

# 29-year-old takes her life in fire

Born in Hackettstown, she started a blaze in a Pa. home after firing shots at police.

## From staff reports

A 29-year-old Hackettstown native died Sunday morning after barricading herself in a Pottstown, Pa., house, firing several shots at police and finally setting the home on fire.

The body of Leigh E. Andrews, of Limerick Township in Montgomery County, Pa., was found about 4:30 a.m. Sunday in a second-floor bedroom of the house, according to The (Pottstown) Mercury.

Andrews, a Hackettstown High School graduate, apparently threatened suicide several times while keeping police at bay with a .44 Magnum handgun, according to The Mercury.

A coroner's report said she had cuts on her wrist and neck and ultimately died of carbon monoxide poisoning from the fire.

Pottstown is about 30 miles west of Philadelphia, between King of Prussia and Reading.

Authorities found Andrews in

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the house with the loaded weapon still in her hand, The Mercury reported. She had fired five to seven shots at police while they were trying to talk her out of the house during the six-hour standoff.

Pottstown Police Chief Christopher Carlile said police did not return fire to the house, even after a bullet from the gun Andrews was using struck a parked car at the scene, according to the newspaper.

Neighbors were evacuated from the block and police launched tear gas into the house to try to bring Andrews out.

About 3:30 a.m., police noticed smoke coming from the second story of the building. Andrews had refused to communicate with police since the incident began at about 11 p.m. Saturday, the newspaper reported.

When police and fire person-

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nel determined that the blaze, started by Andrews, was a danger to surrounding homes, officers cleared the first floor of the house to allow firefighters to fight the blaze.

Andrews left Hackettstown to live in the Allentown area about three years ago. She moved to Limerick after that, according to information supplied to the Cochran Funeral Home of Hackettstown.

Authorities discovered Andrews' body on the second floor after the fire was extinguished, according to The Mercury. The newspaper reported the incident might have been sparked by a relationship problem that Andrews recently had.

The incident began after Andrews was socializing with some friends at a club at the New Hanover Airport north of Pottstown. She left and went to the home, which belonged to Pottstown resident Doug Ward, whom Andrews had previously dated, The Mercury reported.

The newspaper quoted the police as saying Andrews had access to the house and knew Ward kept a gun for home protection. She telephoned her friends at the airport several times, and in her last call, she told her female roommate that she had a gun and was going to shoot somebody, the paper reported.

The roommate, who was not identified, went to the home and found Andrews in a closet with the gun. The roommate dialed 911 and then fled the home as Andrews exited the closet and fired a shot, authorities said.