

# Farmington Observer

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## Come Home for Christmas



## Southfield Presbyterian Church

December 24, 1995

Morning Worship  
 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

## Candlelight Carol and Communion Service

7:30 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.

SOUTHFIELD  
 PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
 5275 W. Ten Mile Road  
 810-836-1430

# Fire from page 1A

## A smoky scene

"I was the first one on the scene," Levine said. "We had just finished another run."

Firefighters entered the front door and found one woman on the floor of the hallway leading to the bedrooms on the east end of the house and pulled her out. Firefighters attempted CPR on the woman, who they believe to be Mrs. Bovair as Lt. Mike Garr, by then on the scene, went in to see if anyone else was home. Garr was able to make his way through the smoke, caused by the flames consuming the ceiling and roof, and found another body.

This time there was no question of using CPR.

"The body was on the bed as if she had never responded to the fire," Garr said. "She was obviously dead by the time I got there."

In all, 40 firefighters, the full complement of firefighters from Stations 2 and 4, fought the fire and began the cleanup and investigation to find out what caused it.

"Burns probably weren't a factor for the victims," said Fire Chief Richard Marinucci. "There doesn't appear to be a smoke detector."

## Did smoke detector work?

Investigators eventually found one smoke detector in the rubble, but it was in four pieces.

"We don't know if it worked, or worked for a short time," Garr said. "And it's going to be impossible to tell."

Firefighters spent all day shoveling out the debris from the fire, working their way back to the

bedrooms where they think the fire may have started. Although one circuit breaker was tripped, the fire's cause has not been determined, Garr said. The Oakland County Medical Examiner has determined that smoke inhalation was the cause of death for both victims.

The fire has not been ruled accidental. Farmington Hills police reported that a TV and VCR appeared to be missing.

The fire is the second fatal fire in less than two weeks after a fire gutted a trailer at the Flamingo Trailer Park on Middlebelt killing a 57-year-old man. Even for Hills firefighters who have been with the department for years, the event was a shock.

"I remember that fire in 1976 (when two brothers died in a house fire on 12 Mile on Dec. 19, exactly 19 years to the day from Tuesday's fire)," said veteran firefighter Bob Rabey, assistant to the chief. "Even though smoke detectors were expensive, I put them in my house, which is also a ranch, after that fire."

## Multiple fatalities rare

Multiple-fatalities have been rare in Farmington Hills. Seven children died in a 1968 fire on Colgate, two brothers died in the 1976 fire, two died in April of 1977 and a husband and wife were rescued, but eventually died as a result of smoke inhalation from a May 1978 fire.

Thode and Gerald Thayer said there was one thing unusual about the fire: Mrs. Bovair's van was missing. The mystery was soon answered when Sandy Bovair, daughter and sister to the



ART EMANUELE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Death scene:** A fire resulted in the death of a mother and daughter in a house (above) on Quail Hollow Court in Farmington Hills early Tuesday.

victims, brought the van home after borrowing it Saturday. She arrived to a scene of lights, fire trucks and the worst possible news.

"She (Melissa) had a lot of friends," said a tearful Sandy Bovair, who lives in Westland, as she tried to understand what had happened. "We were pretty close."

Larry Gaynor, president and CEO of Nalco, where Melissa had worked for about eight months, was also in disbelief at the loss.

"She was highly intelligent and happy," he said. "Her best friend had a nervous breakdown and had to be taken home. She had everything ahead of her."

Sandy Bovair said her brother Joe, who is stationed at Fort McCord in Washington state, is returning to Michigan.

The Thayers remembered the victims as "very nice." They had moved to the "unlucky house" six months ago. The previous occupants, an older couple, had sold the house to the Bovairs and moved to Florida where the husband had died within four months. Louise Bovair's husband died in 1984 in an auto accident.

Preliminary damage estimates are about \$100,000 in damage to the house and \$50,000 in damage to contents. Two dogs, one caged and one loose, also perished in the fire.

Although officials are not sure

whether a smoke detector worked or not, an inoperative smoke detector failed to warn James Arthur Trelor, who died in the Flamingo trailer fire.

"It's very frustrating," said Deputy Fire Chief Pete Baldwin as he surveyed the devastation and the red tarp on the front lawn that covered one of the victims. "A smoke detector is a \$5 item (for free from the Farmington Hills Fire Department). But this is the kind of thing we see again and again."

Funeral arrangements for the Bovairs are being handled through the McCabe Funeral Home.

## LOTTERY

The Lotto jackpot was worth at least \$10 million. The Michigan Lottery numbers for Wednesday, Dec. 20, 1995 are:

■ DAILY 3:  
147

■ DAILY 4:  
0152

■ CASH 5:  
14,15,29,35,36

■ LOTTO:  
2,6,18,22,23,43

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- Place classified ads at your convenience.

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- Request subscriptions at your convenience.

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- You can use a MasterCard, or Visa to access the following information from our classified ads. This service is available by noon Wednesday and Saturday:

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- Item No. 9700: Collectibles: Auction sales, Antiques crafts, rummage sales. Cost: \$5.95.
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THE

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 (Between Middlebelt & Cass Lake Rd.)  
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BREITLING  
 1884



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