

March 15, 2004

Lewisburg woman dies in fire

**By G. Wayne Laepple**

*The Daily Item*

LEWISBURG — A 23-year-old Lewisburg woman died Sunday in a predawn fire.

Christina Dawn Koble was found in a second-floor bedroom, overcome by hot gases and smoke, according to Union County Coroner Wanda Walters.

The 4 a.m. fire gutted Koble's rented home at 337 N. Third St.

Norman Fedder, a state police fire marshal, said the fire started in an electrical receptacle in the first-floor living room.

"I heard her screaming for help," said Theresa Williams, who lives across the street. "I ran across the street and felt her door. It wasn't hot, so I tried to open it, but it was locked."

"I ran back over to my house and called 911. As I ran away, I heard the windows blow out."

Williams, her eyes red and puffy, said she then woke the neighbors in the other side of the cinder-block double house as well as the people living in 333 N. Third St.

"She stopped screaming before the fire company got here," Williams said. "I told them she was up there."

"I'm just sick about this," she said, shivering.

Becky Pascarella, who lives at 346 N. Third St., said she was awakened by Koble's screams.

"It was terrible," she said. "I could hear her screaming and Theresa out in the street yelling for help."

"I looked at the clock, and it was 4:11, and then I went for the phone to call 911."

"I could hear her screaming again."

"Then it stopped, and by 4:20, the flames were shooting out all the windows," said Pascarella.

"She just moved in there about two weeks ago," she said. "She was very nice, always had a smile and said hello when she came out."

"It seemed like it took the firemen forever to get here," said Pascarella. "Every minute seemed like an hour."

Williams nodded.

"They got here really fast, but it seemed like a long time."

The William Cameron Engine Company is about two blocks from the fire scene.

Williams and Pascarella said they understood Koble was a waitress at a Lewisburg restaurant.

Williams said Koble had a 16-month-old child, but the child was with its father for the weekend.

Williams said the other half of the double house was saved by the block wall between the two sides. The house next to the burned one sustained exterior damage from the heat. The plastic siding had melted and hung in shards from the side facing the burned house, about 10 feet away.

Two dogs, a black Labrador retriever and a puppy, perished in the fire.

The coroner pronounced Koble dead at the scene at 6:30 a.m. Sunday. Cause of death was listed as smoke inhalation.

William Cameron Engine Company Fire Chief David Jackson estimated damage to the structure at \$75,000 to \$85,000. The building is owned by Richard Young of Lewisburg.

Jackson said about 40 firefighters from Lewisburg, Milton, White Deer Township, Mifflinburg and Winfield were on the scene. The last units left at 11:27 a.m.

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