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Girl hero in Goodwood fire

Family escapes early-morning blaze

By JIM THOMAS

A Goodwood family of six owe their lives to swift action by a 17-year-old girl.

Heidi Todd, daughter of Stan and Judy Todd, woke up shortly after 1 a.m., Thursday, to see flames spreading through a wooden grate in her bedroom floor and reaching almost to the ceiling.

Without thought for her own safety, Heidi awakened her parents, brothers Cameron and Stewart, ages 17 and 16, and her nine-year-old sister Becky.

Clad only in night attire, she drove up the street to the home of Don and June Harper and called in the alarm.

"A few more minutes and it would have been too late," her thankful father told The Weekender, "she did a super job."

Mr Todd said seconds after Heidi escaped her room, the ceiling came crashing down.

The house was a total loss with damage, excluding contents, valued at \$80,000.

Mr Todd, principal of Southwood Park Public School, Ajax, said his wife ran out in the freezing cold in an attempt to summon help but due to the lateness of the hour, no one was up. At a third house, she managed to arouse the occupants. Their own phone had already been cut off by the fast-moving flames, he said.

"I knew, even before firefighters arrived, there was no chance," Todd said. He praised the swift action of fire volunteers from Stouffville, Uxbridge and Pickering. They were able to save a nearby two-storey garage completed only recently. Cameron picked up his guitar and a

motorcycle helmet on the way out and Stewart grabbed a coat. All else was lost.

Mr Todd said everything seemed fine when he and his wife retired around midnight. Judy had attended a Music Mania practice in Stouffville that evening. Her costume was destroyed in the blaze along with copies of some of the skits.

Mrs Todd suffered a minor injury when she slipped and fell on a patch of ice. Mr Todd blistered one hand. Of greater concern was the loss of staff papers he'd brought home from school. "I'm afraid they'll have to be done all over again," he said.

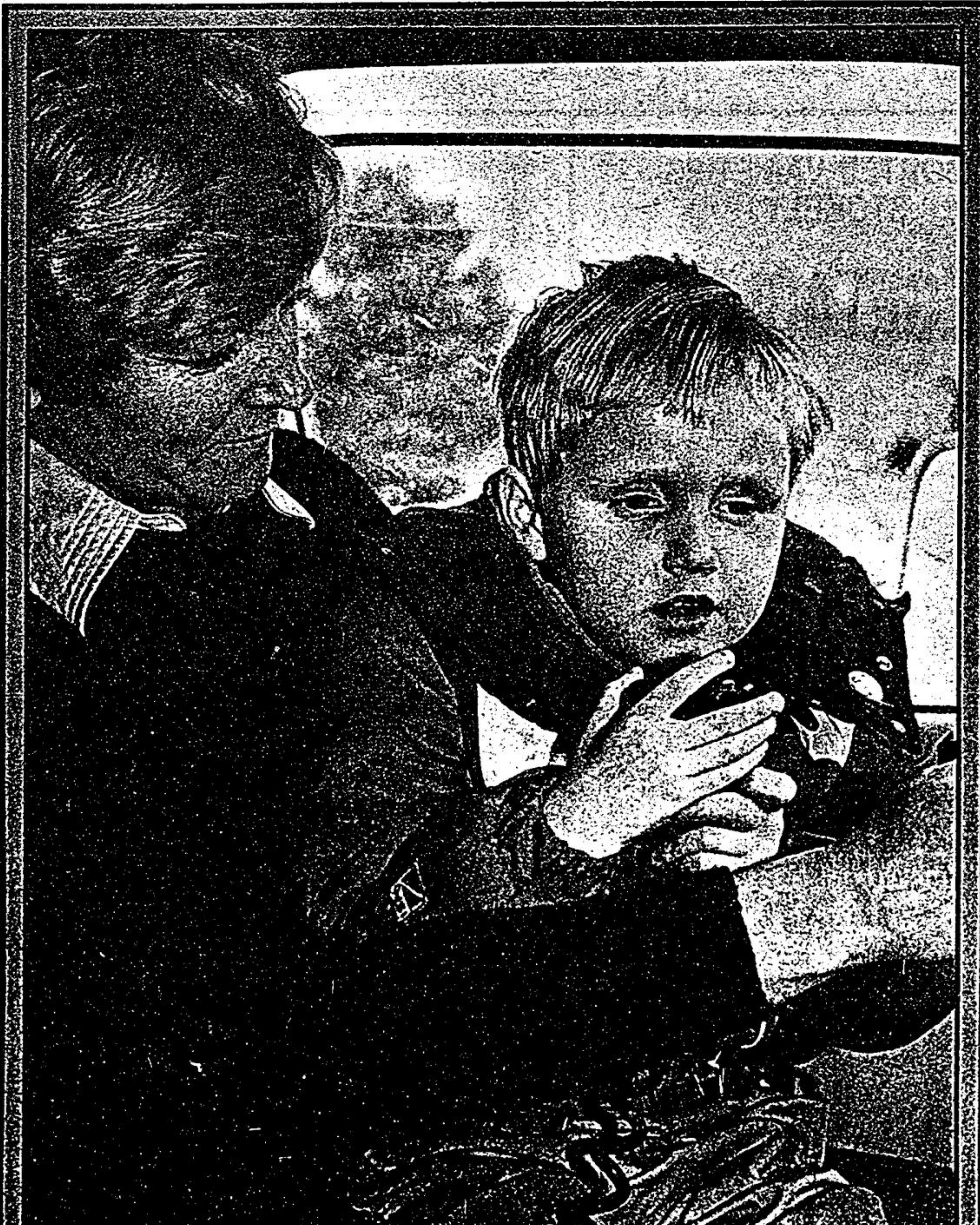
The former principal of Claremont Public School and Joseph Gould Sr. Public School, Uxbridge, expects to be back at his desk, Monday.

Stan and Judy Todd moved to Goodwood from Bay Ridges thirteen years ago. Since buying the property, they'd spent close to \$30,000 on improvements. The house is insured but some of the contents can never be replaced, he said. "There are many things money can't buy."

Todd said he and his family have been overwhelmed by concern and generosity shown by friends. Even before the embers had cooled, the Goodwood Lions Club had responded with donations of clothing. On Thursday, he received a cheque for \$500 from the parents of students at Southwood Park School.

Mr Todd said he hopes to rebuild. "Our neighbors are superb. We don't want to leave," he concluded.

For fire photos, see Page 3.



Come to Breaker, Breaker

Five-year-old Cameron Straughan takes a moment to chat with a travel way dispatcher on the way to school. He and his mother, Mrs. Judy Todd, are on their way to school. Cameron is a kindergartener at William Armstrong Public School and enjoys many of the same activities as his brother, Stewart. Cameron's father, Stan, is a teacher at the school. For more on Cameron and his family, see Page 5.

Donkey ball

Various types of softball games have been featured on Stouffville diamonds in recent seasons—slow-pitch, fast-pitch, T-ball and lob-ball. On July 1, a ball game of a different kind will be played—on donkeys!

Donkey baseball is just that, players riding (or trying to ride) donkeys. The cost of bringing the 'team' to Stouffville from Ottawa will be \$700. Organizers are still looking for riders. The Chamber of Commerce and Town Council hope to field entries.

The event is all part of the Town's Strawberry Festival and Canada Day Weekend, June 25 through July 1.