

# Con man foiled in bid to fool restaurant

The coin roll con artist struck again this week in Farmington Hills, but was thwarted by an alert business employee.

Last week in Livonia, he went right to the source and tricked a Michigan National Bank branch out of \$177.

In at least a dozen recent incidents, a man has approached areas business and exchanged rolls of "dimes" for paper currency. Later, the merchants found that the rolls actually were filled with pennies, with dimes on each end.

Farmington Hills, Livonia, Southfield and Dearborn Heights have all been targeted.

AT 8:50 p.m. Tuesday, a man approached an employee of the Tivoli Restaurant, 31525 12 Mile, in the Clarion Hotel in Farmington Hills. He said he was from the nearby JW's Saloon and wanted to exchange excess coins for bills.

He handed the employee a brown paper bag with 10-15 "dime" rolls. She took the bag to the back room, but when she opened two of the rolls, she found each had pennies. When she refused to make the exchange, the man left.

The man was described as black, 6-1, in his 20s and 180 pounds. He was wearing a knit cap, brown work pants and a green and gold cotton football jersey.

In Farmington Hills on March 3, One-Hour Martini, 27893 Orchard Lake Road, was taken when 16 rolls of dimes actually containing \$9.02 were exchanged for \$80 in cash. The con man said he worked nearby and his boss asked him to request the exchange, police said.

"It sure sounds like the same guy,"

said Farmington Hills detective Charles Nebus.

FOUR LIVONIA businesses fell victim to the scheme in February, and two of them were taken for a combined \$170. Alert employees at the other two stores refused to make the exchange and instead called police, although the man left in each case before officers arrived.

The latest Livonia case was March 15, during the lunchtime rush at the bank branch. According to reports, a man approached the counter and handed a teller a canvas bag supposedly containing 35 rolls of dimes.

The man identified himself as an employee of a party store in Detroit, and provided what he claimed to be an account number for the party store.

The teller agreed to make the transaction, and the man left in an unknown direction. An hour later, a teller checked the rolls and found them to be bogus.

A bank employee described the suspect as black, 6-0 and 210 pounds. He was dressed all in black and wore a "PARTY" printed in white.

IN THE February incidents, a black man of similar height and weight identified himself as employee of a video rental store when persuading clerks to accept the coin rolls for paper currency.

An Amoco gas station attendant was tricked out of \$95 on Feb. 18, and three businesses on Eight Mile and Farmington Road were targeted Feb. 26.

The man struck out in his attempts to work his con on employees at Papa Romano's Little Bambino and the Subway restaurant.

On his third attempt at the Blockbuster Video store, the man changed his story and claimed to be an employee of another nearby business. The con worked and the man walked off with \$75, leaving behind a handful of fake dime rolls.

The suspect in every instance has

been described as very calm and professional while making the bogus transactions.

IN 1988, a "dime bandit" operated in Livonia and surrounding communities for a number of months. The man was responsible for at least six thefts in Livonia alone before being captured by Redford Township police.

Police recommend that merchants not accept coin rolls from strangers, call the business a person claims to represent to confirm identity, or inspect at least some of the rolls before accepting them.

## Kelly donates temporary help

Kelly Temporary Services in Farmington Hills donated free temporary help to local non-profit organizations in the area during the company's annual worldwide KellyWeek celebration, March 11-17.

Over the past five years, Kelly Temporary Services, a division of Kelly Services, has donated more than \$1 million through 15,625 days of temporary help to 15,000 non-profit organizations in North America. This year, more than 4,000 days of temporary help was donated during KellyWeek.

"Charitable organizations within Farmington Hills have always appreciated a helping hand and we're

happy to lend it in the form of free temporary help," said Gregory Hill, vice president and regional manager for the area that includes Farmington Hills. "We see KellyWeek as a way to return something back to the Farmington Hills community."

"Our customers submit nominations to non-profit organizations and we then conduct a random drawing to determine the winners which are announced during KellyWeek," Hill added.

Kelly Temporary Services Division provided temporary employees in the areas of office, marketing, light industrial and technical to 180,000 customers each year.

## Hermanoff wins Beacon

Sandra Hermanoff, president of Farmington Hills-based Hermanoff & Associates, received a Lighthouse Beacon Award from Pontiac Area Lighthouse.

Hermanoff was one of nine to receive the award, which recognizes exceptional individuals for their mission of Lighthouse, according to Noreen Keating, executive director.

"These people have enabled the work of Lighthouse to grow and flourish and meet the growing de-

mands of the community," she said.

Lighthouse, founded in 1972, is a social service agency providing free food, clothing and emergency funds for medicine, rent, utilities and transportation to those in need. The agency provides formula for infants, as well as medicine and medical supplies for homebound senior citizens and handicapped people.

Hermanoff & Associates has performed public relations on a pro-bono basis for Lighthouse since 1987.

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