

police/fire calls

Passerby rouses sleeping family as their attached garage burns

The Merzin family is more than thankful that passerby drove by their Farmington Hills home when they did.

They helped rouse the sleeping family at 2:10 a.m. Oct. 13 after their garage caught fire.

After spotting flames leaping from the family's attached garage on Hemlock, one of the passersby stopped and awakened the couple and a small child by banging on the front door to their house.

"That's a rare person," said

homeowner Cathy Merzin. "He said, 'Get your family and get out of your house now.' He acted really quick and saved three people's lives."

The man also got the homeowner's keys and moved two cars parked in the drive. And he led the family out to safety, Merzin said.

Even though normally she would have been shocked at any other time to hear knocking at her door in the middle of the night, Merzin said, "It was one of those situations

where you know instantly something is going on."

Merzin said she smelled smoke, but thought it was from the passerby cars parked in front her house. "There were a lot of spectators," she said.

The cause of the fire was undetermined. Damage to the garage and its contents, destroyed in the blaze, was estimated at \$38,000, according to a Farmington Hills Fire Department report.

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police and fire calls received during the past week.

• 2 SURRENDER

Two 18-year-old Farmington men turned themselves into the Farmington Department of Public Safety Oct. 13 in connection with several commercial breaking and entering incidents occurring in the city over a 10-day period.

One remains jailed after being arraigned on five counts of breaking and entering and four counts of uttering and publishing, or writing bad checks. The other man was arraigned on four breaking and entering counts.

Both stood mute at their arraignment Oct. 14 before District Judges Michael Hand and Margaret Schaeffer of Farmington, who split the case load. Not guilty pleas were entered on their behalf. Bond was set at \$5,000 for the first man. The second man was released on personal bond.

For each breaking and entering

count, they face maximum penalties of 10 years in prison. The uttering and publishing counts bring a maximum of 14 years in prison.

According to Commander Peter Amato of the Farmington Department of Public Safety, the two obtained a large amount of cash, some lottery tickets and a loaded gun, all valued at \$2,745, during the break-ins.

Businesses hit included:

• Korner Barber Shop, 33342 Grand River, Sept. 25.

• Benner's Amoco, 32410 Grand River, Oct. 4.

• The Short Stop Party Store, 34707 Grand River, Oct. 9.

• Spring Brook Gardens, 23614 Power, Oct. 9.

• The Great Wall of China Restaurant, 35135 Grand River, Oct. 9.

The two are also being investigated for possible ties to break-ins in Farmington Hills, Amato said.

• ABDUCTION AVERTED

A 30-year-old West Bloomfield Township woman averted being abducted after cashing a check from a walk-in, 24-hour kiosk machine at First of America, 28564 Orchard Lake, Oct. 16.

According to a Farmington Hills police report:

After cashing a check at the bank machine at 7:25 p.m., the woman was getting back into her car when a man ran around the front and grabbed the driver's side door, preventing her from shutting it.

She resisted when he tried pulling her from the car. He then tried to push her farther into the car by holding a wrench to her throat.

When she screamed and honked the horn, a struggle followed outside the door and she managed to take the wrench from the man.

At that point, he got into her car, put on white gloves and challenged her. When another car pulled into the lot, the would-be abductor got into his car and drove off.

• HORSEING AROUND

Damage was estimated at \$250 when a horseback rider rode over 200 feet of freshly laid sod in front of a CPA office at 28580 Orchard Lake Oct. 15.

The weight of the horse and rider forced the horse's hooves to sink

about five inches into the ground, according to a Farmington Hills police report.

• KITCHEN FIRES

Kitchen fires in two Farmington Hills residences caused nearly \$50,000 in damage Oct. 14, according to Farmington Hills Fire Department reports.

Damage was estimated at \$45,000 when cooking materials ignited, causing a kitchen fire in a house on Quakerstown.

Damage was estimated at \$2,700 when cooking materials ignited, causing a kitchen fire in a house on Farmington Road.

• DAMAGE REPORTED

Listed below are some of the damage reports filed with local police agencies during the past week:

Damage was estimated at \$120 when BB's were fired through a picture window of a house on Nine Mile Oct. 5-13.

Damage was estimated at \$300 when a picture window was broken at Spallini's, 29104 Orchard Lake, Oct. 10.

Damage was estimated at \$1,000 when someone tried to steal a 1986 Mercury Cougar from Garden Court Apartments Oct. 15-16.

Damage was estimated at \$150 when someone threw a clinder block through a door at Joma's Fine Wine, 24225 Halsted, Oct. 16.

Damage was estimated at \$60 was someone blew up a mailbox on Averhill Oct. 16.

Damage was estimated at \$300 when an unknown fluid was spilled on a car trunk at BelAir Lanes on Orchard Lake Road Oct. 15.

Damage was estimated at \$150 when the windshield of a Ford Mustang traveling in front of TJ Maxx, 33949 Grand River, was struck with a pipe Oct. 16.

• THEFTS REPORTED

Listed below are some of the thefts reported to local police agencies during the past week:

A 1957 Ford Escort valued at \$9,000 was reported stolen from Tom Holzer Ford, 39300 10 Mile, Oct. 8-16.

A bumper and a grille valued at \$175 were reported stolen from a car parked at Hill Day School, 32200 Middlebelt, Oct. 14-15.

Official reacts to report

One school official feels the Farmington district is progressive compared with comments made in a recent U.S. Department of Education report on elementary curriculum.

"Usually, people have already been moving in that direction," said assistant superintendent Judith White, who coordinates curriculum and staff development for Farmington Public Schools. "Those (reports) are usually generated from (information) from the field."

The 83-page report, by Secretary of Education William Bennett, is titled "First Lessons: A Report on Elementary Education in America." It calls for major curriculum reform in American elementary schools.

His criticism was mainly reserved for grades four and up and

for the way schools teach social studies and the natural sciences.

With the forming of a staff development and curriculum department in Farmington, the district has already started to treat both as key areas, White said.

"You have to look at them simultaneously," she said.

Farmington is reviewing the entire curriculum from kindergarten through grade 12, and is focusing on the reading program throughout the grade levels, she added.

The Farmington Public Schools is also continuing its science program, which stresses natural sciences in the fourth and fifth grades.

White also advocates "more active, involved participation by students" as part of the upgraded curriculum.

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