

# Elderly man rescued from fire in apartment

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River, houses mostly older tenants who are longtime residents.

Ford's neighbor and six-year Farmington West resident Kathryn Isard was the one who telephoned for help.

"I went out in the hall and smelled a little smoke. I could see smoke coming out from under his door," she said. Isard and other residents were evacuated from the building.

FARMINGTON WEST manager Howard Risinger said he tried to enter Ford's apartment, after being flagged down by Isard, but the door was chained and the extreme heat kept him out.

"I tried to go in, but the heat was too intense," he said. "I saw the smoke. I told her to get on the phone right away."

Officers Madigan, Putt and Beale carried Ford from his apartment upon arrival. Farmington officer Duane Cowger was the first on the scene and coordinated the evacuation of the apartment building.

Twenty firefighters from Farmington and 28 from Farmington Hills responded to the scene, where there



Farmington West apartment manager Howard Risinger surveys the fire damage.

was smoke and flames visible from Ford's balcony door, according to fire reports.

The fire apparently started in a stuffed sofa in the living room, and had smoldered for some time before filling the apartment with

smoke, said Gary Goss, deputy director for Farmington's public safety department.

"The whole front room was going," he said. "It was super heated."

THE SMOKING sofa was thrown from the balcony to alleviate the smoky condition.

In addition to Ford's damaged apartment, the unit below his was water damaged and the apartment hallway received some smoke damage, according to Michael Wiggins, Farmington fire marshal. Structural damage was estimated at \$15,000 and content damage at \$5,000.

The apartment buildings at Farmington West have brick "fire separations" — walls that helped contain the flames.

"I think it went really well," said Wiggins of firefighting efforts. "It was out within minutes."

A similar situation occurred in the city July 10, 1983 at Chatham Hills Apartments on Grand River. An older woman had to be rescued from a burning apartment; the fire was also caused by careless smoking, Wiggins



BOB SKLAR

Farmington public safety officers Maria Putt (from left) and Jim Madigan, public safety director Frank Lauhoff and Farmington fire marshal Michael Wiggins review the post-fire investigation with a Consumers Power representative.

said. One 11-year Farmington West resident, Mary Bocs, said Monday she

had just talked with her daughter about a recent apartment fire in Waterford Township, before the

Farmington fire occurred. "I was thinking how lucky we were," she said, surveying the scene.

# Businessman donates to rape tip fund

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State Police Second District Detective Unit in Northville. He was a member of the task force that investigated the Oakland County child killing in the mid-1970s.

"I understand he has an excellent reputation, is highly qualified and is very knowledgeable," Dwyer said. Police have no prime suspects in the serial rape investigation since items stolen from the latest Farmington Hills victim March 31 were found in Cleveland Easter weekend. Police believe the rapist spent the weekend there visiting friends or relatives.

Blood samples taken from the 11 crime scenes indicate at least two rapists, one perhaps a copycat. But

Dwyer believes the same man may be involved in the Farmington Hills and Bloomfield Township assaults.

Though fewer, tips are still being received by area police agencies. Dwyer continues to urge anyone with information to call his department at 473-9695.

Dwyer also continues to urge women to be cautious and aware. The rapists appear to stalk victims, studying their habits and lying in wait until they're alone at night. Victims have ranged in age from 13 to 24.

The TASK force would replace an info, nal team of detectives that meets weekly in Bloomfield Township to share information and evalu-

ate strategy.

It would be under the command of the State Police and would answer to a board of directors consisting of the police chiefs, the sheriff and the prosecutor's office.

Each police agency involved would provide a detective. In addition to a commander and an assistant commander, the State Police would provide two employees to organize and computerize tips.

The task force would remain in effect until arrests were made or tips had dried up.

"Right now, there's nothing to justify a full task force. We're following up on information," Dwyer said. "All the tips we've received went into the State Police (computer) terminal."

## clarification

Information in an Observer article May 2 should have said proceeds from a Farmington schools transportation fund-raiser would be given to a Farmington youth group, not

specifically Farmington Youth Assistance.

Organizers said a decision has not yet been made on which group will get the money.

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