be able and are urged to do so at that time.

Citizen briefly

PFD studying facilities

Penetanguishene Volunteer Fire Department will be holding a familiarization session at Georgian Manor and Penetanguishene General Hospital tonight.

The sessions include a tour of each facility to educate the volunteer firefighters as to the layout of the buildings and the locations of hydrants for each particular area.

Following the tours, the firefighters will meet at the Fire Hall for discussions about possible problems which might occur in the event of a fire at either facility.

The familiarization sessions are a continuing policy of the local fire crews and Fire Chief Ted Light said recently they are an excellent method of identifying and ironing out problems before they arise.

Festival slated for Barrie

The Barrie Humane Society will be holding a unique fund-raising event Nov. 29 at Barrie Central Collegiate Auditorium.

The event, a Ukrainian Arts Festival, will feature the Odum Bandurist Ensemble (Ukrainian Canadian Youth Association) with a repertoire consisting of folk, classical, modern and religious songs. Also featured for the evening will be the Vesnianka Dance Ensemble.

Entertainment gets underway at 8 p.m. and tickets and information are available by calling 728-4953 or 728-2753.

All proceeds will go towards funding for the Barrie Humane Society.

Membership open for Mid-Pen bowling

Midland-Penetanguishene's Five Pin Bowlers' Association currently has 460 members enrolled but room is open for more.

If you are interested in joining this organization you should contact Debbie Chadwick at 526-6317 or Pauline Brabant at 361-2996.

You can also contact the bowling alley in either Midland or Penetanguishene.

Woman charged following accident

An accident on Highway 27, north of Elmvale, resulted in charges to a Penetanguishene woman and damages totalling \$3500 to two vehicles.

Police in Elmvale say cars driven by Nancy Archer of Elmvale and Shelly Forget of Penetanguishene were in collision at the corner of Highway 27 and County Road 6 last Friday.

Damage to the Archer car was set at \$1,000 while the Forget vehicle received \$2500 damage.

Shelly Forget was charged by OPP with making an improper left turn.

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