

exhilarating to witness that, although our world can't be free from danger, we can build a society largely able to cope. Everything, I realized, had worked as it should. The firefighters were quick and adept. The police were kind and respectful. The neighbours were supportive and warm.

After the officer left, I made myself another drink. It was 5:45 a.m. Soon I would watch the sun come up. The girls would go to school. My husband would go to work. And I would call the insurance company, exhausted and a little sad, to begin rebuilding what we'd lost.

## DON'T PLAY WITH FIRE

By Lisa Coxon

If a fire breaks out in your home, every second counts. Blazes progress quickly, and temperatures can soar to 900 degrees Celsius in about three minutes. To protect yourself and your loved ones, have a plan in place before disaster strikes.

### ■ **EARLY DETECTION IS ESSENTIAL**

Prevention is the first and most effective step in managing house fires: be sure to install working smoke detectors on every floor and carbon monoxide alarms outside sleeping areas, and test them monthly. "Change the batteries annually," says Stephen Welowszky, division chief of public education with Toronto Fire Services. Family members of seniors should take extra precautions, he notes. Consider devices specifically designed for hearing-impaired individuals that emit a strobe light, as well as pager-like options that vibrate if the alarm sounds while you're asleep.

■ **CAUTION IN THE KITCHEN** In the period between 2009 and 2013, cooking caused an average of 1,357 fires a year in Ontario, according to the province's Office of the Fire Marshal

and Emergency Management. In the case of a grease fire, don't put water on the flames—this will cause them to flare up violently, warns Welowszky. Turn off the heat and smother the blaze with another pan, if possible.

■ **EXTINGUISHER ABCs** Fire extinguishers come in different types, indicated on their tags: A, B, C, or ABC. Type A is for combustible materials like paper and cardboard; type B is for flammable liquids, such as cooking oil; and type C is for electrical and appliance fires. Welowszky says type ABC is best for households.

■ **MAKE AN ESCAPE PLAN** Know two ways out of every room and off of each floor (windows count), and rehearse this drill regularly with all members of your household.