

Two Hospitalized, One Charged After Fiery Collision

By **DEREK ROSE**
Sunday News Correspondent

A car driven by an allegedly drunken driver slammed into another vehicle head-on Friday night, causing both vehicles to burst into flames and sending two to the hospital with serious injuries.



Rochester

Police said Mitchell E. Hartford, 21, of 1190 Wakefield Road, Sanbornville was charged with aggravated driving while intoxicated. The case is still under investigation.

He was allegedly driving drunk and fast in a Mazda RX-7, northbound on Milton Road at about 10:30 p.m.

Last night, one of his two passengers, Peter J. Rodgers, 21, of 48 Fourth St., Apt. 1, Dover, was in fair condition at Massachusetts General Hospital, while Christian

A. Pare, 21, of 36 Pineland Trailer Park, Milton, was in stable condition at Frisbie Memorial Hospital.

Marie Altobelli of Milton Road, whose vehicle Hartford passed, estimated he was traveling at 80 mph.

As his car turned a curve in front of 191 Milton Road, it went out of control and slammed head-on into a 1977 Buick LeSabre, police said.

Catherine A. Brake, 37, of 300 High St., Somersworth, was driving that car and her 7-year-old son was a passenger. They were both treated at Frisbie Memorial Hospital and released.

Chad Evans, 25, was in his 191 Milton Road home when he heard the screeching tires and then saw the flames.

"Every window in the car was glowing orange," he said, "I thought they were all dead, you know."

Then he saw a door open and someone got out. "It was unreal."

Hartford, the driver, was not injured, but Rodgers was in the back of the small sports car, where there were no seats. Witnesses said he had tumbled partly out of the car, but his legs were pinned inside. He was on fire.

"I could hear 'help me, help me,'" said Altobelli.

She and Evans pulled Rodgers to safety. Altobelli used dirt from the road to extinguish the fire on his legs.

"All of a sudden, the flames are coming into the car," said Evans. "I was thinking, I'm going to go up with these guys. You think about it now, and you think it was pretty stupid."

But the car didn't explode, and Evans pulled Pare to safety.

Police said Brake's son was the only person wearing a seatbelt.