

police/fire calls

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police and fire calls received during the past week.

● FIRE RULED ARSON

The fire that heavily damaged the Elias Brothers Big Boy restaurant at 24501 Halsted Feb. 17 was arson. "It was definitely a set fire," Detective Darnel Krause of the Farmington Hills Police Department said.

Police said they found fresh footprints and tire tracks in the snow behind the restaurant shortly after the 2 a.m. blaze, but there have been no arrests.

Lack of any ignition source in the dining area — where the damage was heaviest — was a chief factor in ruling the fire arson, Krause said. Fire damage was minimal in the kitchen area, he added.

Spilling of the ceramic tile floor in the dining area and floor-level burning on that area's walls, counter and doors are indicative of an accelerant on the floor, Krause said.

The speed and scope of the burning in that area also was indicative of an accelerant. Lt. Peter Baldwin of the Farmington Hills Fire Department said.

The fire was reported by a passerby shortly past 2 a.m. When firefighters arrived about three minutes later, the roof was caving in. The fire was under control within one hour, Baldwin said. The fire probably started about 10 minutes before it was reported, he said. Structural damage was estimated at more than \$300,000.

● JUVENILE DETAINED

Petitions to be filed with the Oakland County Probate Court Juvenile Division will allege a 15-year-old Farmington youth was involved in one commercial break-in, an attempted residential

break-in and a larceny from an auto, according to Commander Peter Amato of the Farmington Department of Public Safety.

The incidents occurred Feb. 21-22, according to the police report. Shortly before midnight Friday, Feb. 21, the youth allegedly stole a carwash credit card valued at \$250 and some cassette tapes from a limousine parked behind Heenev-Sundquist Funeral Home, 23720 Farmington, doing \$300 in damage to the dashboard area.

He then allegedly attempted to break into an occupied house on Oakland, but was scared off, leaving a baseball bat on the front porch.

The youth was detained shortly after midnight, when he was discovered inside Springbrook Florist, 23614 Power, where he allegedly ransacked the store and stole several boxes of ballpoint pens, according to the police report.

● WARRANT SOUGHT

Farmington Department of Public Safety officials said they are seeking warrants against an 18-year-old Novi man regarding a property destruction incident and the subsequent threatening of an employee at Dan's Giant Submarine Sandwiches, 22424 Orchard Lake, Feb. 22.

According to the police report, the man allegedly had become disorderly two weeks before, and was asked to leave the restaurant upon visiting it again during the weekend. He became enraged, allegedly threatening an employee's property and life. He then left the building, allegedly striking a window with his fist and breaking it. The man later telephoned the restaurant employee, again making allegedly threatening statements.

● GARAGE BURNS

Investigators believe a fire that heavily damaged a garage at 21532 Hancock Monday was maliciously set.

Hills fraud suspect facing day in court

A 28-year-old man faces felony charges after allegedly misrepresenting himself as an agent of a snow removal company, Farmington Hills Police said.

District Judge Michael Hand of Farmington signed a warrant for Alex George La Fountain Jr.'s arrest Feb. 10. He was arrested by Southfield Police Monday night after a traffic stop uncovered the outstanding warrant.

Arraigned Tuesday before District Judge Margaret Schaeffer of Farmington, La Fountain stood mute to four counts of obtaining money under false pretenses over \$100 — punishable upon conviction by up to 10 years in prison or a \$5,000 fine. He was remanded to the Oakland County jail in lieu of \$10,000 cash bond pending a preliminary examination conference in 47th District Court.

La Fountain allegedly misrepresented himself as an agent of

the Arrow Tree Service to four homeowners in north Farmington Hills.

"WE ALLEGE he signed snow removal contracts and obtained money, but didn't fulfill the terms of the contracts. He didn't remove any snow," Sgt. Dennis Touchford of the Farmington Hills Police Department said.

Although La Fountain gave police a Southfield address, Detective Jerry McKenzie believes he had been living in the Waterford area.

La Fountain is a suspect in several other similar misrepresentation cases involving snow removal contracts in Farmington Hills, Southfield and possibly other communities, McKenzie said.

"People who he allegedly bilked have called him a smooth con man — a very good talker, very polite, someone who presents himself very well," McKenzie said.

control within 20 minutes, Baldwin said. Damage was estimated at \$5,500 to the building and \$600 to the contents, he added.

● THEFTS REPORTED

Several thefts were reported to local police agencies. Some of them follow: About \$450 was reported stolen from the Kentucky Fried Chicken, 20740 Farmington, Feb. 20-21.

An electric typewriter valued at \$329 was reported stolen from Modern Millwork, 30365 10 Mile, Feb. 21-22.

A radar detector valued at \$250 was reported stolen from a car parked at the Holiday Inn, 38123 10 Mile, Feb. 21.

The dash and related parts, valued at \$800, were reported stolen from a cargo van parked at Tom Holzer Ford, 30300 10 Mile, Feb. 20-21.

Three televisions, a VCR, jewelry, a clock radio, a telephone and a chainsaw valued at \$2,500 were reported stolen from a house on Susan Feb. 22.

A generator valued at \$100 was reported stolen from a garage on Haggerty Feb. 7-22.

A snowblower valued at \$400 was reported stolen from a house on Bridle Hills Court Feb. 23.

Four wire wheel covers valued at \$2,500 were reported stolen from 10

1986 Mercury Grand Marquis cars parked at Tom Holzer Ford, 30300 10 Mile, Feb. 21-23.

A handgun and cash valued at \$200 were reported stolen from a house on Tulane Feb. 23.

Stereo equipment valued at \$635 was reported stolen from a car parked at Country Ridge Apartments, 3330 Freedom, Feb. 22-23.

A 1985 GMC Jimmy valued at \$15,500 was reported stolen from the Kendallwood Apartments Feb. 24-25.

A snowthrower valued at \$350 was reported stolen from a garage on Holsworthy Court Feb. 17-21.

A camera and a necklace valued at \$170 were reported stolen from a house on Pillsbury Feb. 24.

Tires valued at \$1,000 were reported stolen from a car parked on Smithfield between Feb. 22-24.

Cash and jewelry worth \$435 were reported stolen from a house on Prospect Feb. 24, shortly after jewelry valued at \$6,900 was reported stolen from a house on Lakeway.

A television, jewelry and a U.S. Savings Bond valued at \$450 were reported stolen from a house on Farmington Road Feb. 25.

A copier and a computer valued at \$3,000 were reported stolen from Kitchen Master, 24633 Halsted, Feb. 25.

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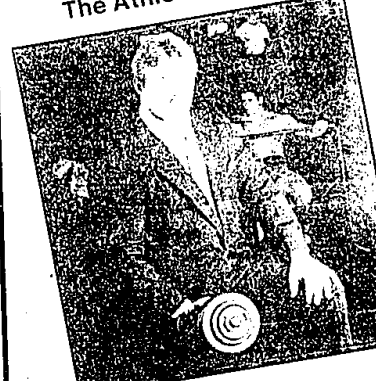
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