

# Quick Thinking Keeps Fire in Check

## Gilmanton Man Uses Door To Block Blaze

By SETH WHEELER  
Staff Writer

GILMANTON — A blaring smoke detector and the quick thinking of a former Laconia firefighter who barricaded his home against encroaching flames minimized fire damage to a Heath development home Wednesday night.

Allen Perley says he, his wife Lida, and their 5 year-old son Russell were eating dinner when a smoke alarm in their new addition led them to an 8 by 8 foot storage closet where flames and thick smoke were



Lida Perley looks over the charred remains of one of her books that was destroyed by a fire at her home Wednesday evening. Comic books that she had been collecting for the last 30 years were among the items destroyed.

(Citizen/  
Welburn)

# ● FIRE

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rolling out into the adjoining room.

Grabbing a small fire extinguisher from the kitchen that he had just bought, Perley emptied the contents on the fire, but made little headway on the flames that were fueled by a number of boxes and other items in the closet.

At that point, Perley says his wife went downstairs to grab a 40 gallon extinguisher which helped to check the spread of the flames, but failed to completely douse the fire.

As the fire regained strength, Perley says he turned to a hollow core door that he planned to install in the closet, and pushed it up against the entrance where flames again began to lick out into the room.

"I wasn't about to let that door go," Perley said.

After a quick call to the Gilmanton Fire Department, Perley said he returned to the closet and waited an anxious

few minutes for the arrival of fire units.

Fire Chief Norman Skantze says his firefighters quickly extinguished the blaze "with a couple hundred gallons of water."

"Thank you very much for saving our house," said 5-year-old Russell as firefighters left the scene.

A first alarm was sounded shortly after 6 p.m. when the Gilmanton department received the call, sending units from Alton, Belmont, Center Barnstead, and Barnstead Parade to the scene.

Skantze says the first alarm companies were quickly released when the fire was brought under control.

Both Skantze and Perley acknowledge that the fire was caused by a portable lamp in the closet that had ignited curtains hanging nearby.

Despite the lack of structural damage to the home, Perley says it could have been a lot worse.