

Woman, dogs flee Canton blaze – Lesyk alerts occupant to garage fire

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FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 2011



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A Canton firefighter unrolls a fire hose at a garage fire Thursday afternoon at 82 State St. in Canton. The home is owned by Paul S. Jones. Several propane tanks inside the garage exploded.

CANTON — A woman and several dogs were able to escape a fire that heavily damaged a State Street home in the village Thursday afternoon.

As flames sparked in the garage at 82 State St., a passing motorist went inside the wood-paneled home to alert Michelle Mayette to the fire about 2:30 p.m. She escaped the home safely,

but a few dogs housed in cages in the garage were killed, Canton firefighters said. The home is owned by Paul S. Jones.

Defense attorney Alexander Lesyk was driving by the home, which is across from Canton High School, when he noticed flames coming from the garage. He jumped from his pickup truck and ran over to the burning home to see whether anyone was home.

He knocked on the door and received no response. He then checked the door handle, which was unlocked, and went inside and yelled, "Is anyone home?"

Ms. Mayette, who was upstairs, heard Mr. Lesyk's voice and came downstairs to see who was at the door. After realizing what was happening, she grabbed a few dogs and left the home. Meanwhile, Mr. Lesyk was given the keys to her car, which was parked near the garage. When he started the car, the headlights already had begun to melt from the intense flames.

"I was so nervous, I accidentally put it into drive," said Mr. Lesyk, who then pulled the car away from the garage.

Several propane tanks inside the garage exploded, momentarily pushing back firefighters as they were battling the blaze.

"I heard this explosion," neighbor Georgia Mitchell said. "I looked out my back door and saw smoke coming from the home."

Canton Fire Chief Michael E. Dalton said the fire might have started while maple sap was being boiled in the garage. The fire appears accidental, but fire investigators will return today to continue the investigation. Canton, Morley and Pyrites firefighters responded to battle the blaze. "The firefighters made a good stop," Mr. Dalton said. "They confined the fire to the garage. It was a first-rate save."

Several Canton High School students who were walking home watched as the fire raged across the street from the school's campus. No injuries were reported, and the home was insured. Mr. Lesyk said that he doesn't consider himself a hero, and that he was doing what anyone else would have done.