

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1994

# COMMUNITY LIFE



MIKE GARR

## Hot tips for fire awareness

If you had a fire tonight, do you think you'd survive? Surprisingly, most people think they would. Yet in the United States during 1993, 4,250 civilians died in their homes because of a fire. Were they less prepared than you? Or did they just think that a fire was something that happens to other people?

Fire Prevention Week was inspired by one of the worst fires in our nation's history: The Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which took 250 lives, left 100,000 homeless and destroyed 17,430 buildings. In 1922, President Warren G. Harding proclaimed National Fire Prevention Week. Since then, the fire service across America has used this annual observation to highlight fire safety awareness tips.

### Test your detector

During 1993, 55,622 fires were reported in Michigan, accounting for 233 civilian deaths. Monetary losses were estimated at \$338 million. The theme for this year's Fire Prevention Week, observed Oct. 9-15, is "Test Your Detectors for Life."

The message was selected to highlight the life-saving potential working smoke detectors have and the importance of keeping them working. Beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s, many people started installing smoke detectors in their homes, and now fire experts are concerned that they may be losing their effectiveness.

If your detectors are more than 10 years old, you should replace them now. They are not lifetime appliances. Manufacturers of smoke detectors indicate that a new generation of technology

See FIRE, 15A

## This old estate home has charm, history

A 1837 home named Biddestone has the look, inside and out, of an English estate complete with gardens and surrounding wooded areas.

By DIANE GALE

STAFF WRITER

Sometimes a house is more than brick and mortar.

There was a time, for instance, that stately houses were given names - just like children - and the architecture and grounds were shown the same care as an offspring.

Take the Biddestone home on what was called Mansion Row on east of Farmington Road and south of I-696 in Farmington Hills.

In 1837, the Cotswold Manor home was built with Indiana Bedford limestone for Edward Moesman. His ancestors came to the United States from Biddestone, England, and he was recreating his own bit of English style here.

The original 40 acres has been built over the years, but the Biddestone estate still includes two acres of land, most of which are lush with English gardens and untouched wooded areas bursting with wild flowers and beech maple.

For the first time since 1969, the house, just under 3,000 square feet, is on the market. Owner Joan Fox, former Farmington Hills councilwoman and mayor, is selling.

"I came in the front door and I know this house is what I wanted," Fox said. "As much as I love it, the years are going on. People say, 'It's so beautiful, how can you bear to part with it?'"

"And I have to say, There comes a time. I've loved it and I've had it for 25 years, and maybe someone else will love it for 25 years."



ART HEALEY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Stately estate: The grounds around the house, which some know simply as Biddestone, are alive with colorful wildflowers during spring and summer. During fall, the lush green English gardens take the stage.

It won't be the first time Biddestone will be viewed by the public.

Replete with a slate roof, copper gutters, white oak floors and doors, this stately home is a mainstay on garden walks and home tours.

The architect, Marcus Burrows, who was known for his creations of English Revival-style buildings. He was widely known in southeast Michigan during the second and

third decades of the 20th century. Some of the mansions he designed can still be found in Detroit, Birmingham, Albion, Dearborn and Grosse Pointe.

In Farmington, five homes, including the Luman Goodenough estate which is now the Longacre House, were designed by Burrows. Four of these Burrows houses were along Farmington Road.

Burrows designed Biddestone to capture the beauty of the surrounding trees and gardens seen outside the casement louvered windows.

"It's like being in a ballet," Fox said, looking out a sitting room window overlooking an English garden with a wooded backdrop. "There's always movement with the trees."

The price? Fox and her Realtor declined to comment for publication.

# How can you avoid a broken heart?

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