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Retired embassy worker hurt in Wilno inferno



An inferno

When Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards Township firefighters arrived at the scene of a house fire on Shrine Hill at Wilno late Saturday night, the structure was burning wildly out of control and a huge red glow filled the night sky. Residents Jim Visutski, his wife, Yuie and their two children, Janisa and Aaron escaped from the house but when Mr. Visutski didn't see them outside he ran back in and upstairs and that's when he came perilously close to losing his life. He was forced to exit out a second-storey bathroom window and remains in an Ottawa hospital.

Family of four escape their burning home Saturday night

By Gerald Tracey
News Editor

Wilno – A retired long-time employee of the Department of Foreign Affairs who spent all of his career working in Canadian embassies abroad and then retired to the family home in Wilno is in the Ottawa Hospital Civic Site recovering from injuries he received when he escaped from the burning family home Saturday night.

Jim Visutski, who worked with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada for more than four decades, sustained neck and ankle injuries when he jumped from a second-storey window at about 10:30 p.m. Saturday.

His wife, Mallika (Yuie) Insua, and their two children, Janisa, 15,

and Aaron, 10, escaped from the residence unharmed.

It is believed Mr. Visutski may have gotten out of the burning house and re-entered it in search of his wife and children when he couldn't locate them outside.

His son, Jacob of Ottawa, from his first marriage to Lynne Postill, who now lives in Killaloe, said Monday afternoon his dad sustained a broken vertebrae in his neck and a broken ankle after he was forced to jump out of a bathroom window of the two-storey home. He also suffered damage to his airways and lungs and was immediately placed on a ventilator upon his arrival at St. Francis Memorial Hospital in Barry's Bay. He received minor burns to his hands as well.

"He is heavily sedated but is able

to move his arms and his legs so that was great news today," his son.

Although he is not allowed to visit his dad due to COVID-19 regulations, he said staff at the hospital have been excellent keeping him informed of his condition.

The younger Mr. Visutski said depending on how much damage was done to the airways the breathing tube could be removed by today (Wednesday).

"They are being a little conservative about the neck at this point saying he might just need the halo brace," he continued. "But the surgery seems to be something that they are not going to do, which is good news."

Mr. Visutski, who has an older brother, Justin, and a younger sister, Kasha, both living in Toronto, said

doctors at the Ottawa Hospital spoke highly of the treatment his dad received in Barry's Bay.

"The doctors here had a lot of praise for the doctor at the Barry's Bay hospital," he said. "They said if they hadn't put the tube in, it could have been fatal because the pipe was swelling due to the damage."

Mr. Visutski, 77, was kept in Barry's Bay overnight and transferred to Ottawa Sunday morning.

Mr. Visutski and his second wife and their two children retired to Wilno about six years ago after he worked for more than 40 years with Foreign Affairs as a diplomat and counsellor living and working in Saigon, Vietnam (1965-66); Prague, Czechoslovakia (1972-74); Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1974-75); Wel-

lington, New Zealand (1979-81); Canberra, Australia (1982-1986); Seoul, South Korea (1986-89); Jakarta, Indonesia (1989-93); Warsaw, Poland (1995-98); Bangkok, Thailand (1998-2000), and Islamabad, Pakistan (2002-2005). He also filled postings at the United Nations in New York from 1967-70, and Washington, D.C. 1976-78. He worked out of the Canadian embassies mainly in the areas of property management, personnel and counselling.

Over the years, he had collected numerous artifacts and memorabilia from his days abroad and all of those collectibles were destroyed in the fire which the Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards Township Fire Department responded to with 16 firefighters and its entire fleet of trucks.

Fire Chief Bob Gareau said while the cause of the blaze may never be known because of the complete loss, the fire started on the lower level at the front of home. He said when the first firefighters arrived the structure was completely engulfed in flames.

There was a large red glow over Shrine Hill for almost two hours as the structure burned out of control as firefighters hauled 23 loads of water from a dry fire hydrant at the nearby Kashub Park less than a kilometre away.

Chief Gareau said firefighters remained on scene for six hours with six trucks and then 10 returned Sunday morning with four trucks and extinguished hot spots and burning debris for another seven hours.

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