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Twenty-five cents

Stolen jewels sought

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

A Detroit woman was arraigned Friday before 47th District Court Judge Michael Hand on a larceny charge in connection with a jewelry theft in Farmington Hills Thursday.

Gloria Mae Bynum, 37, of 3357 Seven Mile, was released on 10 percent of a \$20,000 bond. She is charged with larceny from a building, a felony punishable by up to four years in prison. Police say Bynum has at least three aliases.

A pretrial conference is set for 2 p.m. Wednesday.

Police are seeking another woman who is believed to have possession of \$8,000 to \$10,000 worth of gold rings.

Neither woman was armed.

Police learned of the theft from Diamond Place Jewelers at 3105 Orchard Lake Road at about 2 p.m. Thursday when salesman William Ogden reported two women had run from the store with a tray of rings.

He was the only employee on duty. West Bloomfield Police Officer Randy Fougner happened to overhear the Farmington Hills police radio report and drove toward the reported vicinity of the getaway car.

WHILE TRAVELING westbound on 13 Mile near Middlebelt, he spotted a red Mercury Lynx matching the Farmington Hills police description. He followed the car eastbound, stopping it just east of Telegraph where he was met and assisted by Farmington Hills officers.

The suspect, traveling alone, had no jewelry other than a newly purchased pair of earrings. She was arrested and taken to Oakland County Jail.

Her car was reported to have stolen out of Taylor, police said.

Officers have no leads on the second suspect, who they surmise was dropped off or escaped in a second car, said Farmington Hills Detective Darnel Krause.

According to Ogden, "two women came in and asked to see a tray of rings. I shut the case and didn't look it."

"Then one of them made a small purchase, and a phone call came in. One of them half obscured my vision, and while I was on the phone I saw a ring tray being extracted. They were out the door like nobody's business."

"They got away in a car parked right in the fire lane. Both of them were big, and I mean big. I wouldn't tangle with them, and I'm big," added Ogden.

Police detectives were still investigating late Friday afternoon and had no information concerning the whereabouts of the stolen property or missing suspect.



Donning a new career

Practice makes perfect and that's exactly what Bernadette Jones, a student nurse, is doing as she puts on sterile clothing which will

be used for surgery. To read what it takes to be a nurse in today's world of health, turn to Page 3A.

HANDY BORST/staff photographer

Council seals deal on park

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

The Farmington Hills City Council is expected to confirm an agreement to purchase a centrally located, 211-acre park site at its public hearing tonight.

Pressure from community leaders who for years have petitioned for a city park was largely instrumental in clinching the deal, said Farmington Hills Director of Special Services Douglas Gaynor.

An option to purchase the property for \$2 million was signed Wednesday by City Manager Lawrence Savage and the owner, Birmingham attorney Nicholas Spicer. Spicer inherited the land, bordered by Farmington Road between 10 and 11 Mile, from his late mother, naturalist Eleanor Spicer.

The deal is contingent upon the granting of "substantial" funds by the state land trust board in December, and establishes a two-year option period.

A \$200,000 payment by the city was agreed upon for the first year of the option, which expires March 1, 1984.

AMONG other conditions of the sale:

- In the event that funds are unavailable, necessitating a second option period, \$300,000 will be paid for the year March 1, 1984-March 1, 1985;

- Option payments are deductible from the purchase price;

- Closing would take place within 90 days of exercising the option;

- Option payments are non-refundable should Farmington Hills decide not to buy the land, because it is "necessary to compensate the (Spicer) estate for . . . removal of the property from the market for a possible two years, with the owner meeting all expenses of such a delay in that period."

"The city shall accept the property as is, allowing for "reasonable wear and tear and ordinary use;"

- If the estate breaches the option agreement or is unable to provide title, the city will be refunded or may close, and

- In the event of property damage due to the elements, casualties or acts of God which devalues the land, the value would be deducted from the purchase price.

A compromise was worked out to be exercised in the event Spicer and the city disagree on the value of any future property damage, said Savage.

"If something like that happens and . . . we cannot agree on the amount of devaluation, a three-man arbitration panel will be set up. Their decision will be final and binding on both parties," said Savage who added that he will be surprised if the council refuses to confirm the deal.

Please turn to Page 4

Every tax bill has own story

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

While recently mailed property tax assessments are cause for lament among many Farmington Hills residents, they threaten financial disaster for an increasing number of "hardship cases" appearing before Farmington Hills' board of review.

A middle-aged Farmington Hills widow faced with a nearly \$3,000 tax bill pleaded her case before the three mayoral appointees last Tuesday.

"I'm unable to work and am on total disability. I have cancer, hypertension and high blood pressure, so I've got a lot of doctor bills."

"When it gets up over 70 degrees, I can't go outside during the day. So I can't cut my grass or keep up my house. I can't sell my home, and I don't know where else to go."

"Anything you can do will be appreciated," said the woman who last year struggled to pay a \$2,400 assessment — unaware that though she was hospitalized during the last board of review, a representative could have presented her appeal.

Sympathetic board members told the woman her case would be reviewed,

and that she'd be notified of the outcome after April 1.

"We're noticing a lot more hardship cases due largely to the economy. They range from little old ladies with \$4,000 incomes to guys out of work. You should sit and listen," said board of review member Robert Beauchamp.

"In some cases we can take the assessments down to nothing, and in others we can invoke the state homestead tax rule and refund up to \$1,200," he said.

By Thursday, the last day of the Farmington Hills board of review, more than 1,200 taxpayers will have contested tax assessments before Beauchamp, Gerald Peoples and Harlem Morris, all Farmington Hills residents with real estate backgrounds.

The three have until April 1 to adjust or leave intact the levies. Farmington's board of review heard its last cases March 9.

