

# Farmington Observer

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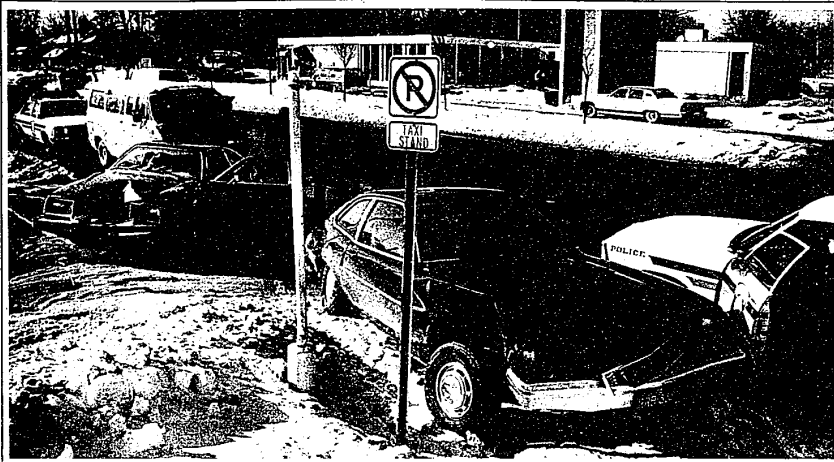
Monday, February 16, 1981

Farmington, Michigan

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Just one of those weeks

Fender benders abounded last week as the winter weather released its wrath on the metropolitan Detroit area. This accident occurred on Farmington Road, south of Grand River on Friday. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

## Police seek man attempting child abduction

By MARY GNIEWEK

A 7-year-old Farmington Hills boy escaped injury Wednesday when he bolted from a man who tried to force him into his car.

The child was approached while walking home from a friend's house on St. Francis, northwest of 8 Mile and Inkster.

A man driving a green station wagon followed the boy as he walked southbound on St. Francis, then turned at the corner of Sedalia.

The driver pulled over and asked the boy to "go somewhere" with him. When the youth told him he had to go home, the man grabbed his wrist and tried to force him into the car.

The boy freed himself and ran home. The car continued south on St. Francis.

The boy suffered a cut on his wrist made from fingernail imprints. A student at Grandville Elementary School, the boy told police his attacker

had a mustache and a heavy build. The man appeared to be in his 20s and had black hair.

"The police told Roger to try to remember to get a license plate number if he sees the car again," said the boy's mother.

**POLICE ARE LOOKING** for the driver but have no solid leads at this time.

Last December a 12-year-old neighborhood youth was pursued on foot for several blocks by two men who came from an abandoned home at the corner of Ontaga and Emmett.

They had tried to lure the boy, a student at Clarenceville Junior High, into the house as he walked to a school bus stop.

The boy escaped unharmed. No arrests have been made in that case.

The 12-year-old's mother believes

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## Assayer fights negative image by joining forces with police

By CRAIG PIECHURA

Last year there were 127 reported instances of break-ins or attempted break-ins in Farmington. There were 1,087 such incidents reported in Farmington Hills.

That's an increase of 32.2 percent over the previous year in Farmington and a jump of 49.3 percent in Farmington Hills.

Much of what was stolen in residential break-ins consisted of silver and gold coins, flatware and jewelry. And a great deal of stolen items have been sold to coin shops or stores that have sprung up lately that buy used gold or silver.

Tony Martini, owner of the Farmington Assay Office, buys coins, stamps and collectibles and will purchase gold and silver items from adults. Martini resents the image of assayer as a legal "fence" for stolen objects.

While they support stricter regulation governing such transactions, police in Farmington and the Hills commend Martini for cooperating with them in the fight against crime.

Martini has gone as far as allowing local police and Michigan State Police to stand behind a one-way glass in the shop to monitor customers selling sil-

ver and gold and take pictures of suspected burglars or sellers of stolen goods.

"HE'S JUST BEEN SUPER," said Lt. John Santomaro of the Farmington Police. "When they see something suspicious, they not only refuse to accept it, they call us. From the Assay Office alone we've made four or five felony arrests since January."

Two juveniles — one a 15-year-old resident of Boy's Republic and the other a 16-year-old Livonia youth who was turned over to the Wayne County Youth Home, were arrested last Monday after the 16-year-old tried to redeem 52 pieces of gold-plated flatware, a gold bracelet and two class rings at the Farmington Assay Office.

The items were reported stolen earlier that day from a home just down the block from the Livonia youth.

Employees at the coin shop were suspicious about a young man redeeming expensive flatware so they asked him for identification. The youth balked at the request and stalked out with the box of flatware under his arm. An employee went outside to see where the young man went and jotted down the license plate of the van he entered to relay to police.

