

'Training home' now a fond memory



This century old farmhouse on Sixth Line, owned by Monica and Dave Gunn, quickly was gutted by fire during Saturday's controlled burn.



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Staff Writer

Several new Halton Hills firefighters got a lesson in how rapidly fire grows and spreads when the fire department intentionally burned down a Sixth Line home Saturday morning.

The controlled burn of the vacant farmhouse was at the request of homeowners Monica and Dave Gunn, who never actually lived in the house, instead building another one on the 100-acre property they purchased approximately four years ago.

Due to Niagara Escarpment Commission regulations, Monica Gunn said they are only permitted to have one home on the property.

She said the home was previously owned by the McEnery family, and since the Gunns purchased the property they have allowed Halton Hills Fire Protection and Prevention Services to use it for search and rescue and Rapid Intervention Team training.

Halton Police have also used the home for training, she said.

"As a resource its invaluable for us because it gives us the opportunity during training to practise in a real-life environment," said Halton Hills fire department chief of operations John Martin. "It (the controlled burn) gives us an opportunity to illustrate, especially to our new recruits, how fire develops."

Gunn said she was pleased the firefighters could "derive some information" from the fire.

"You never know, it might end up saving someone's life," said Gunn.

She said watching the old home burn was surprisingly "emotional" for her and how quickly the fire spread was an eye-opener.

"It really showed us how quickly you need to get out. You need a plan of escape and a meeting place," she stressed.

She said they plan to plant trees for a "new beginning" where the farmhouse previously stood.



A Halton Hills firefighter prepares to open a hose on the blazing farmhouse during Saturday's controlled burn on Sixth Line. The century-old farmhouse has been used for training in recent years by both police and fire services. *Photos by Yves Desjardins*



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