



Firefighters from Emmaus on the scene of a house fire on Buckeye Road in Upper Milford Township last Thursday.

PRESS PHOTO BY C. RICHARD CHARTRAND

## Family displaced by U. Milford fire

An Upper Milford Township family was displaced from their Buckeye Road home by a fire Thursday morning, but luck and good timing kept the damage from being significantly worse.

At about the time the fire started, one of the Vera Cruz Fire Department's units, with a full crew on board, was refueling at Harned-Durham Oil Company nearby.

The cause of the blaze at 4723 Buckeye Road is still undetermined, Vera Cruz Fire Chief Jason Tapler said.

Firefighter George DeVault said his unit had responded earlier that morning to an automatic alarm, then noticed their fuel was low and went to Harned-Durham to fill up.

As they were filling up, he said, he "saw a column of

smoke" rising nearby. Almost immediately afterward, the call came in, and they were just a block or two away.

The home is owned by Larry Frey and his wife Michelle.

Michelle and the couple's 13-year-old daughter, Rebecca, escaped immediately after the fire broke out at about 9:15 a.m. They were both treated for smoke inhalation at Lehigh Valley Hospital, as a precaution, Tapler said.

The fact that the Upper Milford unit happened to be nearby was certainly a factor in minimizing damage to the house.

"It was also unusual," DeVault said, "because we had a full crew on the truck — a driver, officer and two firefighters."

If they had been called out

from the station, it would have taken several minutes longer to get to the fire and the damage may have been much more extensive.

As it was, Rebecca's second-floor bedroom, where the fire is believed to have started, was destroyed and the rest of the house sustained smoke and water damage, Tapler said.

He said he expected the family to be displaced until the damage is repaired.

The first unit to respond also had a full tank of water, which helped quell the blaze quickly, DeVault said.

Three more units from Upper Milford responded to the scene, as well as personnel from Emmaus, Old Zionsville, Macungie and Alburty, Tapler said.