At the intersection of Farmington and Freedom roads, Officer Thomas Cox pulled the van over and arrested the driver for driving on a suspended license. The driver, Douglas Hirschel, 16, of Livonia, wasn't arrested for possession of stolen property but the two juveniles in the van were turned over to juvenile authorities.

WEDNESDAY the goods were returned to the Livonia woman.

In this instance the attempted sale looked suspicious. Few 16-year-olds own flatware collections. And the store has a voluntary policy of refusing to purchase gold or silver from anyone under the age of 18.

Other illegal transactions aren't as easy to spot.

Martini says he knows store employees have inadvertently bought stolen items in the past. But, he says, the store is a business, "not a charitable organization," and sometimes mere suspicion that something is stolen isn't enough.

"How do you know if someone's a drunk or a dope addict or a known thief or a receiver of stolen property or a friend of one?" Martini said. "How do I know who people are when they come in? Will the police provide me with the names and pictures of said persons?"

Martini said he supports legislation that requires coin dealers to ask sellers for identification carrying a photograph. But he says no law will eliminate greed.

"NO LAW will stop a criminal from breaking into your home," says Martini. "Most people steal because they're desperate, greedy or an s.o.b. and they get away with it."

State House Bill 4014, introduced last month by Ruth McNamee, R-Birmingham, causes Martini some problems. Some coin collectors, says Martini, won't want their name and address kept on file at the store and police station after every transaction. Right now, he says, many coin dealers won't subscribe to coin publications for fear that the public will learn of their valuable collections.

He also balks at the provision in the law which would require dealers to hold gold or silver for seven days in their establishment. Prices for gold and silver fluctuate greatly daily, he says.

"All the articles I read lately in the paper make it look like we (coin dealers and assayers) are thieves," Martini says.

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Herbert Jones, an employee at the Farmington Assay office, totals up the worth of a valued piece of silver. The precious metal has become one of the top items sought by thieves. (Staff photo)

## Judge disqualifies self from accident case

Oakland County Circuit Judge Hilda Gage has disqualified herself from presiding over a civil suit because her attorney-husband could be called as a witness.

The case involves the 19-year-old son of fellow Circuit Judge Alice Gilbert. Judge Gage last week withdrew from the case in which Noel Gage could be asked to testify in a negli-

gence suit against Judge Gilbert's son, Gregg Greenblatt.

The suit, filed by David West, 18, against Greenblatt, stems from an April 26, 1978, car crash which killed Douglas Dameron, 54, of West Bloomfield, and injured four teen-agers. Dameron was the owner of the Dameron Chrysler-Plymouth dealership in Farmington Hills.

West, who was acquitted in 1979 of negligent homicide in Dameron's death, is seeking \$10,000 damages in the personal injury suit against Greenblatt.

He charges Greenblatt's reckless driving caused him to crash head-on into Dameron's car on Middlebelt near Walnut Lake Road in West Bloomfield. He further claims severe and perma-

nent injuries as well as severe pain and psychological trauma.

AT WEST'S TRIAL, Greenblatt refused to testify invoking the Fifth Amendment against self-incrimination. At the time, Greenblatt was represented by Noel Gage, although he has retained different counsel for the civil action.

It is possible that Noel Gage could be called in the civil suit to testify whether Greenblatt took the Fifth Amendment on the advice of counsel. Judge Gage said West's attorney had filed a previous motion for her disqualification because Noel Gage had represented Greenblatt in the past.

But she refused on the basis that a former client of her husband's would have no effect on her judgment, she said Friday.

But when the attorney later informed her there was "a real likelihood Noel would be called as a witness," she

removed herself from the case.

During West's criminal trial, Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson tried to get Probate Judge Barry Grant to disqualify himself after he and Judge Gilbert were reportedly seen together during the trial.

Judge Grant refused to disqualify himself. He later dismissed the charges against West.

The civil suit has been reassigned to Judge Gene Schnell.

THERE IS A second civil suit resulting from the crash that caused the death of Dameron.

## Cash sought for mansion

The Farmington Historical Commission has opened a public drive for cash donations to assist with the restoration of the Warner Mansion, given to the city last year for use as a historical museum.

Official home of three-term Michigan governor Fred M. Warner during the Progressive Era, the historic property at 33805 Grand River is in the first stage of development as the Farmington Historical Museum.

Built in 1867 and occupied continuously for 113 years by generations of the Warner family, the Victorian mansion was acquired by the city through a gift of deed presented by William Slocum and Susan Klingbeil, grandchildren of Fred Warner.

The first \$10,000 to be received dur-

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FARMINGTON HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
The Governor Warner Mansion  
33805 Grand River Avenue  
Farmington, Michigan 48024

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT OF DONATION \_\_\_\_\_ RECEIPT REQUESTED \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE REGISTER THIS GIFT TO THE MUSEUM AS A MEMORIAL TO:

Make all checks payable to:

FARMINGTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION - MUSEUM TRUST FUND  
(Return to the address shown above)

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