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Fire at Victorville complex quickly doused; arson

Daily Press

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San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department officials investigate the scene of a small fire at the Sherwood Villas apartment complex in Victorville Monday. The fire, believed to be arson, was allegedly set by a woman suspected of murder in Colton, according to several eyewitnesses. [Paola Baker, Daily Press]

VICTORVILLE — A small blaze at a local apartment complex Monday afternoon may have been set by a woman wanted on suspicion of murder out of Colton, according to several eyewitnesses.

Nicole Darrington Clark, 42, remains at large after she allegedly stabbed her daughter and two granddaughters in Colton this morning. She was reportedly seen in Victorville around noon Monday, according to scanner traffic, and was driving a black Hyundai Sonata, with California license plate 7TQL009.

Clark is described as a black woman, about 5-foot-9 and 200 pounds, and should be considered armed and dangerous.

Messages left with the Colton Police Department weren't returned early Monday morning, but at 5:15 p.m. Monday, scanner traffic reported that a woman matching Clark's description was seen at the Sherwood Villa Apartments at 14900 Arlette Drive "pouring gasoline on the building and lighting it on fire."

Salvador Ramirez, 62, who lives in the complex, said he witnessed a woman holding a red gasoline canister "setting an apartment door on fire" and pouring gasoline over the side of the building.

He described the woman he saw as a black woman, and identified her as Clark when shown a photograph.

Several other witnesses on scene said they also saw a woman that appeared to be Clark holding a gas canister or pouring gas over the building. The woman then fled the scene in a black, four-door vehicle, its license plate number matching Clark's Hyundai Sonata, according to scanner traffic and witnesses on scene.

The blaze was extinguished within minutes, according to **San Bernardino County Fire Department** spokesman Eric Sherwin. No injuries were reported.

According to the San Bernardino Sun, Clark is accused of stabbing her daughter and two granddaughters at an apartment complex in the 1400 block of East San Antonio Drive, in Colton, a little after 9 a.m. A 18-month old girl died in the attack.

The surviving sister and mother, both taken to the hospital in critical condition, came out of surgery Monday afternoon and were stable. The San Bernardino Sun reported police do not have a motive for the stabbing.

Colton Police Department Corporal Ray Mendez told the Daily Press as of Monday evening, Clark remained at large. He couldn't confirm if Clark was indeed the alleged suspect in Monday's fire.

San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department officials on scene were tight-lipped, citing the ongoing investigation, but said the fire was "possibly arson". No suspect was in custody as of Monday evening.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20170605/fire-at-victorville-complex-quickly-doused-arson-suspected>

Victorville Apartment Fire Possibly Tied to Colton Murder Suspect

Victor Valley News Group

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Witnesses reported seeing a woman pouring gasoline on an apartment unit that matched the alleged murder suspect. (Photo: Jami Evans)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) Authorities are looking into the possibility that a fire at a local apartment complex may have been ignited by the woman wanted in connection to a Colton murder.

Nicole Darrington Clark, 42, is accused of stabbing her daughter and two granddaughters, leaving an 18-month-old girl dead early Monday morning.

On Monday afternoon around 5:15 p.m., the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** responded to the Sherwood Villa Apartments at 14900 Arlette Drive.

A female matching the description of Clark was reported to have been witnessed pouring gasoline on an apartment unit and starting a fire, scanner traffic reported.

Sheriff's Dispatch said the fire was "possibly related to that 187 suspect from Colton, we have a black female setting the building on fire," scanner recordings stated.

A vehicle matching the description and plate number driven by Clark was seen driving west on Hook Blvd, scanner traffic reported.

No one was injured in the fire, but authorities are on high alert as they continue their search for the woman who they say is armed and dangerous.

Several hours prior, deputies received reports that Clark was spotted at the same apartment complex just before noon.

KTLA reported that Clark has a violent past, which includes her being released from state custody in 2010 after stabbing her son and pushing her daughter out of a moving vehicle in 2005.

As of 11:20 p.m. Monday, there has been no reports that Clark has been arrested.

