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ST. STEPHEN, N.B. - TUESDAY, JUNE 8, 2010

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Rescued rabbits find new homes



Photo courtesy of Scott Biggs
St. Andrews firefighters struggle to contain a blaze that erupted at the Blue Moon Hotel Saturday morning.

Fire damages St. Andrews landmark

BY JOHN GARDNER
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ST. ANDREWS - The Blue Moon Motel, a fixture on Mowatt Drive since 1967, suffered major damage early Saturday morning, as fire swept through the motel.

The call was received at 4:06 a.m. by the St. Andrews fire department. At that time, the northern end of the main section was fully engulfed by flames, with the flames threatening to move through the rest of the building or leaping to adjoining properties.

Deputy fire chief Danny Bartlett credited the assistance of the Oak Bay Fire Department for saving a large portion of the building.

"If Oak Bay hadn't been here we may have lost the whole building. Having the extra manpower helped immensely."

As it was, Bartlett estimated that 12 units were lost in the blaze.

The property was built by Don McLaren in 1967, and purchased in 1972 by Charles Lankisch. His son Gordon and Gordon's wife Kim assumed ownership about 10 years ago and currently own it.

"It is devastating. My wife and I worked like dogs for over 30 years," said Charles.

"I couldn't find any words. I couldn't understand it."

SEE "BLAZE" PAGE 3

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■ Cross-border effort leads to new homes for sociable creatures

BY KATHY BOCKUS
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ST. STEPHEN - They've dubbed it "the Blue-ground railroad."

About 75 angora bunnies of every colour and age have now travelled it on their way to House Rabbit Network shelters and new homes in the north-eastern United States.

Those journeys began here in St. Stephen, thanks primarily to two women, brought together by one's desire to adopt a cat and a dog and the other who found the perfect pets for her.

Lorraine Howard is a former Boston resident who now lives in Calais. Besides her dog and cat, she owns house rabbits as pets.

Gail Flaherty is a volunteer with the Charlotte County SPCA. When she met Howard during the dog and cat adoption process, she learned of the woman's interest in rabbits.

So when the Oromocto SPCA shelter sent out a call for help to other SPCAs after it became the depository for some of the 160 angora rabbits seized at the beginning of May by the New Brunswick SPCA, Flaherty made a call to Howard and set some wheels in motion.

Flaherty asked Howard if she had any rabbit resources she could contact. Howard did and called Suzanne Trayhan, the founder of the House Rabbit Network in Massachusetts with whom she was acquainted.

The HRN is a non-profit organization devoted to sheltering, adopting and educating the general public about pet rabbits.

Trayhan and her network contacted rabbit rescue affiliates in various states and found placements for 20 New Brunswick bunnies two weeks ago and Friday's latest shipment of about 55.

"They're great. I never knew they existed," said Flaherty. "It's a new experience for us. It's been a great experience for us. It's nice to know these guys are going to be pets and have a good life and there's no danger they will be going back into the same situation they were in."

"Gail is an extraordinary woman," praised Howard. "Both she and the shelter she helps operate are a tremendous asset to your community and a very positive reflection of your town and the wonderful people in it."

"It's nice to know there are people out there who care, on both sides of the river."

Tracey Marcotullio, manager of the Oromocto SPCA, said she was grateful for the support offered by the Flaherty and the American rabbit rescue effort. She said other SPCA shelters in New Brunswick also took some of the bunnies.

There are still nine - two adults and seven baby rabbits - at the Oromocto shelter waiting for adoption. The shelter took a few at a time to treat for health problems. The animals were then spayed and neutered before being adopted. When asked if the rabbits were in bad shape, Marcotullio replied, "We've certainly seen worse."

Howard was saddened by the condition of the bunnies she and Larry Clarke delivered to Massachusetts on Saturday.

SEE "SPCA VOLUNTEER" PAGE 3



Kathy Bockus/Courier
Addie Smith, 10, a junior volunteer with the Charlotte County SPCA, holds an angora rabbit, seized by the Oromocto SPCA, one of about 75 bunnies from that same seizure that have come through St. Stephen on their way to House Rabbit Network rescue homes in the United States.

House arrest ordered for bomb-scare prankster

BY JOHN GARDNER
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ST. STEPHEN - He just wanted to get his friends out of school.

"I thought it would be something funny to do to get my friends out of school," said the youth who called in the report of a bomb to St. Stephen High School on April 12.

The young man, who cannot be identified, was sentenced in St. Stephen Provincial Court on June 4 to nine months supervised probation. Judge David C. Walker also ordered house arrest, with certain provisions, until

August 15.

He must attend school as permitted, and Walker outlined the importance of his attendance. A probation officer was given the broad authority to direct his path to rehabilitation. This will include community services, programs that deal with anger management, and oversight on who he associates with.

"You don't need to be surrounding yourself with friends who would encourage you to do this," said Walker.

The judge gave the probation officer wide ranging powers to decide who the youth may

associate with.

Crown Prosecutor Lucie Matherin asked the judge to consider the weight of the victim impact statement written by St. Stephen High School principal Jamie Waycott, representing the 700 students and staff.

"It raised numerous concerns for their safety and well being," said Matherin. The crown went on to make reference to Columbine High School where on April 20, 1999 two students went on a killing spree that left 12 students and a teacher dead.

Due to the nature of the call, the school

took the call seriously, sending the entire school population to a parking lot across the road from the school. Many of the students were left wearing shorts and short sleeve shirts in the chilly mid-April weather, as the urgency of the evacuation meant that was all many students were wearing when they exited the building.

At least one student left the building without shoes.

Duty Counsel, Randy Wilson told the court the young man admitted it was "a stupid, reckless act."

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