

# localnews

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■ MALLORYTOWN: Damage estimated at \$350,000

## Fire razes family home

STEVE PETTIBONE  
QMI Agency

MALLORYTOWN — Fire officials here estimate the total damage at \$350,000 in a fire that tore through a large house on County Road 2 near Mallorytown in the early morning hours Friday.

Owner Helen Cooper says she was out at her barn tending to her horses shortly before 1 a.m., when it first became apparent that something might have been awry.

It started with one of her horses, Merlin, who was penned in an area beside the house.

"He was whinnying like crazy as though he was trying to tell me something," she recounted to QMI Agency as she stood in her driveway a few metres away from the heavily damaged bungalow.

She said she also noticed a faint beeping sound at one point as she went about her chores, but said being outside made it sound like an insect, or something akin to what a person hears from a surge protector after a power outage.

It wasn't until she made her way back toward the house, Cooper said, that it became clear that something was definitely wrong.

"I came back toward the house, dropped my bail of hay and said 'Is that smoke coming from my house?'"

It was, and Cooper says she quickly flew into action — initially running into the house to try and save some of her animals lodged inside. But she soon realized it was too risky.

"I tried to run in and save my kittens, but the smoke was too heavy and I thought 'This is stupid' and got out," she said.

After calling 911, Cooper said, she phoned her father, who lives in Brockville. Not surprisingly, she said, he was on the scene in next-to-no time.

"Like any typical dad, he said 'I'll be right there,'" she recalled. "He was here before the fire department."

The massive blaze required significant manpower to battle. Front of Yonge Fire Chief Greg Halladay said that firefighters from neighbouring municipalities were called in, including three trucks from Elizabethtown-Kitley and one from Athens. Front of Yonge had five trucks at the scene, Halladay said. In addition, paramedics from Leeds and Grenville EMS were on hand for several hours while crews fought the fire.

Halladay said firefighters



STEVE PETTIBONE QMI Agency

A home on County Road 2 in front of Yonge Township sustained heavy damage in a fire that occurred in the early morning hours Friday. Owner Helen Cooper, who lives at the house with her daughter Emily, was outside tending to her horses when the blaze began.

worked the scene until approximately 6 a.m. He said it is difficult to know at this point what might become of the house, noting the heavy damage sustained to the large addition at the back of the home.

"The addition on the back sustained a lot of smoke and water damage," Halladay said.

For Cooper, the blaze has caused the potential loss of a house she has grown to love in her two years there. If it must be rebuilt, she said, she knows how she would like it to look.

"It's a great house," she said. "I'd like to rebuild it exactly as it was, because I loved it."

In the meantime, she said, fire officials and insurance company representatives continue to investigate the fire and she is intent on carrying on with day-to-day life, including operation of her Brockville-based diving business, the Dive Brockville Adventure Centre, during its peak season.

"My staff has been terrific today with handling the business while I tend to everything here," she said.

Her neighbours, too, have been wonderfully supportive, she said.

"My neighbours and friends have been fantastic," she said. "I've got a carload of toiletries that they've brought over for us," she said.

Cooper said her insurance company is paying to have a mobile home brought in, so that she may stay on the property and tend to her horses and chickens. She said the mobile home is expected to arrive sometime next week.

In the meantime, she and her daughter, Emily, will be staying with her parents in Brockville, she said.

Cooper lost some kittens in the fire, as well as Emily's pet rabbit, but there were some happy endings too.

Cooper said firefighters managed to save four of her cats from the basement, and in a pair of twists that led her to think there was almost some form of higher intervention at play, her late husband's armoire — spared from the flames in spite of everything else around it being scorched, she said — and some rosettes her daughter had stored in her room were not destroyed by the fire.

"It's funny how things happen like that, isn't it?" she said. "It makes you think."

■ WAR

## Artifacts sought

KATHERINE FERNANDEZ-BLANCE  
The Whig-Standard

The Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund is running a nationwide campaign to collect artifacts from the Fort Henry Internment camps.

The camps ran from 1914 until 1917 and interned Ukrainians, Germans and other Europeans during the first world war.

"A lot of people relate internment to the Japanese," said Andrea Malysh, fund program manager. "People don't actually understand that it started in the First World War."

Local residents that have come across artifacts from the internment camps can donate or sell their items to the fund.

"It stays in the public do-

main," she said.

So far, parole papers, an oil painting, photo albums, and ships in a bottle have made it into the fund's collection.

The group has yet to decide where the artifacts will be displayed, but some could be featured in the permanent Internment exhibit at the Fort Henry Museum next spring.

To donate or sell an artifact, contact Lubomyr Luciuk at 613-546-8364.

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