<http://www.vvng.com/victorville-apartment-fire-possibly-tied-colton-murder-suspect/>

Upland, San Antonio Heights, you have more time to protest fire department annexation, here's why

Liset Márquez, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Posted: June 5, 2017, 5:37 PM



A fire engine pulls out of Upland Fire Station 163 on Benson Avenue Wednesday November 27, 2013 for an assignment. FILE PHOTO

UPLAND >> Registered voters and landowners in Upland and San Antonio Heights will have almost an extra month to register a protest against dissolving the Upland Fire Department after an attorney alleged the notification process discriminated against women.

The Local Agency Formation Commission in San Bernardino extended the protest period to July 11. LAFCO initiated the 30-day period May 12 and was set to conclude it June 14.

The agency is overseeing the annexation of the Upland Fire Department into **San Bernardino County Fire**, a move city leaders approved to save money. The process is not complete until parcel owners in the affected areas have a chance to register their protest, if so desired.

LAFCO will now send out notices to all 35,000 landowners, said Kathleen Rollings-McDonald, executive director of LAFCO.

Rollings-McDonald on Monday defended the process, saying it followed all the legal requirements, and the new measures the agency is now taking go above and beyond its statutory obligations.

The decision to extend the period was made by Rollings-McDonald and legal counsel, the executive director said.

Attorney Joe Farrell got into a war of words with the agency after he concluded the protest process discriminated against women because mailed notices were not addressed to each parcel owner.

As of Monday afternoon, Farrell had not received a response from the agency but had heard it was making changes to address his concerns.

“At the end of the day, if they are complying with the statute, then that is all a citizen can ask,” said Farrell, who resides in San Antonio Heights, which would be grouped with Upland’s fire service area and would join Upland residents in paying a \$150 yearly tax.

He filed an objection with the agency in late May after he had become aware of several women who did not receive the notices. In most real estate transactions, women are often the ones to co-sign on a parcel, Farrell said, placing their names second on legal documents for couples, he said.

The agency initially sent notices to more than 21,000 parcel owners, based on a list of billed landowners from the San Bernardino County Assessor’s Office. It’s a procedure LAFCO has followed in the past, based on the government code on reorganization, Rollings-McDonald said.

Prior to a protest hearing, the agency typically obtains an expanded list, which contains all parcel owners and co-owners. LAFCO would then use that list to determine the eligibility of protests, she said.

It took the agency 10 working days to get the list from the county Assessor’s Office, Rollings-McDonald said.

The agency received the expanded list last week. The new notices will go out Friday, she said.

In a May 31 written response to Farrell, LAFCO attorney Paula C.P. de Sousa Mills addressed the claims of gender discrimination.

“SB LAFCO affirmatively states that no action it has taken with respect to the reorganization has in any way, whether intentionally, incidentally, or otherwise, discriminated against property owners based on gender,” de Sousa Mills wrote.

Annexing the more than 100-year-old department to San Bernardino County Fire has proven unpopular with some residents, specifically those in the community of San Antonio Heights. The move would transfer the city’s fire station properties, employees, assets, obligations, as well as liabilities, to county fire.

At the protest hearing, which will still be held at Upland City Hall, if the agency receives anything above 50 percent protest from the number of registered voters or parcel owners the process can be terminated, while anything between 25 and 49 percent would trigger an election.

If registered protests come in from fewer than 25 percent the process is approved.

Jeannette Vagnozzi, Upland's deputy city manager, said the delay will not impact the timeline for annexation; the transfer of power is expected to occur at 8 a.m. July 22.

"We gave ourselves some cushion time in case anything came up," she said.

Upland has been working since November to meet the necessary requirements from LAFCO to get the certificate of completion. Vagnozzi said she anticipates that could take one or two days after the hearing.

The city's 2017-18 proposed budget only sets aside funding for a month of fire services. The savings from dissolving the fire department, however, has been set aside in case the annexation fails.

<http://www.dailybulletin.com/government-and-politics/20170605/upland-san-antonio-heights-you-have-more-time-to-protest-fire-department-annexation-heres-why>