

A rare sight: suburban cop on a motorcycle

By Tom Saar
staff writer

Look for Don Fradette and the White Ghost to be hunting Grand River during Saturday's Founders' Festival parade.

Fradette, a Farmington Hills policeman, will be sitting astride the White Ghost, a 1978 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, one of two such machines the department owns.

"Most people don't see us until they've been pulled over," said Fradette, a seven-year veteran of the

force, of the name he's given his 800-pound mount.

Festival week keeps Fradette and the Ghost hopping. They work the Festival Queen motorcade as well as the parade, and there's always plenty to do.

"People sometimes don't realize they can't go into the street during the parade," Fradette said. "One year I had to arrest a drunk who tried to drive up the street. He didn't even know there was a parade going on."

Most dry working days from June to late October, Fradette can be found plod-

'It's the mystique more than anything else, I guess. When they're stopped by a man on a bike, they know they've been had.'

—Lt. Ernest Miller
Farmington Hills Police

ing the Ghost in just about any part of the 33.4-square-mile city.

A police officer on a motorcycle is a rare sight in the wide open spaces of suburbia. Warren uses a few bikes and West Bloomfield has one. Livonia and Bloomfield Township recently did away with their motorcycle patrols.

But Farmington Hills' cycle (there's only one on the road at any one time except for parades and other special occasions) is useful, according to police officials.

"WE USE THEM on our busier streets like Grand River and Orchard Lake roads," said Lt. Ernest Miller, the head of the department's traffic department and Fradette's boss.

"They're better there because the officer can get in and out of the lanes for traffic enforcement. On single-lane roads, cycles are no better than cars because they can't move around any better than a car can."

The motorcycles are of use in the subdivisions, too, "especially when we have motorcycle complaints," Miller said.

Sgt. Richard Krueger, who rode the city's cycles from their inception in 1974 until last year when he was injured in a bike-car accident, remembers his duty as "a good job, a real good job."

"The attitude of the people on the street is a lot different," said Krueger. "I don't know what it is, the motorcycle or the uniform, but people seem different somehow. They're more polite."

Miller agrees — there's something about a man on a motorcycle.

"It's the mystique more than anything else, I guess," Miller said. "When they're stopped by a man on a bike, they know they've been had."

THE CITY'S TWO cycles, both '78 made-in-Milwaukee Harleys with 1,200 cubic centimeter engines, were purchased from the Lansing Police Department for \$2,400 each.

The city added roll bars on the sides, side saddle bags, radios and fairsing shields, which protect the riders from flying stones and cut down on wind resistance.

"We're trying to make a deal where we can get a radar unit mounted on one of the bikes," Miller said.

Fradette and other riders also have special equipment. They wear standard riot helmets, but their over-the-ear leather boots with double soles and their riding pants with extra material in the seat and knees are special ordered at about \$40 each.

"We give them about 40 hours of

practical experience before we let them go out on the road alone," Miller said. "One of the other motorcycle officers does the training."

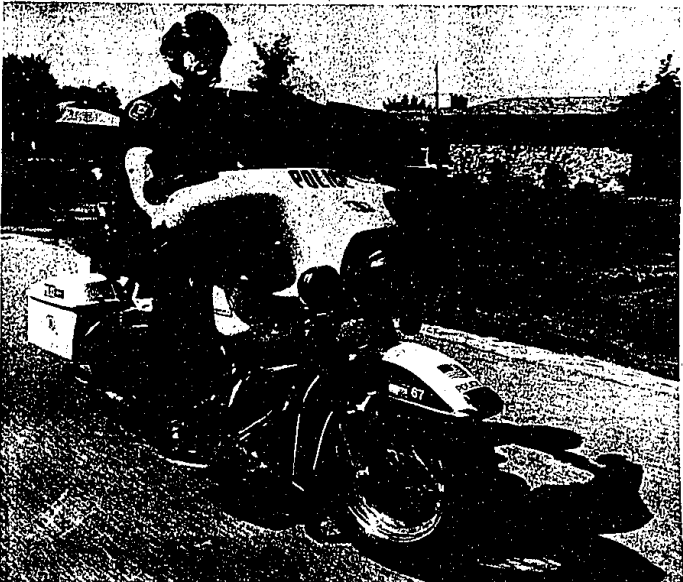
THE OFFICERS usually take their bikes home after work "to cut down on

maintenance costs," according to Miller.

