

At the Fire

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Shaffer hurried to the side of the house and broke the picture window cutting her left elbow in the process. She pushed the hose in and tried to climb inside. The room was ablaze.

Earlier in the day she had been staining a door, and when flames went to the ceiling, fumes may have exploded, and apparently the stain can did. In the clothes closet were fabrics that tend to be fast burning.

She ran outside yelling for help.

Neighbors, the Ron Crafts arrived and two men stopped. An effort was made by one man to get on the lower roof and enter the bedroom where the baby was. This didn't work. The window wouldn't come out.

Meanwhile a passerby went to the nearby George Keck residence where the Columbia Falls message center received the fire call at 4:17 p.m.

Mrs. Peterson homeward bound saw the Shaffer home in flames. She used her CB radio. "Please someone call Plum Creek and get word to my husband, Wayne Peterson...."

Shaffer was getting out of the shower after basketball practice at the junior high gym. Allen Jacobson, a junior high teacher, was at his home two miles north of Columbia Falls on a ridge above the valley. He and sons, Gary and Brian were feeding cattle, when they heard fire sirens and trucks. They figured it was at the golf course or Shaffers, and got into their car and went down to help. Jacobson asked Mrs. Shaffer: