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Daring ice rescue saves dog from Mill Lake

BY SARAH BISSONETTE

McDOUGALL TWP. – When Tammy Ash's dog broke through the ice, her neighbour and firefighters came to the rescue.

Tuesday morning Ash was preparing school lunches when she saw a man pull into the driveway and run past her Mill Lake house, only to come back up to his truck about five minutes later. That's when she learned the sound she and her two children could hear was their dog Bozley crying and trying to get back on the ice with canine 'sister' Molly barking for help and support.

The man was Noel Biloski, who Ash calls the hero of the story. He spotted the dog while getting ready for work and stopped to make sure it would get safely off the ice.

"(The dogs) were over on the weekend and the ice is getting thin out front here, so I just kind of thought 'Bad news,' and hope they make it back," said Biloski. "Then (Tuesday) morning the one was across here... then I heard the yelping and I looked, the dog was in the drink."

Bozley had fallen through in the middle of the bay. With hopes the dog would get itself out, he headed to the Ash's home but not before calling a neighbour to keep their eyes on him in case anything should go wrong. Seeing the dog needed more hands-on-help, he went back home, grabbed a neighbour's tin boat and headed out across the thicker ice.

"It literally looked like he was bobsledding across," said Ash.

At one point Bozley slipped under the water.

"The other neighbour was telling me to calm down because ... the more I was upset the more Bozley was crying," said Ash. "So as soon as I stopped he kind of just laid his head on the ice."

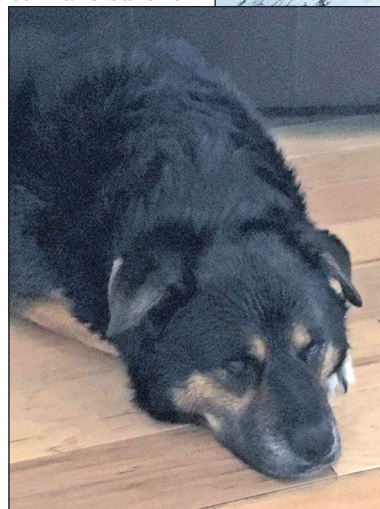
Bozley was dragged into the boat, but then Biloski, the dog and boat were stuck in the hole of open water surrounded by chunks of ice. Resilient, Biloski didn't throw up his hands in defeat, instead he called his neighbour on his side of the lake to grab a rope, and go the Ash's side to pull him in.

"I guess by that time other people had seen what was going on and the 911 calls started," he said. "So a bit embarrassing...(at least) they got



Submitted photos

Bozley, left, fell through the ice on Mill Lake Tuesday. He was pulled from the water by neighbour Noel Biloski and both were towed to shore by the McDougall Fire Department. Shown above, two firefighters make their way to the boat in Mill Lake. The firefighter on the right eventually tied a rope to the boat's bow and it was pulled to shore.



some ice water training. It was a win-win situation."

The McDougall Fire Department responded with eight firefighters, two of whom grabbed ropes and made their way toward the stranded boat. The boat and everyone in it was towed back to shore.

"I'm very thankful," said Ash, who visited her neighbours with thank you cards later that night. "Words cannot express our gratitude. It's unbelievable that someone would risk their own life."

For his part Biloski said he's a dog lover, took precautions to keep himself safe and knew the way the current went that meant the ice in front of his property was thicker than where the dog went in.

See 'Township' page 2

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Masons help to expand health centre services page 5



Skiers head to nationals Sports, page 6



March Break activities around the region page 11

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Compassion, fiscal responsibility with end of life care funding

PARRY SOUND - The Ontario Budget 2016 contains a significant new investment in community hospice palliative care.

Ontario Finance Minister Charles Sousa announced today that the Government will invest an additional \$75 million over the next three years in community palliative care and residential hospices.

The new funding will bring the total annual investment in the sector to \$155 million.

