

Stubborn inferno

House fire claims youth's life



Waubushene home destroyed by blaze

by Doug Reed

For the first time in more than two decades fire has taken the life of a Waubushene resident.

The remains of 12-year-old Edward Hodgins were unearthed at 3:15 p.m. Sunday by a Tay Township front end loader that had been dressed into service to sift through the ruins of the boy's 100-year-old frame two-storey dwelling.

When last seen alive the youngster was spotted in his second floor bedroom frantically trying to get out of the burning home.

Shouts from the street for him to jump were to no avail. His body was later discovered in the basement under tons of rubble.

According to Tay Township (No. 1-Waubushene) Fire Chief Tom O'Hara, firefighters were summoned to the scene at 3:58 a.m.

By then the dwelling was already engulfed in smoke and flames. The chief said it was a miracle six other people in the home at the time managed to get out alive.

Engulfed in flames

Waubushene firefighters and their counterparts from Old Fort Road Brigade (Tay) were called to this roaring house fire at 3:58 a.m. Sunday on Mary Street in Waubushene. They were unable to save

the home since it was totally engulfed in flame and smoke by the time they arrived. Six people managed to flee the inferno, however, a 12-year-old boy couldn't escape

the holocaust. His remains were located about 12 hours later by searchers who used a front-end loader, back-hoe to sift through the ruins.

Hospital

Rushed to hospital were Edward's parents, Vivian Hodgins, 47, and Clem Hodgins, 39. Their daughter Shirley, 19, and Shirley's 16-month-old son were also taken to hospital as were Tom Lawler, 26, and Billy Lawler, 23.

Most were treated and later released from Huronia District Hospital where they had been taken by Midland-Penetanguishene Ambulance Service.

The homeless are presently staying with Myles and Sally Howe in Waubushene. A request by Midland's Salvation Army for clothing and other goods has met with success, it has been learned.

Exhausted firefighters from Waubushene were bolstered by their counterparts from Old Fort Road Brigade in attempts to gain the upper hand in quelling the stubborn blaze.

Fighting flames in -40 Celsius weather became nothing short of a gruelling task however by dawn's first light the fire had been extinguished.

Through the steam that rose from the ruins most of the day one could see how flames had rampaged through the dwelling gutting most of the front portion of the house.

Task

Then began the heart-breaking task of trying to locate the holocaust's victim.

Tay Township Public Works Department was called in to sand Mary Street in and around the fire scene so as to allow emergency vehicles better traction.

Water and Light personnel was called in as was Bruce Tinney whose septic service tanker was called in to start removing water from the home's basement in an attempt to find the youngster.

Shortly after noon the front-end loader started clawing through debris and by 3:15 p.m. the search came to an abrupt end when the boy's body was recovered.

He was pronounced dead at the scene by coroner Dr. Peter Cameron.

John McKenzie from the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office and members of the Midland OPP spent most of the day questioning witnesses and survivors.

By day's end McKenzie had classified the fire's cause as "undetermined."

It is believed the fire may have started in the basement since flames were first noticed working their way upstairs from the basement.

Furnace

The fire chief said the owner of the building had converted a wood furnace to oil and recently had reconverted it back to wood.

Firefighters and support personnel were all praised for preventing the fire from spreading to other homes in the area and for their determination in finding the youngster's body even when it meant enduring record low temperatures and a wind chill factor that caused the temperature to actually dip to well below -60 once Sunday afternoon winds started to whip through the hamlet.

Officials may never know what caused the fatal conflagration, the second in Waubushene during the past 20 years.

The last fire to take a life occurred, according to Chief O'Hara, about 20 years ago when a husband and wife lost their lives due to a fire in the hamlet.

Countdown: to Winterama has now begun



Happy New Year '81! Now that the holiday season is over, the Chamber of Commerce committee for Winterama is getting into high gear.

The theme of the parade this year is western-urban cowboy. Clifford McNamara will be in charge of the parade, so please contact him at 549-3251 if you have a float to enter.

The logo you see above was designed by Randv Brown, art teacher at MSS and will

be used for our buttons.

These will be going on sale next week. Profit from the sale of these buttons goes towards the purchase of prizes and trophies. We ask your support by buying and wearing a Winterama button.

Many contests sponsored by local merchants, will be taking place prior to carnival. We will keep you informed as the weeks go on. To start with, the Photo-Box will be having a Photo Contest. For more

details and entry forms, drop into 73 Main St., or contact Mr. Schwauss at 549-7697.

Gignac's Children's Wear will be holding a Baby Contest. Drop off a favorite photo of your baby at 44 Main St. - Mrs. Gignac will be displaying the entries in her store window. Inside the store people can vote for the baby of their choice by dropping pennies in numbered pop cans.

For the men, there will be a moustache-growing contest. Details at a later date. In the meantime, get growing!

Chairman for Winterama Carnival this year is Mr. Bob Delorme, secretary -

Chairman for Winterama Carnival this year is Mr. Bob Delorme, secretary - Mrs. Joyce Sauve. If you are interested in getting involved, call Bob at 549-3366, or Joyce at 549-2232.

This is the first of a series of weekly columns to keep you up to date on what's happening for Winterama.

Venez donc au carnaval d'hiver!

First alarm of 1981 sounds Friday to MHC

Penetanguishene Fire Department's first call of 1981 turned out to be a false alarm.

Fire Chief Ted Light said apparently the cold triggered a fire alarm in one of the residence apartment buildings at the Mental Health Centre.

The alarm went off at 10:20 p.m. last Friday. The town's fire department responded to 73 alarms in 1980, up two from 71 in 1979, the chief noted yesterday.

The most serious fire of 1980 was the early Sunday morning fire of Aug. 24 that took the life of Anna May Poole, 37, in her home at Burke and

Chatham Streets.

Toronto-Dominion Bank manager Jake Reimer said this week that nearly \$2,000 was donated between 35 and 40 groups and individuals to make up a fund for the two Poole children, Trent and Tara.

The bank accepted money brought in and put it in an account administered by Celine Leblanc on behalf of the Poole's neighbours. Reimer said that most of the money remains in the account. Money brought in will continue to be placed in the account for the benefit of Trent and Tara Poole.

Hindson handles Dock Lunch 6-2

In Penetanguishene Recreation Hockey Sunday, Hindson Marine handled Dock Lunch by a score of 6-2.

Scoring for Hindson Marine was by Bob Dion, Mike Orser, Paul McDonald, James Dupuis and Gary Buttineau with a pair.

Ken Cowan, Rab Larmond and Marcel

Vallee each got two assists for Hindson Marine while Mike Orser and Ron Lalonde got single assists.

Dock Lunch goals were scored by Larry Langley and Martin McNamara with Rick Desjardin assisting on both goals and Ray Dion assisting on Langley's goal.

In the second game, B & J Gas Bar outscored Chalet Sports 9-4 with Aime Gignac and Richard Lefaive each getting double markers for B & J Gas Bar.

Singles for B & J Gas Bar were scored by Greg Arbour, John Bell, Mickey Perrault, Larry Pattenaude and Terry Dahmer.

Lefaive also got three assists while Gignac received credit for two assists.

John Bell got three assists for B & J Gas Bar while Mickey Perrault got two.

Pete Decourcy got a single assist for B & J Gas Bar.

Goal getters for Chalet Sports were Ken

Akerman, Steve Lalonde, Pat Duquette and Rick Duval.

Assists were by Pat Duquette, Larry Butson, Fred Akerman and Marc Duquette with two.

The Athlete's Edge Player of the Week for Sunday was Frank St. Amant.