

# The challenge makes firefighting fun

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one of 35 Pittsfield Township firefighters from 1973 to 1979.

The chief and the assistant chief were very good in spending time with young new members and in developing practical philosophies of firefighting," Baldwin added.

IT WAS while in Pittsfield that he completed the Michigan Firefighters Training Council's 200-hour basic firefighting course.

In January 1979, Baldwin left Pittsfield, a mostly rural township of 22,000 people, for Farmington Hills, one of southeast Michigan's fastest-growing cities. Hired by then chief John Van De Voort, Baldwin was one of six full-time firefighters, who included current chief Richard Marinucci.

A lieutenant since December 1984, Baldwin was chosen to be second in command of Farmington Hills' fire station department from among five

inside applicants.

"Peter has worked hard and has proven his dedication to the fire department. He's sincerely interested in improving fire service and in reducing our fire loss," Marinucci said in announcing Baldwin's selection as deputy chief the week before Christmas.

More comfortable outside the limelight even though he's the fire department's public relations officer, Baldwin says he "perhaps gets

more out of my work than I put in.

"I get a great deal of satisfaction with being part of a good organization that provides a real quality service for the dollar."

BALDWIN FINDS the department's makeup of 14 full-time employees and 82 part-time firefighters particularly cost-effective.

"The city has developed a department that provides quality fire service yet does not waste an inordinate amount of money. It doesn't have firefighters sitting around the fire stations with nothing to do," he said.

For example, he said, on-duty firefighters are involved in inspections, fire prevention and equipment maintenance when they're not on emergency runs.

In 1983, Baldwin was named Co-Firefighter of the Year for helping rescue a 70-year-old woman from her burning apartment in Farmington.

Recounting what happened, Baldwin said he and firefighter Richard Cray entered the burning apartment with a hose and found it full of smoke. Their search turned up a woman lying unconscious on the living room couch.

"After pulling her out of the apartment, we re-entered and extinguished the fire, which involved a bedroom," Baldwin said.

The woman suffered second- and

third-degree burns and required treatment at the Ann Arbor Burn Center. As for the fire, "we never really determined the cause," Baldwin said.

AFTER GRADUATING from Ann Arbor Huron High School in 1971, Baldwin spent a year working as a driver-attendant for a new ambulance service in Washtenaw County.

"I was looking for a job in some kind of field that was exciting," he said. "I picked the job literally out of the blue."

But the job required 80 hours a week. The physical strain and the low pay convinced Baldwin to leave the company after a year and attend Eastern Michigan University in pursuit of a bachelor's degree in speech pathology.

"Rarely," he said, "would you receive a full night's sleep or eat a decent meal while on duty."

Baldwin attended EMU for about a semester before Pittsfield Township's assistant fire chief, who worked part-time for the ambulance company, encouraged Baldwin to join the fire department.

Although he continued attending classes after becoming a firefighter, Baldwin remains three credits short of earning a bachelor's degree in speech pathology. In 1980 — a year after joining the Farmington Hills Fire Department — Baldwin did

earn a bachelor of science degree in fire science from Madonna College.

THE FARMINGTON resident has attended several fire service seminars, including two two-week sessions at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Md., where he studied fire prevention and incident command. He's state-certified as a fire inspector and as an emergency medical technician.

Under Chief Marinucci's new chain of command, the Farmington Hills Fire Department has three divisions: Operations, headed by the new deputy chief; Training, headed by Lt. Thomas Shurtleff; and Fire Prevention, headed by Fire Marshal Stephen Hume.

Although as a commanding officer he doesn't respond to emergency calls as often as front-line firefighters, Baldwin says firefighting "can be very disruptive to family life."

"It takes a certain commitment on the part of our people to provide fire service — and that commitment is shared by our families."

Whatever time he frees up, Baldwin devotes to his family — wife Anne, who works part-time, and sons Kyle, 8, and Shawn, 10 months. As the deputy chief put it: "It's very difficult to get us all together. So when we are, it's very rare and very special."

## Trip is an eye-opener

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were nightly meetings with recluses — Soviet Jews who are trying to leave the country, have been refused permission to emigrate, and who have lost many opportunities in their country because of their religious beliefs.

Rittner called the issue a global one.

To speak on behalf of Jews, we cannot forget blacks in South Africa, or Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland," Rittner said.

She also gave it religious overtones. "It isn't enough for Jews to leave the Soviet Union. They must be encouraged to be Jews and practice their religion — not just citizens who get out of the Soviet Union."

"HE TAUGHT me many things," she said of Wiesel, who was a spiritual mentor throughout the trip, "that once upon a time religion separated people. He said that religion must never be a separator, but a door... an open hand to everyone."

"There is nothing that is more important... to cause me to turn away from other people and their needs," she added.

The Soviet people, including the recluses, were warm and receptive to the group, she said. She also saw much hope in the Soviet Jewry as they again made efforts to get exit visas.

"It was not like I thought it was going to be," she said. "If you could only imagine the life, the vitality of these people. I was constantly amazed at them as they are refused and discriminated against as Jews — of their courage and their hope."

The Wiesel encourage visited tiny rooms with crowds of up to 50 people nightly. Rittner said what they saw was a highly religious group of people who are denied to live in the way they choose.

"ISRAEL LIVES in the Soviet Union in these people," Rittner told the council delegates. "It is not simply a matter of dissent. These are people who want to live as Jews freely."

As a member of the Roman Catholic religious community, Rittner is using her work to draw various religions together. She is coordinating a project, co-sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops Office about Catholic/Jewish relations.

lations. The groups are developing a Holocaust curriculum for use in Catholic schools.

She is a speaker and book editor and has headed several conferences during her years with the Sisters of Mercy.

Rittner holds bachelor of arts and master's degrees in English, and a doctoral degree in higher education administration. She is working toward a second master's degree in theology at St. John's Seminary in Plymouth.

In 1985, Rittner was made an Honorary Fellow of Bar at Tan University in Tel Aviv, Israel.

## Parking on Brookdale OK'd

Unrestricted parking will again be allowed on Brookdale Street, following a petition by a majority of residents requesting the change.

A total of 24 of the 38 Farmington residents living on Brookdale signed the petition, which was delivered to the city recently by resident Darlene Thompson.

Parking was prohibited to "permit only" on the street several years ago when residents complained about traffic overflow from Bootleggers bar, then operating on the corner of

Brookdale and Grand River. The bar is now closed.

"The problem no longer exists," Thompson told the council Monday Jan. 5. "We'd like to forget it's happened. It's time."

The city council voted 4-0 to direct city administrators to draft a permanent order to restore unrestricted street parking for Brookdale.

A 90-day temporary order will be issued immediately, by council order.



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