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'HOMETOWN PAPER, NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS!'

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1996

## Thomsons may face jail for arson

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The Acton Tanner

No word yet if former Acton residents Ken and Joan Thomson will attempt to appeal their arson and fraud convictions. Torching their dream home for financial gain could mean jail time for the couple who were each convicted of arson threatening safety and arson with intent to defraud an insurance company last Thursday in a Milton court room.

The Thomsons, both 36, showed little emotion as the guilty verdicts were read but Ken Thomson's mother, local realtor Anne Genoe reacted hysterically and had to be calmed by family members both in and out of the court room.

Until their sentencing on May 24, the Thomsons, who have no other convictions, can return to British Columbia where they live with their two children.

Assistant Crown Attorney James Cornish asked for a presentence report on the couple, noting that such reports are usually ordered in cases "where there is a likelihood of jail."

The jury deliberated four hours before finding the Thomsons guilty in connection with a Jan. 25, 1992 fire at their home at 3 Young St.

The Crown said the Thomsons had an "obsession" with their dream home and it turned into a money pit and finally a nightmare for the deeply in debt couple.

During their deliberations the jury asked to be read the testimony of Thomson neighbour Bill Dumarsh. The judge had told the jury that their verdict would largely hinge on Dumarsh's evidence.

Eighty-one-year-old Dumarsh testified he saw a car idling in the driveway of the Thomson's home around 6:10 pm on the day of the fire. He said that as one person walked back and forth beside the car, another went in and out of the house through the garage.

Dumarsh said the car had louvers on the back window like the Thomson's vehicle, but he could not see the people because of the car's exhaust fumes.

About 20 minutes after the car left the fires were reported.

Three separate fires had been set with two igniting, including a bag of gasoline on the second floor that sprayed on a firefighter and led to the endangering charges.

The jury rejected testimony from several defense witnesses who said the Thomsons were at a party in Toronto at the time of the fire. The jury also rejected the defense lawyers' claim the fire was the work of youths, who broke into the house looking for money.

In an interview on Friday, Ken Thomson's step-father-in-law, Ab Genoe said it was "too soon" for the couple to decide whether the convictions will be appealed.



### BEAVERS, CUBS AND RABBITS?!

11-year-old Chris Rivers got into the action songs during Thinking Day ceremonies at Robert Little School last Thursday. The 3rd Acton Scout member joined area Guides and Scouts to celebrate the birthdays of Lord and Lady Baden Powell. (Karen Wetmore photo)

## Queen Street waste transfer plan surprises Town

Plans for a waste transfer station at the old Ajax site on Queen Street in Acton caught Town staff and Council by surprise.

News of the proposal surfaced in a letter from the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MOEE)

informing the Town it had until mid-March to comment on Tri City Services Ltd.'s application to amend its provisional certificate of approval for a waste disposal (transfer) site at 238 Queen St. E. Acton Councillor Rick Bonnette

said they know nothing about the proposal.

"This comes as a total surprise to Council, and I doubt any of the neighbours have heard about it yet or we would have been getting their phone calls," Bonnette said.

"A number of the residents are already unhappy with what is happening at that industrial site in their residential neighbourhood."

The site, owned by Freure Management, is zoned for a neighbourhood commercial plaza and

is currently leased and being used to store old tires.

The MOEE letter has been sent to staff for a report and the MOEE will be informed that Council can't make the March 15 deadline for commenting on the application.

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