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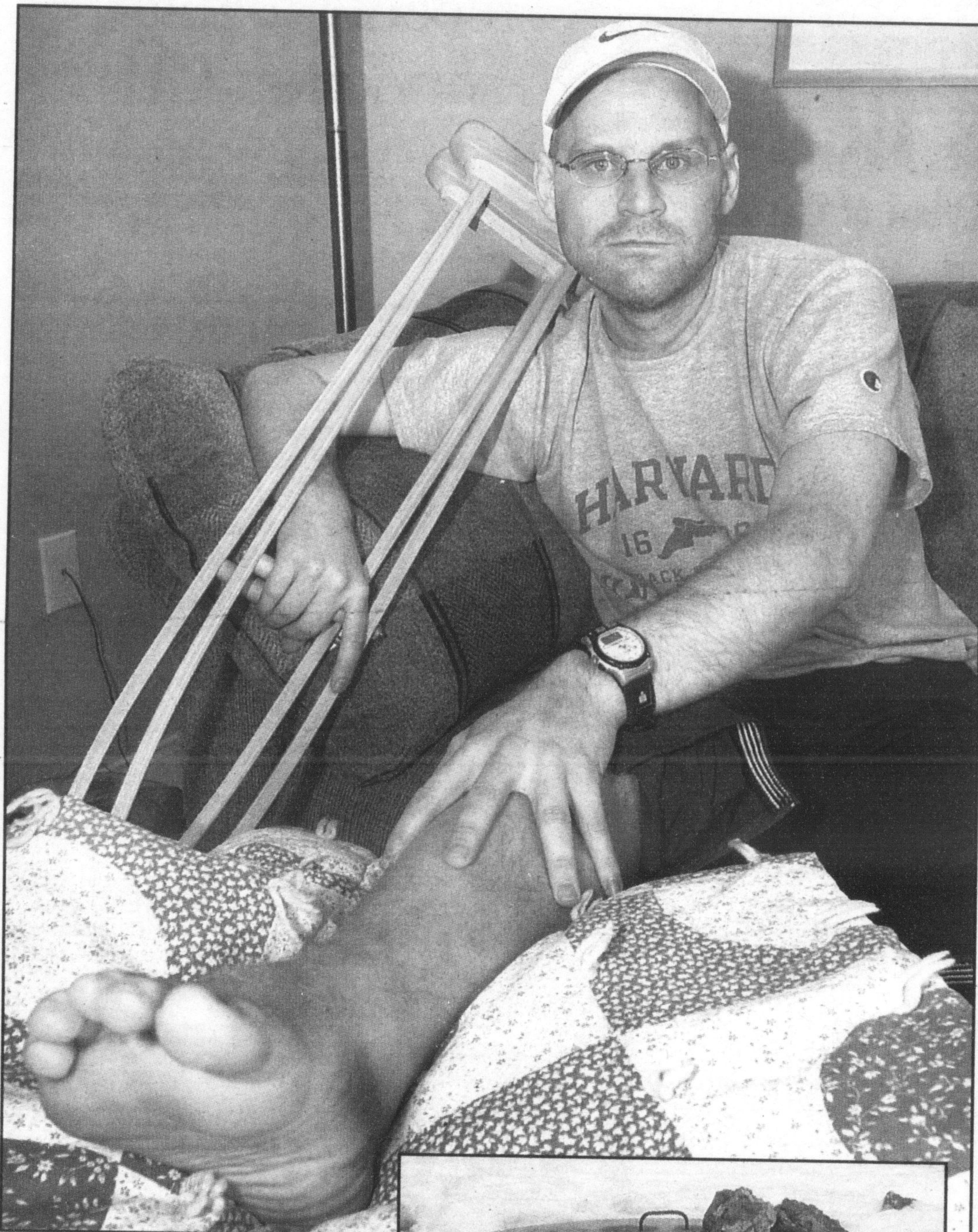
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Lucky to be alive

## Man escapes serious harm after falling in well



Trevor Johnson recovers at his Guelph home after surviving a 30-foot fall down a well on No. 10 Sideroad Saturday. Inset, a new well cover is in place after the old one crumbled when Mr. Johnson stepped on it.

Photos by GRAHAM PAINE

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**  
*The Champion*

Trevor Johnson is lucky to be alive after dropping about 30 feet into frigid waters when the well cover he was standing on crumbled beneath his feet Saturday afternoon.

Although he's at home with severely sprained ankles and doesn't expect to return to work for another week or so, Mr. Johnson said the outcome could have been much, much worse.

"It was very unlucky that it happened, but lucky that it was me and not a kid," he said.

Mr. Johnson, a Guelph resident, was with his girlfriend babysitting her four-year-old nephew and an unrelated infant at a No. 10 Sideroad home, on the border of Milton and Halton Hills.

"We were playing in the snow and I was running away. I saw the well cover, and stepped up onto it to tie my shoes. The next thing I knew, I was in the water," Mr. Johnson said.

**Victim doesn't remember much**

He said he doesn't remember much from the actual fall, which happened at about 2 p.m., but remembers his girlfriend, Rebecca Lopers, screaming his name and looking down into the well.

"It was like a bad dream. My mind wasn't functioning right because it's such a shock to your body. I looked up and saw a little hole above me," Mr. Johnson said.

Ms Lopers called 911 and shortly after, police arrived, Mr. Johnson said. Both the Milton and Halton Hills fire departments also responded, although only Milton personnel — the technical rope rescue team — took part in the rescue.

All in all, there were about 15 Milton fire personnel with one pumper truck and three support units on site, plus an ambulance, said Tim Roberts, training co-ordinator with the Milton Fire Department. He said they couldn't determine how deep the water was, but Mr. Johnson wouldn't have been able to stand up in it.

The fire department gave Mr. Johnson a helmet to wear, to protect his head from falling pieces of the well cover.

"Every time they (firefighters) moved, I was pelted with cement," Mr. Johnson said.

His primary concern being hypothermia, Mr. Johnson positioned his body so his feet were against one side of the well and his back was wedged against the other side, lifting his entire body above the water.

Fire personnel lowered an extension ladder and a harness down the well and Mr. Johnson donned the harness. He climbed up the ladder himself but was attached to a haul system so if he fell, fire personnel could have continued to pull him up.

Mr. Johnson said that while he was climbing up, he knew his ankles were sore, but didn't think they were seriously sprained. "It's kind of funny, but down there I thought that I'd come out, go in the shower, have some tea and be okay. But the minute I was on solid ground, I lost control of my body and I started shaking."

A minor case of hypothermia was to blame. He was warmed up and taken to the Georgetown hospital. He was released later that day, suffering sprained ankles and minor cuts and bruises. "Both of my ankles were swollen like grapefruits."

The entire rescue process took just over half-an-hour.

Staying above the water was a good move on Mr. Johnson's part, Mr. Roberts said.

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