

Limehouse man escapes early morning blaze

By **LISA TALLYN**
Staff Writer

David Cairns of Limehouse was awoken by a loud crash about 4 a.m. Saturday.

He got up to investigate, put on his glasses, and wondered why his vision was still foggy.

When he opened the bedroom door it was clear the house was on fire, the smoke hit him "like a black wall."

Recalling the fire safety tips he learned as a child, Cairns, who was in the house alone at the time, dropped to the floor and crawled through the hall to the front of the house.

Realizing he couldn't make it downstairs, he smashed a small window and crawled out to the roof of the porch.

He's not sure how long he lay there "hacking and coughing" before he realized he better get off the roof, quickly. He stood up, slipped on the snow on the roof, then fell, landing on his back on the snow-covered ground about eight feet below.

Winded by the fall, he laid there for a short time, then jumped up and ran to a neighbour's home to call the fire department.

When Halton Hills firefighters arrived, the house, located at the corner of Kirkpatrick Lane and Fifth Line, was fully involved.

Cairns was taken by ambulance to hospital where he was treated for smoke inhalation and released later that day.

Halton Hills Fire Department (HHFD) Deputy



Early Saturday, Halton Hills Fire Department) responded to a house fire at the corner of Kirkpatrick Lane and the Fifth Line in Limehouse. The lone occupant, David Cairns, escaped through an upstairs window. Damage is estimated at \$250,000. *Photo by Alison Murray Brown*

Chief John Martin said it's not known if the smoke alarms were working in the home at the time of the blaze, but fire crews couldn't hear them sounding when they arrived.

Martin said, however, due to how advanced the fire was, the alarms could have already been destroyed.

Cairns doesn't know if they were going off at the time.

"Everything just kind of happened. I have no

idea if I heard them," he said.

Martin said approximately 30 firefighters fought the blaze that gutted the home.

The building was so unstable it was knocked down with a backhoe later that day.

Damage is estimated at \$250,000. Martin said the cause is undetermined, but not considered suspicious.

Cairns said the home was insured and he and his wife Kristin are currently staying with family.

He is thankful that his wife was visiting her family in Newmarket at the time of the fire. He said the couple often foster kittens for North Halton Kitten Rescue, and fortunately they didn't have any on Saturday.

"We lost everything," said Cairns.

He is particularly upset about the loss of the art he and Kristin collected on their travels, but added they are just things.

"Life is about experiences, no fire can take that away from me."

Cairns said the support from the community has been amazing.

"It really makes me appreciate what an incredible community that we live in. People have been just incredible."

When asked if they need any help, Cairns said, "I don't know what to say."

"I've got a shirt on my back. I'm wearing pants. Someone was nice enough to bring me a couple of pairs of shoes.

"At the end of the day it's just stuff."

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