

BRIEFLY

Social worker charged with sexual assault

A former employee of Lanark County Social Services has been charged with sexually assaulting a mentally handicapped woman in his care. Ontario Provincial Police laid charges against Hal Rogers Jenner, 43, of Perth, on Wednesday in connection with an incident alleged to have occurred between January and September 1994. Jenner worked in the adult protective services program until being fired on Nov. 24. The alleged assault involved a Carleton Place-area woman who was a client of the program, designed to support mentally handicapped adults living in the community. County officials would not comment because the man has grieved the firing.

For sale: 5 acres near Experimental Farm

The National Capital Commission has put five acres on Fisher Avenue up for sale for \$1.4 million. The parcel, opposite the Experimental Farm, consists of two lots bought by the commission in the early 1950s. The NCC left the property vacant and the federal government recently declared it surplus. An "academic institution" has made an offer for the property and the NCC is making a counter-offer, said spokeswoman Suzanne Amos-Kinsella. A condition of the sale is that a recreation path through the land continue to exist.

I've got a ticket from RIDE, 30 find

Area police laid 30 charges of impaired driving during holiday spotchecks. Nepean, Ottawa, and Gloucester police stopped more than 22,000 vehicles during the last two and a half months. In addition, 95 drivers had their licences suspended for 12 hours. Last year, police checked more than 37,000 vehicles and handed out 49 charges and 191 suspensions. Across Ontario, provincial police spot-checked about 485,000 cars between Nov. 27 and Dec. 31. One of every 194 drivers was either charged or issued a suspension. Last year the OPP charged or suspended one of every 211 drivers.

Aykroyd to the rescue for homeless family

PERTH ROAD — A woman whose home was destroyed by fire recently says she was "in awe" after movie star Dan Aykroyd offered his condolences and a helping hand. Flames last weekend levelled Ken and Yvonne Young's bungalow near this village north of Kingston. They and their three children lost all their possessions. None was home at the time. But soon after the fire was extinguished, Aykroyd, who has a home in the nearby Sydenham area, showed up unannounced to comfort the Youngs. "He said he would take care of us and not to worry," said Yvonne Young. Aykroyd first came to fame on NBC's *Saturday Night Live* TV show and has since starred in movies. He asked guests at a New Year's party at his new café in Kingston to contribute to a fund for the Youngs.

INSIDE

Mud slinging: The Liberal party is investigating alleged irregularities in the sale of party memberships as the Ottawa-Vanier byelection nears, **C2**

Randall Denley and Dave Brown return soon

ROAD WARRIOR



For winter travelling conditions on local Ontario highways call **745-7040** (English) or **745-4166** (French). For regional Ontario highway conditions call **1-800-267-0284**. For highway conditions across Ontario call **1-800-268-1376** and, for across Quebec, **772-3026**.

NEWS TIPS

Have a local story to tell? Call the *Citizen's* tips line at **596-6397**. If you have information about coming community events, please call Community Connection at **596-8433**.

Many of those who fled the Centretown blaze are recent immigrants whose few possessions were destroyed. But Duong Bach, with friend Tam Nguyen, saved his Canadian flag



Fire leaves newcomers homeless

By Leonard Stern
Citizen police reporter

Duong Bach reached into his pocket and pulled out the only possession he rescued from the fire that destroyed his Somerset Street apartment — a Canadian flag.

"It's my country," said Bach, as though the maple leaf compensates for the loss of everything else.

Bach, 52, came to Canada a year and a half ago from Vietnam. A police officer in Saigon, he was imprisoned when that city fell to the communists in 1975. He finally escaped to Thailand in 1987, from where he eventually found passage to Canada.

"Canada is very important to me," he said Thursday in the foyer of the YMCA on Argyle Street where many of the victims have sought emergency shelter. Then, folding away the flag, he sighs, "I have nothing else from the fire."

The blaze destroyed the three-storey building at 720 Somerset St. West. It started just before 11 p.m. Wednesday in one of the third-floor apartments above the Hong Kong Market.

Smoke poured from the charred building Thursday morning and firefighters continued to spray the ruins with water in the evening.

Fire officials don't yet know the cause of the fire but estimate damage will amount to about \$2 million.

The approximately 25 tenants escaped unharmed but are now homeless.

Many of the victims, like Huong Duong, 38, are recent immigrants from Vietnam. Weeping and frightened, Duong explained Thursday she is alone in Canada.

She said she lost everything in the fire, including photographs of family members who are still in Vietnam. "I ran out in my nightgown when I smelled smoke. We were so scared. I don't know what to do."

