



The Nation's Top Prize-Winning Suburban Weekly

# Township Shopping Center Hit By Fire

## City Wins Condemnation Suit For Three Houses

## Four Firemen Injured in Sunday Blaze

### Levels Drug Store, Damages 3 Other Retail Outlets

By LARRY EVOE  
City Editor

Bloomfield Township fire officials are still investigating the cause of a blaze that destroyed a drug store and damaged three other stores at Maple and Telegraph early Sunday morning.

Fire Chief Volvy V. Yanuszeki said the fire apparently started in the southwest corner of the Sav-On Drug store in an area used to store soft-drink bottles.

Yanuszeki estimated damage at \$385,000. He said there was no evidence of arson.

In addition to leveling the drug store, extensive smoke and water damage was done to the adjacent Argyle Shop, Jacqueline Shop and the American Savings and Loan Association.

The Argyle Shop had just recently been completed and had opened for business in November.

A PASSERBY discovered the fire about 6 a.m. and ran to the township fire station a block west of the shopping center and pounded on the door.

The chief said there was no way to tell how long the blaze smoldered before it was discovered. He said the last employee left the drug store at about 11:30 p.m. Saturday.

Township firemen were assisted in fighting the fire by members of the volunteer department from Bloomfield Village.

Six pieces of equipment were pressed into service by the 49 firemen. Township police from the midnight shift were held over to aid in the hazardous traffic.

FOUR FIREMEN, including Yanuszeki, received minor injuries. The chief suffered a cut hand and an injured leg. The other firemen hurt were John Trussell and Robert Clamont. Trussell is a member of the township department and Raymond Marentette, a volunteer.

Trussell was given first aid at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Pontiac for a knee injury. The other fire-fighters were treated at the scene.

At Monday night's township board meeting, Supervisor Homer Case said he and building inspector Harold Shoof would meet soon to "make some changes in the building code."

The wall between the drug store and the Argyle Shop was not of masonry construction. (See BLAZE, 2-A)



FLAMES SHOT high in the air at the Sav-On Drug store early Sunday morning. The blaze is believed to have started near this window. Several hours after the fire was extinguished, the piles of rubble in the drug store still smoldered. Officials are still unable to determine the cause of the \$385,000 fire.



## Fire Prompts Review Of Building Codes

All stores built in the township must, and do, meet present building codes, but the codes do not make mandatory the use of sprinkler systems or fire walls. Bloomfield Village is also under the jurisdiction of township codes, but Birmingham has a stricter building code.

"Our 2C, or shopping center construction, should not contain combustible materials or merchandise, and the exterior walls should be masonry," said Chief George Scott of Birmingham's fire department.

"No building can exceed 7,500 square feet unless the structural shell is protected by a fire wall. A sprinkler system will double the footage to 15,000-foot maximum and if the entire building is protected by fire walls and is also sprinkled, then the maximum is 30,000 feet," he said.

"We wouldn't permit a shopping center in Birmingham of that kind (found in the Township) to be built here," he said. (See FIRE, 2-A)

## Property to Go Into Parking Lot

The entire block south of Shain Park will become a parking lot. Birmingham city commissioners were informed Monday night that an Oakland County condemnation jury had found necessity for the project and awarded damages to the three property owners involved.

Total cost to the City for the three lots was set at \$95,000. The jury verdict ended nearly a year of controversy between the City, the three property owners and the residents of the area.

## Mortensen Quits Post With C of C

Charles Mortensen, manager of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce since its inception in 1948, today announced his resignation.

The chamber board of directors accepted the resignation, effective Dec. 24, "with regrets." William E. Roberts, chamber president, said the board will appoint "a community-wide committee" to screen applicants for a successor to the job.

Mortensen said his future plan call for "a long overdue vacation."

THE BOARD of directors adopted a resolution crediting Mortensen with serving the chamber "diligently and industriously during his long tenure."

It also extended to him the board's "warm thanks for a job well done and best wishes for good fortune" in his future pursuits.

In a statement included in a bulletin received by chamber members in Wednesday's mail, Mortensen said:

"During the years I have been here, Birmingham has more than doubled in population and is re-

(See MORTENSON, 7-A)



CHARLES MORTENSEN

## Groves PTA Says Enforce Present Law

The Groves High School PTA board of directors has come out in support of the Birmingham PTA Council's stand governing the sale of liquor and tobacco to minors.

In October the PTA Council adopted two resolutions condemning the sale of both liquor and tobacco to minors.

The Groves board suggested that the PTA Council amend the resolution governing liquor to include a "strong appeal to the appropriate law enforcement agencies to enforce the present law."

Harry T. Kirk, Groves PTA president, said his group has also adopted a resolution urging the PTA Council to make a strong appeal to all parents to "completely support" the existing state statutes governing liquor and tobacco.

ANOTHER motion was passed by the Groves board covering any reduction in the age limit in regard to the sale of either liquor or tobacco.

The resolution read, "The Groves PTA Board is opposed to changing the Michigan statute in regard to the lowering of the age limit for the purchase of alcoholic beverages and tobacco."

The board further urged the PTA Council to initiate a "vigorous campaign" to educate parents and students to the dangers of the use of tobacco and alcoholic beverages by minors.

