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Christian biker club damaged by fire

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The Detroit News

Springfield Township – A Christian motorcycle group's clubhouse – hit by gunfire in an August drive-by shooting – was the apparent target of arsonists early today, according to a preliminary investigation by the Oakland County Sheriff's Office.

Two deputies were sent out to the Hogs in Ministry headquarters at 8219 E. Holly Road about 2:46 a.m. after burglar alarms went off. The building, which was unoccupied, was already on fire as deputies approached, and the township fire department arrived and put out the blaze shortly after 3 a.m.

"The matter is under investigation, and there is no one in custody at this time," said Detective Sgt. Tim Willis. "We don't know what might have motivated this."

An arson dog and arson investigator determined two separate areas may have been set on fire, and the investigation continues.

It is the most recent of several unusual incidents at the address and the third suspicious fire there in a year.

On Aug. 17, at least 14 bullets were shot into the front of the building, which was unoccupied. On Sept. 1, a window screen on the building was cut and the window broken out but no entry was made, according to reports.

On Jan. 17, an outbuilding barn was set on fire using hay stored inside the structure. The fire burned out and no major damage was reported.

And about a year ago, Oct. 29, 2008, a Molotov cocktail apparently was tossed beneath a cube van belonging to the club but burned out on its own without doing damage to the van.

"It's anyone's guess why someone would do something like this," said Pastor Cliff Powell, of the River Church in Holly which is affiliated with H.I.M. along with Faith Church in Waterford Township. "We know it is not the secular bike clubs. They like H.I.M. But somebody apparently is upset. ... We got shot up in the front this summer."

The H.I.M. ministry reaches out to secular bikers and recreation bikers, along with jail ministries and drug and alcohol recovery efforts, Powell said.

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