

Family carries on following house fire

Continued from Page 1

The Blachfords stayed with neighbors Monday and plan to stay with relatives until they are settled in some sort of temporary housing in the Farmington area — a service provided by their insurance carrier.

THE FIRE provided a bit of déjà vu for Steve Blachford who had a similar incident happen when he was young. A winter fire drove his family from their home in the middle of the night, he said.

Commander Michael Wiggins of the Farmington Department of Public Safety estimated \$35,000 in building damage and \$25,000 in content damage to the one-story ranch house in Farmington Meadows subdivision. Structural damage was confined to the roof and living room where the tree was located. The remainder of the damage resulted from smoke and water. Much of the house's contents, especially in the kitchen and living room, are gone.

Steve Blachford was in the process of remodeling the kitchen, which had new cabinets and was ready to be wallpapered, he said. Contractors tell the Blachfords the drywall throughout the house will need to be replaced.

"We think it (the fire's beginning) was either an extension cord or Christmas light wiring under the sheet" draped under the tree, Wiggins said. "The flames were already through the roof when we pulled up. Live trees burn very quickly — once

you start them, it's a matter of seconds."

THE MEADOWLARK fire is the worst house fire in Farmington that Wiggins can recall since 1985, although, he said, "it seems like every year, there's something involving a Christmas tree."

The subdivision is on the city's south side, north of Eight Mile, east of Farmington Road. Heavy smoke and flames were shooting from the front door and roof as firefighters arrived shortly before 9 p.m., according to Wiggins, who said 28 firefighters arrived to battle the blaze — 16 from Farmington and 12 from Farmington Hills.

Wendy Blachford, the only family member in the house when the fire started, heard a popping noise as she prepared dinner in the kitchen and entered the living room and saw flames between the tree and the wall.

She fled out the side door, grabbing the family's pet cat on the way. Her children were playing outside; no one was injured.

MEANWHILE, Steve Blachford was approaching the area by car and could see smoke coming from his neighborhood. He arrived about five minutes after the fire started.

"I could see the smoke from Eight Mile and knew it was from our neighborhood," he said. "When I was coming down the street, I kind of got panicked."

"I'm just glad no one was hurt."

One witness on the street saw the tree burning through the living room window shortly after the fire started. "It was totally involved by that time," Wiggins added.

The Blachfords' situation is one fire-prevention people talk about year round. Not only natural trees are fire hazards, according to information from fire safety organizations. Artificial trees should be made of flame retardant materials and should be used by those who are not home daily to care for a live tree or by those with an unusually dry house.

Even cutting your own tree doesn't guarantee safety. The tree in the house on Meadowlark was cut only last Saturday, according to Steve Blachford.

ALTHOUGH PINE and fir trees will outlast spruce in moisture content and selecting the proper tree is

important, selecting decorations is just as important, experts said.

The following electrical precautions are suggested from Wiggins and other fire prevention agencies:

- Check light wiring and sockets for breaks and shorts and replace them if necessary. Never repair them.
- Never connect more than three strands of lights to one extension cord, and don't use boxes that will accommodate more plugs.
- Use only Underwriter Laboratory-approved decorations.
- Do not use electric lights on metallic trees, but use spotlights for illumination.
- Turn off electrical decorations when you leave home or go to bed.
- Make sure a live tree is watered at all times.
- Be sure your house has a fire extinguisher — a recommendation stressed by Wiggins.

Thursday, December 16, 1988 O&E 7A(P)



BOD SKLAR/staff photographer

The scene of a Monday fire, this house on Meadowlark is temporarily not habitable.

Sun-Damaged Skin Program

The University of Michigan Department of Dermatology now offers an innovative Sun-Damaged Skin Program to persons aged 35 years or older with wrinkled and/or sun-damaged skin. Visits will provide an individualized approach and stress screening for skin cancer and patient education. Select patients may be eligible to participate in a clinical study involving a topical medication which is being tested at The University of Michigan to determine its potential for reversing the damage to the skin caused by time and sun exposure.