DARWIN DANIEL, WHO last year purchased a home in Hunter's Pointe subdivision at 13 Mile and Drake, expected city hall "to be overrun" with people like him.

Daniel paid \$126,000 for his home, yet it was assessed at "50 percent of

the fair market value," determined by the city assessor to be \$139,800.

"I find it a little hard to believe that property values are going up when people can't sell their homes. And I've always defined fair market value as what something will bring on the open market," Daniel said.

"(The board of review) told me I've got a point, but that they'll have to look and see if my house was a distressed sale."

The board's decision will mean a \$200-\$500 difference in Daniel's \$3,000-plus assessment, he said.

"We agonize over this kind of thing," Beauchamp said.

"Some of these we just hold onto if we know several homes in a subdivision are in the same situation. We wait and judge them all the same."

"The same goes for condominiums. Hard-pressed industrial taxpayers also are finding assessments steep this year."

Jay Schmidt, leasing agent for the Farmington Hills Industrial Center in the city's industrial park, told the board that a \$10,000 tax hike in light of the firm's \$179,000 cash loss in 1982 warranted a tax break.

"Our building is a light industrial,

multi-tenant complex worth \$2-2.5 million and you've got it up at \$3.2 million. Four of our tenants have declared bankruptcy in the last year," he said.

"Taking that into account, the value assessed — we feel — is high."

A FARMINGTON Hills man claiming his home is over-assessed because it doesn't have a basement was perturbed at having to leave his Dearborn office and appear before the board for the third consecutive year.

"In the past, they've (board members) seen fit to lower (the assessment) — but the reductions are pending only for a year, (a policy set by City Assessor Robert Romer).

"It gets a little annoying to have to come back three years in a row," he said.

Though assessments climbed an average of 4 percent in 1982, they lag approximately 2 percent behind the 6 percent state-imposed factor of last year, said Romer.

TAXPAYERS WILL receive bills in July, and must pay them by March. This year's millage rate is still undetermined.

New senior housing edges closer to completion

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

The demand for senior citizen housing in the Farmington area will be eased this August when a \$3.5 million low-income housing facility is expected to be completed.

Located on the northeast corner of Drake and Freedom roads, the Drake Apartment building is a HUD-funded Detroit Baptist Manor project.

Baptist Manor is a large senior citizen housing facility on 13 Mile near Or-

chard Lake Road. The new facility will have 102 unfurnished units — five two-bedroom apartments and 97 one-bedroom apartments — supplied with stoves, refrigerators and carpeting. Already, 400 Farmington and Farmington Hills residents are on the Drake Apartments waiting list.

Many applications were received as soon as the word got out, before construction began, said Robert McQuaid, executive director of Detroit Baptist Manor.

ACCORDING TO HUD guidelines, half the apartments' residents must be from the Farmington area and all must be 62 years of age or older.

Other restrictions include a maximum income for a couple of \$17,400 and \$15,500 for single persons. As no medical services will be provided, residents must be healthy enough to live independently, added McQuaid.

All units will be rented at individually regulated rates which will include utility costs, McQuaid said.

The director said he was unable to

divulge what an average rent might be, as tenants will be charged a variety of rates based on income.

Liberty Construction of Southfield superintendent Roy Zolno said the job is 65 percent complete with drywall in and painting now under way.

A two-story, wood-framed building with veneer face brick, the apartments are on a five-acre site. The U-shaped portion of the building facing Drake Road lies into five connecting corridors or bays.

"The project was supposed to be completed October 15, but we're talking about the possibility of August. Not all the brick work is done, but the electrical and plumbing work is done, and the heating is partially finished," McQuaid said.

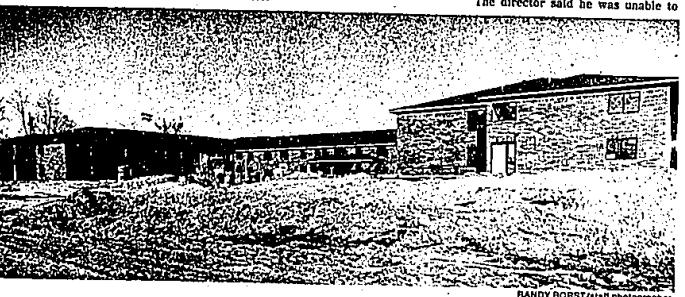
Zolno said warm weather enabled work crews to do a lot of work indoors that normally would have had to wait for cold winter temperatures to subside.

"And usually we run into problems

with kids. We put up a fence and barb wire," he said.

"We're just now getting security guards because cabinets and more valuable items are going in. We've had no trouble and the city inspectors have been super."

Local firms involved in the project include Fusco Associates, an architectural firm in Southfield; Farmington Hills' Valvona Corporation, installer of underground utilities such as sanitary lines; and Brewer Roofing of Novi.



HANDY BORST/staff photographer

Because of the weather, construction is ahead of schedule for the completion of the new Baptist Manor senior citizen housing complex on Freedom and Drake roads. Officials are hoping the

structure can be completed by August rather than the originally anticipated finishing date of October.

IT WILL also contain a community room with a small kitchen (for social functions, not daily meals); card rooms, library, laundry rooms and lounge areas.

While Baptist Manor will manage Drake Apartments, McQuaid said he is anticipating that a couple in residence at the apartments will manage the office and perform maintenance.

HUD, which signed a 40-year mortgage with Baptist Manor, will oversee the operation, McQuaid said.

"HUD requires that we maintain separate sets of accounting books. They'll do an annual inspection, receive our audit, ask questions about our maintenance standards and resident services, annually certify every resident from a financial standpoint, receive job descriptions of all personnel and their pay levels, and review our records and filing," he said.

THE MILD winter has put construction about two months ahead of schedule.

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