

# Two distinct fires says investigator

By JANET BAINE  
Staff writer

Two separate fires were set using a flammable liquid in Ken and Patricia Thomson's Young St., Acton residence four years ago, Inspector Clifford Miller of the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office testified in General Division court Thursday.

Miller was the last witness to be called for the prosecution in the trial of the Thomsons. Both husband and wife face charges of arson endangering life and arson with intent to defraud.

"The fire in the basement was separate and distinct from the one in the office," Miller said. He said the one in the office on the main floor was set on top of a desk.

The arsonist likely threw a match down the stair into the basement,

igniting the flammable liquid which had been spread there, then quickly lit a fire which had already been set on the desk and left the house, he said. A garbage bag containing gas was found upstairs by firefighter Jim Endean.

Miller testified that plastic bags are normally used to slow the progress of the fire and allow the arsonist time to escape from the house.

Endean, who was among the firefighters from the Halton Hills Fire Department called to the scene, had been sprayed with gas from the bag upstairs. At that point all the firefighters had to leave the burning house because of the danger the gas presented.

"When I learned one firefighter had been sprayed by gas, it totally amazed me that I wasn't

investigating a fatal fire with the death of a firefighter," Miller said.

David McFarlane, the supervisor of an investigative team for Revenue Canada, testified that neither Ken nor Patricia Thomson filed income tax returns for 1987, 1988 or 1989. When no return is filed and the department believes there is taxable income, they prepare a tax return based on income information they have from the employer, McFarlane said.

As a result of this, Ken Thomson owed about \$63,293 in taxes, penalties and interest in November, 1991 and he was sent letters regarding this in October, November and December of that year, McFarlane said.

The trial was expected to continue Monday with the lawyers for the Thomsons, Jack McCulligh and Doug Lent, continuing their defense.

## Business award nominees announced

Nominees for the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce will have to wait until the awards banquet to find out if they won.

The chamber has altered the format of its business achievement awards this year. Nominees in all four categories have been announced and the actual winners won't be named until the awards banquet on Thursday February, 29.

Up for Entrepreneur of the Year are; Acton Tanner, Edmund Fry & Co., and Red Dog Cafe.

Civic Pride nominees are North Halton Golf and Country Club and Sheridan Nurseries.

Up for Employee of the Year are Al Becker of Halton

Flour Milling, deli manager of Acton IGA Connie Bath and Robert Marrows of Ann's Cartage and Piano Movers.

Business of the Year nominees are; DDH Distribution, Halton Hills IGA and Work that Body Fitness Programs Inc.

The awards banquet will be held at the North Halton Golf and Country Club. Dinner will served at 7 p.m. following cocktails at 6:15 p.m.

Tickets are \$40 per person and can be purchased through Mike Manes of Acton IGA at 853-1960, Walt Dixon of Park Lincoln Mercury at 877-2261 Elly Tuitman of Tuitman's Garden Centre at 853-2480 or the Chamber office at 877-7119.

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