

Crowds cheer in Carbonear

Olympic torch winds its way around the bay

By DANIEL MACEachern

THE COMPASS

As the sun cracked the horizon over Conception Bay Saturday morning the Olympic torch was beginning its CBN relay in Carbonear.

Residents lined Water Street and waved miniature Canadian and Olympic flags handed out by the relay's advance team. They cheered as the torch made its way up the street just after 7 a.m., kicking off Day 16 of the Olympic Torch Relay.

While runner Rosalie Russell of Harbour Grace awaited her turn with the Olympic flame, excited residents snapped pictures with her and her unlit torch, including young Meghan Lehr.

"I just really wanted to see the torch," she said. "It's really important

and it's cool. I really like it."

Runner Roy Chiu of Toronto touched his torch to Russell's and the two relay team members posed with the sunrise over Carbonear harbour in the background while residents cheered and took pictures.

As Russell took the torch on its way along Water Street, Chiu, who said carrying the torch was the thrill of a lifetime, said he was enjoying his first time in Newfoundland.

"It's very good. I like the place. It's very outdoor. I love the sightseeing," he said.

Carol Haire of Carbonear was excited to bring her family to see the torch pass by.

"It's great. I got the kids out of bed this morning," she said, and then, as

her son complained he was freezing, said it was "hot chocolate time."

The air was a little warmer by the time the torch made it to Cupids an hour and a half later, having passed through Harbour Grace, Spaniard's Bay, Bay Roberts and Clarke's Beach.

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'It's a very exciting time'

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Dawn Rogowski of St. John's carried the torch through a throng of residents who broke out in smiles, cameras and video recorders in hand.

Nornia Bonnell of Cupids posed for a photograph with Rogowski before the torchbearer walked the flame past Cupids.

"It's a very exciting time. I work for the Cupids 400, community liaison officer. I'm the chair of the (Cupers Cove) Soiree committee here, so it's very exciting, and I wanted to get that done."

Torchbearer Rogowski said she was thrilled by the support of residents along her leg of the run.

"It was unbelievable. I didn't expect the turnout, I didn't expect a lot of that. It was just a wonderful feeling just to see how many people came out to support the torch and the Olympics."

She said the experience exceeded all her expectations.

"It was beyond what I was hoping it

would be. I'm very proud to be Canadian, and just representing people with the small window of time. It went by so quickly."

Rogowski added it was a "weird feeling" getting back on the bus with the other torchbearers after she'd completed her run.

"Everybody was just sitting there, reflecting on their own experience," she said.

The seven CBN towns visited on the weekend are among 41 communities and places of interest the Olympic torch visited during its five-day trek through the province. The Newfoundland and Labrador towns were among 1,000 Canadian communities the flame will visit in 100 days.

After Cupids, the torch went to Brigus, before being taken up the highway for another round of relays in communities along the Trans Canada Highway, part of a 480-km. section of Canada traversed by the torch on Nov. 14 in its journey to Vancouver, where it will light the Olympic cauldron Feb. 12, 2010.

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Roy Chiu lights the flame of fellow torchbearer Rosalie Russell of Harbour Grace on Saturday morning in Carbonear. DAN MACEACHERN/The Compass