

December 18, 2006

Mr. Adrian Thompson, Fire Chief
1923 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Room 201 South
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Thompson:

I am writing to express my sincere thanks to Chief Timothy Gerhardt, the officers of Platoon Four and the other firemen for their extraordinary actions last October which most likely saved the lives of those in my home.

For several days, I had smelled a faint odor of something that seemed to be burning, but I could never find a source, see any smoke or even be sure that anything was burning. Finally, I called and expressed my concern to a 911 operator who immediately sent Chief Gerhardt and the others to my home. Having identified that indeed something – not quite sure what – was most likely burning somewhere, they searched all over my home, inside and out, several times. While they could not find anything at first, they insisted that they would find whatever it was. Finally, one policeman noted a very faint bit of smoke around a small closed vent about half-way up the outside of the house. They climbed up, chopped into the vent and, to their amazement, found a very slowly smoldering abandoned bird nest. They immediately cleaned the nest out from this space.

Then, when they identified the likely vent entrance spot on the other side, in the kitchen, they cut through the drywall and found a running motor, invisible and unknown to me, with exposed wiring in an old kitchen range vent pipe which was feeding the heat to the bird nest. In removing the motor and exposed wiring, they cut as little dry wall as possible, without unnecessarily destroying my kitchen.

There is no doubt in my mind that if they had not found this fire and it had continued, it would have burned a significant part of my house, if not the entire house, and the occupants.

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