A comprehensive array of medical and surgical therapies for aging and/or sun-damaged skin are available.

For an appointment in the Sun-Damaged Skin Program, please call the University of Michigan Department of Dermatology, (313) 936-4069 on Monday, Wednesday or Friday from 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 A.M.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN MEDICAL CENTER



A GIFT OF TRADITION, THE CHOICE OF KINGS, CASHMERE IS ONE GIFT DESTINED TO PLEASE

Give from our cashmere collection and know your perpetuating a tradition of the centuries. Always exquisite, a gift of cashmere exemplifies the bearer's taste, as it ensures the recipient's pleasure. Precious soft, it is only the downy underside of the cashmere goat that is spun and woven to create this fiber. It is the discriminating man who deserves such luxury. Remarkably warm, each sweater in our collection is fully fashioned for comfort. So bring us your gift list, we'll be happy to assist.

Capper & Capper

Chicago Waldba at Madison (312) 236-1800 / Old Orchard / Oakbrook
Troy Michigan, Somerset Mall (313) 643-6700
Capper & Capper Charge, American Express, Visa, Mastercard



The essence of femininity. Delicacies to softly support. Gently underlie...and enhance silhouette. From Christian Dior, in ivory or pink, silk satin. Bra with nylon lace trim, sizes 34B, C to 36 B, C; 36. Matching bikini, S,M,L; 116. Foundations Collections.

Lake Fifth Avenue

STORE HOURS:
Thursday - Saturday 10-9
Sunday - 10-7 Troy
11-7 Fairlane

Somerset Mall, Big Beaver at Coolidge, Troy • Fairlane Town Center, Dearborn

SPECIAL OCCASION

Gowns and Cocktail Clothes
30% OFF

'Tis the season to be glamorous! Save 30% on a Group of Exquisite Gowns and Cocktail Clothes. Just in Time for Christmas! sizes 4-20 petites 2-12

chudiks
OF BIRMINGHAM

294 E. Brown Street • 647-1300 • Open Sunday 1 to 5
Monday thru Friday 10 to 9 • Saturday 10 to 6

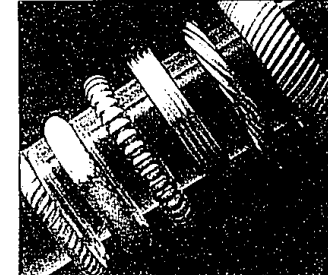
GREENSTONE'S

Creators of fine jewelry for over 60 years

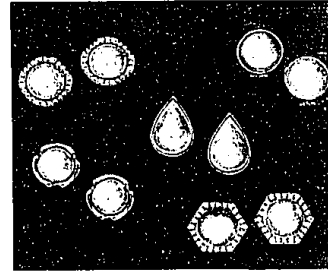
Classic Holiday Gifts!



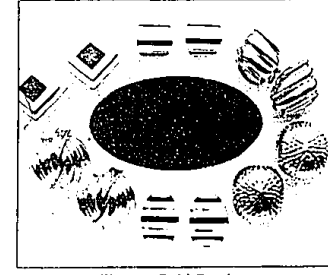
Bejeweled Bugs
Our bejeweled gold bugs set with diamonds and other precious stones are priced from \$315.



Gold Bangle Bracelets
Our 14k gold bangles for any occasion in a wide array of styles and sizes. Pictured styles begin at \$410.



Dramatic Mabe Pearls
Our collection of Mabe Pearl earrings feature over 15 styles, many set with diamonds. Prices begin at \$260.



Elegant Gold Earrings
Our gold earring selection, over 100 styles, are priced from \$35. Styles pictured above begin at \$220.

*All items subject to prior sale

528 North Woodward • Birmingham • 4 Blocks North of Maple • 642-2650
Monday-Friday 9:30-6:00, Thurs. until 8:00, Saturday 9:30-5:00 • Major Credit Cards Welcome