



Two neighborhood youths destroyed the dreams of Dennis Myra Potocsky when the pair allegedly poured gasoline on the Potocskys' new garage and house under construction in West Bloomfield. (Staff photo by Charlie Kidd)

Scorched dreams

Neighborhood juveniles set new house ablaze

By JUDITH BERNE

Two neighborhood youths have admitted deliberately setting fire to a house under construction in Powderhorn subdivision.

The fire, which interrupted many family dinners when it erupted at approximately 6:30 p.m. Saturday, began when the two juveniles poured gasoline on the garage and lit it.

The house is on Parkland Drive in the subdivision west of Middlebelt between Maple and Walnut Lake roads.

"They planned it a day ahead of time," reported Cpl. Robert Scott of the West Bloomfield Police Department. Scott said the 15-year-old boys apparently did it out of boredom and because "they wanted to prove to their friends they weren't chicken."

They have been petitioned to appear in juvenile court, according to Scott, who believes they will be put on probation and released in the custody of their parents.

"The parents were very cooperative, very

concerned," Scott relayed. Of the boy he interviewed, Scott said: "He knew what he had done was wrong. But he didn't seem to be very excited about it."

The names of the boys were not released by the police due to their ages.

THE HOUSE, at 3382 Parkland, belonged to Dr. and Mrs. Dennis and Myra Potocsky of Southfield, who with their three children, had planned to move in the end of March.

Now builder Ed Silver estimates it will be at least a year before the Potocskys can take possession. "If I'm lucky, maybe next November," Silver said.

Silver, who estimates approximately \$100,000 worth of construction went up in flames, says his insurance company will pursue the settlement from the families of the two juveniles.

Even so, Silver says he will lose as a result of the fire. Preliminary checks of his lumber supplier revealed that his lumber costs are up 10 to 15 per cent.

Silver was on the scene ahead of the West Bloomfield Fire Department from his home less than a mile away. "There was nothing they could do," Silver said.

FIRE CHIEF Earl Benson echoed Silver. "The house was not dryvalled yet, so there was nothing to stop the blaze from sweeping through."

By the time his 15 firefighters and four pieces of equipment arrived, the main job was to protect the surrounding houses.

"We had a break with the wind," Benson said.

But the terrain surrounding the new construction caused his men some problems. One fireman got stuck up to his hips in mud and had to be pulled loose. Another sprained his ankle when he slipped and fell in a front-yard ditch.

When the flames had been quenched, all that remained of the 4,000 square foot would-be home was a lone charred bay window.

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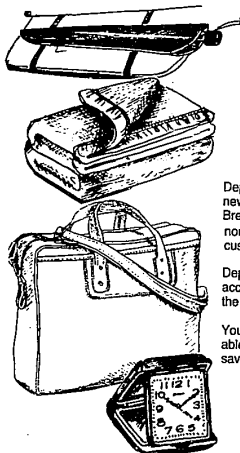
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