"We want to thank the government for recognizing the need and the benefits, and for providing additional support for community based hospice palliative care. The aging

population is driving a sharp increase in the need for appropriate, cost effective end of life care," said Melanie Honsinger, Executive Director of Hospice West Parry Sound. "The government is demonstrating compassion and fiscal responsibility."

Hospice Palliative Care Ontario (HPCO), which represents visiting and residential hospices throughout Ontario, will continue to work with the government in the coming weeks to determine specific investments.

However, the budget does state that at the end of the three years, the annual government funding for residential hospices in

Ontario will be \$55 million a year.

This number reflects the government's commitment to extend funding to 20 additional hospices, including in rural areas.

"Hospice palliative care in Ontario is most often a community driven initiative, supported by local donors and volunteers. The increase in government support is much needed to ensure we can meet the inevitable demand for care," said Honsinger. "With the aging population, the demand for care could overwhelm the health care system unless we expand access to hospice palliative care now."

Coordinated community end of life care can prevent costly and often unnecessary hospital visits and stays.

The Auditor General of Ontario noted that it costs at least twice as much to fund hospital beds than it does to fund a residential hospice bed.

HPCO particularly acknowledges the passion, hard work and commitment of MPP, John Fraser, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health and Long Term Care, who spearheaded the end of life care file for more than a year.

(Submitted article)

Stay off area waterways, West Parry Sound OPP warn

PARRY SOUND - After a winter that was slow to start, warnings are being issued about spring being early to come.

The West Parry Sound Ontario Provincial Police reminds all outdoor enthusiasts of the dangers of the insecure ice on local lakes and rivers.

Remember 'No ice is without risk.' If you travel on the ice, you put yourself at risk and you risk the lives of the people who come to your assistance.

If you go through the ice, remember the 1-10-1 rule. You have one minute to gain your composure, to get your breath, you have ten minutes to get out of the water and you have less than one hour to get yourself warm.

At least 10 centimetres (4 inches) of clear blue ice is required for walking, 12 centimetres (5 inches) for snowmo-

biles and 20 centimetres (8 inches), minimum, is needed for most light vehicles.

The strongest ice is clear/blue in colour, opaque/white ice is much weaker.

A layer of heavy snow on a frozen lake or river can insulate the ice below and slow down freezing. Travelling on ice with snowmobiles or vehicles can be potentially very dangerous and added precautions must be taken. Avoid slushy ice, untracked ice, or ice near moving water or dock bubbles.

Proper use of safety equipment can reduce the

risks of travelling over ice-covered bodies of water. Some of these include; the wearing of survival suits, carrying picks (used to grip the ice to pull yourself out of the water) and carrying a rescue rope.

The OPP and the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs are reminding snowmobilers to take personal responsibility for their own safety and well-being this winter.

Township in midst of ice rescue training schedule when rescuers get real call

continued from front

"You tell people 'don't risk your own life for a dog', but knowing the water wasn't super deep, it wasn't that cold out and it was close to home, I called my neighbour just to keep eyes on me in case things did go south...," Biloski said.

Safe


Bozley is now safe, staying close to home after his about 20 minutes in the water.

"He spent all day (Tuesday) kind of pretty mopey and sleepy, but he's doing okay," said

Ash. "He's just not quite himself yet."

Ice rescues are rare in the township, but McDougall's Fire Department is fully trained and equipped to help both humans and animals in distress. The three prior ice rescues of an animal were trying to get deer out of the ice. To help, the township bought a hooked pole attached to a rope to hook around an animal's neck and kept firefighters out of reach. In this case it wasn't needed.

The call for an ice rescue was opportune with the fire department in the midst of its training schedule for such an event.



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Human Resources Consultant Request for Proposal (RFP)

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Muskoka Community Network is seeking the expertise of a qualified human resource professional to assist the Board of Directors in its search for an Executive Director. The Board's objective is to ensure the continued success of MCN under the leadership of an experienced, high-performing Executive Director.

For more information, please visit www.mcnet.ca/rfp