Duong works for Bridgehead Inc., a local company that imports crafts from developing countries. Duong's boss, Peter Selzer, hurried to the YMCA as soon as he heard his friend and employee was staying there.

Already Bridgehead has raised \$900 to help Duong buy new clothing and furniture, said Selzer. "We're like a family. We'll take care of Huong as best we can."

The dazed, exhausted look on the faces of the fire victims bespoke real tragedy.

Tam Nguyen, 32, was on his way



—Wayne Hiebert, Citizen

"I ran out in my nightgown when I smelled smoke. We were so scared. I don't know what to do."

—HUONG DUONG
Fire victim

home from a friend's house Wednesday night when he saw his apartment building aflame. He said he knew instantly everything he had worked for in Canada was reduced to ashes.

"I worked hard to save money for furniture. I just bought (it), now it's burned. I'm so sad, I lose everything."

YMCA manager Wilda Phillips was not certain how many victims were waiting to see one of two social workers sent in by the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, though she said there were more than 20. The region will be helping victims cover the cost of accommodation and food.



LONG NIGHT: Smoke billows from the scene of a Somerset Street blaze Thursday morning as firefighters douse the remains of the apartment building. Rush-hour traffic was diverted on a stretch of Somerset, west of Bronson Avenue.

There was little left to save from the fire that broke out late Wednesday night, causing an estimated \$2 million in damage. A few Oriental vases survived, framed in frozen firehose runoff. The Hong Kong Market and apartments that housed about 25 people were destroyed.

Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society says 'au revoir'

Ottawa branch's decline began with first PQ win in 1976

By Stephanie Rubec
Citizen correspondent

The men sitting at the Institut Canadien Français are six of a different Group of Seven: the last members of Ottawa's Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society.

In the good days, the society's membership was as high as 6,000 and the annual celebrations attracted thousands to Ottawa's Coliseum.

At the society's largest Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebration, on June 24, 1968, hockey great Jacques Lemaire led a parade through downtown Ottawa.

But those days seem far away. The Society is now about to close its doors.

In the past 20 years, membership has dropped to seven; the youngest member is 65, the oldest is 80: Claude Parent, 65, Jean-Paul Charron, 67, his brother and the president Aimé Charron, 69, Marcel Lau-



—Chris Mikula, Citizen

END OF AN ERA: Six of the last seven members of the Institut Canadien Français: (from left) Aimé Charron (sitting), Maurice Mattar, Louis-Alfred Beauchesne, Claude Parent, Joffre Bélanger and Jean-Paul Charron (sitting)

zon, 70, Louis Beauchesne, 76, Joffre Bélanger, 79, and Maurice Mattar, 80.

"We're resting for now," says Aimé Charron. "I'm afraid that our rest will be for a long time... for a

very long time."

Founded on Aug. 13, 1913, the Society played an important part in promoting French in Ottawa and Vanier by organizing activities like hockey and bridge.

Ottawa's Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society, unlike its Quebec cousin, was strictly a cultural organization. The society's charter forbids discussion of politics or religion at its events.

Parent enjoyed the Sundays everyone remembers so much. The Society would rent the Capitol Theatre and invite members to see a play.

But membership began to drop in the mid-70s when Montreal's Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society became involved in politics.

"It happened because of the declaration made by the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society in Montreal," says Aimé Charron.

"They declared their support for the Parti Québécois and its separatist campaign."

Even though the Saint-Jean-Baptiste societies were not affiliated, Franco-Ontarians associated the Ottawa society with the separatist message, says Charron.

Membership dropped by two-thirds in 1976 — the year the PQ first came to power — and has been dropping ever since.

"We were going door-to-door to sell memberships and we could see

the reaction when people saw us," explains Aimé Charron. "We understood."

The disappearance of church halls also signaled the end of Ottawa's branch. The halls it once rented for bowling, cards and billiards became bingo halls, says Bélanger.

Bélanger, who was one of the administrators of Vanier's Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society, saw its membership fall from 800 to zero.

Even though the seven administrators will continue to meet occasionally, they decided to suspend all the Society's activities for the first time since it was founded.

"We're no longer a very strong force, but we're leaving something behind," says Mattar.

What they're leaving behind is the organization's charter and \$29,613 they placed in a trust fund. The money will be retrieved if the Society's membership grows and it resumes its activities.

"We're hoping that this will not last forever," says Beauchesne.

In the meantime, the interest collected on the money will be used to fund cultural activities in Ottawa and Vanier.