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The Highlander

Thursday **May 30 2024** | Issue 642

INSIDE: SPORTS HALL OF FAME FAMILY GROWS PAGE 21 **FREE**



Ready, set, race

JDH student Phoebe Stamp is quick off the block as she races against Ava Loney and Nasime Wiso from SBES at a five-school elementary track and field meet at Haliburton Highlands Secondary School May 25. See page 20 for more. *Photo by Mike Baker.*

OPP detonate explosives at AH cottage

By Lisa Gervais

Cottagers on Comak Crescent in Algonquin Highlands had what would have been an ordinarily quiet summer weekend disrupted as OPP, on May 25, detonated explosives found inside a summer home.

The weekend began when paramedics were called to a cottage just south of the Frost

Centre late Friday afternoon. Sources told *The Highlander* Ornge air ambulance was summoned to Haliburton hospital to take a patient who had injured his hand in an explosion at the cottage.

OPP on site May 25 confirmed, “there was an individual who was injured in the area of the property where we’re standing

now.” They would not elaborate. However, an OPP media release issued May 27 said police were called to assist fire and EMS at 5:04 p.m. “after an individual received an injury from a homemade explosive device.” They said the man was taken to hospital for serious, but non-life-threatening injuries.

Sources said after responding to the call,

firefighters kept a distance while OPP were called. Algonquin Highlands Station 80 was summoned to secure the scene. The paper was told the OPP bomb squad was then contacted and four surrounding properties evacuated. *The Highlander* was informed the situation escalated to a full bomb threat and

Continued ‘Blasts’ on page 2



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OPP and firefighters at the scene of a bomb scare this past Saturday night. Photo by Lisa Gervais.

Blasts 'shook the whole cottage'

Continued from page 1

OPP planned to explode the devices on-site Saturday. Monday's OPP media release said, "as the investigation continued, neighbours were evacuated and the OPP Explosive Disposal Unit (EDU) attended, recovering and securing additional explosive substances and devices from the residence."

In a follow-up email from *The Highlander* for clarification, OPP confirmed, "EDU technicians located explosive substances and devices and disposed of by rendering safe techniques. In addition, materials were seized for further analysis by the Centre of Forensic Science."

The site was cleared Sunday with OPP adding, "there are no explosive substances or devices remaining at the location that would pose a threat to public safety."

A neighbour, who asked not to be named, said two blasts on Saturday "shook the whole cottage." A plume of smoke could be seen over the area from Hwy. 35.

The neighbour said she and another neighbour had just gotten back from town Friday night when a fire pickup truck arrived, followed by a second one, about 5 p.m.

"Things sort of progressed and we saw the caution tape up the road. And then a bigger fire truck came. My friend next door heard the word evacuation." The woman said they walked up the road to try to see what was going on and first

responders yelled at them to stay away.

She added emergency services came again Saturday morning, stopped vehicular traffic around 10 or 10:30 a.m., and the bomb squad arrived. She said a neighbour was informed about a "redneck bomb."

She said, "we just stayed vigilant. Paid attention." She added police asked cottagers Friday night if they had an association so they could get word out that vehicles would not be allowed down the road Saturday.

The neighbour said it was an "exciting and interesting" weekend, but in hindsight scary. "He never seemed like a threat to anybody around here. I would not know him to see him," the cottager said.

OPP said they had arrested Kevin Brown, 36, of Mississauga, with making or possessing explosives for an unlawful purpose and breach of recognizance.

The release added, "the investigation is ongoing and anyone with information is asked to call Haliburton Highlands OPP at 1-888-310-1122, or submit tips anonymously through Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS).

"The OPP takes all threats to public safety seriously and provides resources necessary to assess and respond to the threat. If you have information about a possible explosive device, call 9-1-1 and provide as much information to police as possible about the threat."



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