"The officers take pride in their bikes," he said. "This way they can take them home and keep them clean. It's hard to keep a bike clean. They do a little minor maintenance, too."



Patrolman Don Fradette: "Most people don't see us until they've been pulled over."



photos by RANDY BORST/staff photographer

The White Ghost, with Don Fradette aboard, casts a shadow on Springbrook during a recent patrol of Farmington Hills.

Drivers warned on stamps

JULY 29, 1943

A final warning was issued to all automobile owners in the Farmington area to have their car-use federal tax stamps displayed prominently on their vehicles. The stamps, which cost \$5, could be obtained at the Farmington Post Office.

Police said they would ticket all autos without the stamps. The guilty drivers would be made to report to Pontiac, where "the situation would be straightened out," according to a news account. Government officials could issue a stiff fine for not showing the stamps.

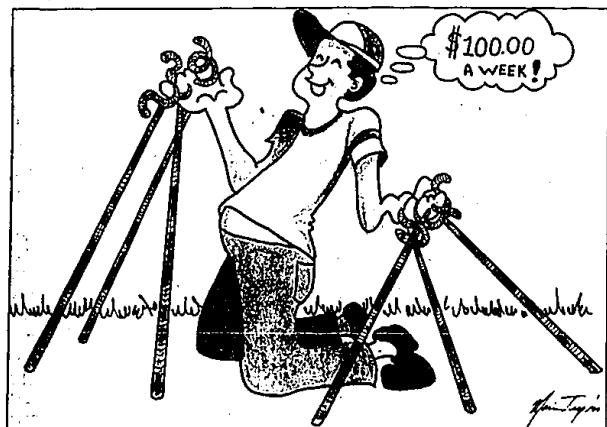
HEALTH TIP on the editorial page of the Farmington paper read, "The scum which forms on cocoa as it cools should not be discarded, since it contains bone-building material which is healthful. Just beat the cocoa with an egg beater lightly and the scum will be broken up so that the cocoa can be enjoyed with its full nutritional content."

MR. AND MRS. William Carpenter were entertaining Mrs. Carpenter's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Poquette of Wayne.

FARMINGTON'S CIVIC Theater was showing "Ball of Fire" with Gary Cooper and Barbara Stanwyck and "King of the Cowboys" with Roy Rogers. The double feature included a newswheel and a "thrill serial."

JULY 30, 1953

OFFICIALS SAID that the city of Farmington would double its present population of approximately 2,600 with the development of two new subdivisions which had been tentatively approved by the city council.



memory lane

Approximately 400 new house sites were to be available in the Bel Aire subdivision, and another 98 were to be constructed in the Alla Loma Park subdivision. The 1950 census placed Farmington's population at 2,325.

DANCER'S DEPARTMENT STORE in Farmington advertised "a good selection of fine shoes" for men priced at \$8.97. "They're odd lots that we want to clear out from our shelves . . . that's the reason for the rock-bottom price."

"BEFORE YOU BUY a new truck," read an advertisement, "make the 15-second sit down test in Ford's new driverized cab . . . Man! What a treat for a working guy!" The 1952 Ford trucks were available at Berling-McHugh, Inc. at 30711 Grand River.

A CLASSIFIED ad stated, "You can earn \$100 a week picking night crawlers. See Owens Sporting Goods, 28404 Grand River."

JULY 25, 1963

PAVING OF NINE Mile Road from Farmington to Gill roads was to begin soon. The contract for the work, which was to have included grading and improving of the ditches, was awarded to Sterling Garrett Construction Co. at a price of \$68,722.85. City officials estimated the project would take six weeks to complete.

Please turn to Page 6

now 50% off Men's final summer clothing clearance



All the great names in spring and summer suits, sport coats and slacks are here. And everything is 50% off. But hurry in for the best choice. Selections will vary by store. 3800 units* in Men's Clothing.

SUITS

- Hart Schaffner & Marx
- Daniel Hechter
- Clucketeer
- Bill Blass and more

Orig. \$160 to \$320,
now 79.97 to 159.97

SPORT COATS AND SLACKS

- Stanley Blocker
- Bill Blass
- Evan Picone
- Daniel Hechter
- Arthur Winer

Orig. \$55 to \$175,
now 26.97 to 86.97

*Total units available at all Hudson's stores while they last

hudson's
men's store