

Community Grieves

by Mel Ruder

In a rash of fires during recent months the Flathead experienced disastrous arson and multi-million dollar loss. No fire brought more heartache than Tuesday afternoon's holocaust which destroyed the home of David R. Shaffer.

Dead from smoke inhalation are Kandie Marie Shaffer, 2, and Warren Gordon Peterson, 4.

Funeral services for Kandie will take place Friday 2 p.m. at Columbia Falls LDS chapel with Bishop Max Staheli officiating. Burial will be at Woodlawn Cemetery. She was born Dec. 28, 1974 at North Valley Hospital, Whitefish.

Services and burial for Warren, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Peterson, Columbia Villa Apartments, are to be at Mt. Vernon, Wash., with Van Leuven Funeral Home sending the body to Kern Funeral Home.

Shaffer is a Columbia Falls Junior High seventh grade mathematics teacher and University of Utah graduate. He purchased the Robert Craft home 2½ miles northwest of Columbia Falls at Craft Corner on Tamarack Lane. Extensive remodeling and enlargement had taken place.

Mrs. Shaffer Tuesday afternoon about 3:30 p.m. was getting ready to come into Columbia Falls. Kandie, a beautiful blonde little girl, was asleep upstairs.

Carla Shaffer was babysitting Warren, whose mother, Jill, is a keypunch data processing operator for Burlington Northern in Whitefish. His father is an assistant computerized saw operator at Plum Creek's MDF plant.

Mrs. Shaffer told Warren: "Go downstairs, get your coat so we can go to Columbia Falls." The five older Shaffer children were at the LDS chapel attending religious classes held each Tuesday after 4.

Warren downstairs put a stick into the fireplace, got it blazing, and somehow touched off clothes in the nearby open closet at the stairwell.

The little boy screamed.

Mrs. Shaffer ran downstairs, saw the fire in the closet, attempted to call the Columbia Falls fire department. The telephone was dead. She shouted at Warren: "Go outside, hurry, hurry." She never saw him again.

The fire didn't seem too serious at the start, but she ran out the front door and got the garden hose, and then the window in the door exploded. Mrs.

[continued on page 3]