CASE'S PROMISE of reviewing building codes led to the question of whether the early Sunday fire that gutted a drug store and spread to two adjacent stores and a loan office could have been controlled with more-than-just-adequate fire protection. The fire was controlled by the fire wall at the Argyle Shop, next to the drug store. (See FIRE, 2-A)



## First Arrivals for Men's Night

The Joseph Forgiome family of 886 Davis, Birmingham, were among the first arrivals Monday night for the annual downtown observance of Men's Night. Accompanying their father were Jim (with glasses) and

Neil Forgiome. The chamber of commerce reports the crowds were the largest ever to take part in the event. (See story, other photos on 3-A.)

## Nation Pays Tragedy Strikes Again: Fire Ruins Apartment

By DICK ZEMMIN  
Staff Writer

A fire Tuesday night destroyed the apartment of Mr. and Mrs. Donald W. Groves, causing an estimated \$15-\$20,000 damage, and handed the couple their second tragedy within one week.

It was exactly seven days previous, on Dec. 3, that Michael W. Groves, their 27-year-old son and captain of the late President John F. Kennedy's honor guard, died of a heart attack.

The couple had just returned Saturday from funeral services in Washington, D. C.

THE GROVES' apartment, located on the third floor of a large house at 511 S. Bates, was called the "Eagle's Nest" by Mrs. Groves, because of the high view from the windows.

The large frame building was converted into a three-story apartment house by the owner, Mrs. William S. Todd of 150 Drury Lane, Bloomfield Township.

The fire started Tuesday evening when Groves was out taking the family's dog for a walk and Mrs. Groves was lying on the couch.

Birmingham Fire Dept. received the call about 7:25 p.m. and rushed to the scene. (See TRAGEDY, 7-A)

## Serve Police Group

Birmingham Police Lt. Merin Holmquist has been elected secretary-treasurer of the Oakland County Law Enforcement Association. Captain Walter Sluiter of the Bloomfield Hills Police Dept. was named to the group's board of directors.

## 'Mailboxing' Among Games Played by Area Teen-Agers

Police Chief Norman Dehke commented on the sport, "which has become one of the biggest headaches for the department."

"Some of these things could blow your hands off," he said. "You never know how loose the gunpowder is packed. Any kind of jar could set them off."

Dehke said the youngsters reportedly made the fuses short so they could be around "when the fun started."

"IT'S HARD for me to believe that these kids make up the bombs

in the family garage without the parents knowing that something is up," said Dehke.

The bombers are not partial to boxes they blow up. Some are cheap, some are expensive.

However, one resident began to think they had singled him out after his mailbox had been destroyed 10 times.

Asked why they did it, a group of apprehended boys used this standard answer:

"I don't know why I did it."

A DIVERSION that costs thousands of dollars each year in the township is window breakage at night under construction.

"These kids, who seemingly have nothing else to do, throw rocks and sticks through the windows," explained Lt. Jerry Weaver.

"Over a long period of time, this type of senseless destruction adds up to a lot of money."

Helping Santa with his calls will be the Senior Men's Club, The Community House and the Birmingham Recreation Dept.

(See GAMES, 7-A)

## Hey, Kids, You Can Call Santa!

Birmingham area youngsters will be able to talk to Santa Claus beginning Monday at 5:30 p.m.

Santa may be reached at MI 6-7222 from Dec. 16 through Dec. 20, from 3:30 until 5:30 p.m.

Helping Santa with his calls will be the Senior Men's Club, The Community House and the Birmingham Recreation Dept.

(See GAMES, 7-A)

## Reset Rights Procession For Feb. 9

The Birmingham Council of Churches has rescheduled its "Freedom Festival" for Sunday, Feb. 9.

The council said the outdoor religious procession would be preceded by a silent prayer in behalf of responsible federal civil rights legislation now pending in Congress.

The procession, which was originally scheduled for this Saturday, had been postponed in deference to the official period of mourning for President John F. Kennedy.

A spokesman for the council said the February date was selected because it is race relations Sunday and "heralds the opening of Brotherhood Week, the Lenten season, and Abraham Lincoln's birthday."

CITIZEN'S OF all races and creeds have been invited to walk in the procession by the council.

Further details such as starting time, route of march, guests and places of start and finish will be announced at a later date.

The original program was to have included speeches by former Gov. John B. Swainson, Michigan Civil Rights Committee Chairman John Felkins and Messrs. Clement J. Kern, pastor of Detroit's Holy Trinity Catholic Church.

(See RESET, 2-A)

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See editorial, 1-B  
By DAVE PHILPO  
Township Editor

Second in a series

Teen-agers play a dangerous game in Bloomfield Township.

Copping what has become a national trend, youngsters engage in the sport of "mailboxing."

Here's how it works:

A carload of boys, under the cover of darkness, drive up to a mailbox, pull the door open and toss in one of a variety of homemade bombs.

Then comes the deafening roar as the box crumples and buckles under the force of the blast.

The shrills of glee . . . and the youths speed away into the night, usually free from detection.

SOME, HOWEVER, do get caught. From one group of boys Bloomfield Township Police confiscated an arsenal of skyrocket, cherry bombs and home-made firecrackers, made of copper tubing filled with gunpowder.