

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

The annual auction is held in the garage of the Farmington Hills Police Department.



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Dwain Whinnery of Farmington Hills checks under the hood of this Chevette, about to go on the auction block.

By Amy Rauch  
staff writer

**F**ARMINGTON HILLS police auctioned everything from hood ornaments to plastic pink flamingos at their annual auction April 27.

About 60 people gathered in the garage of the police department.

"I always go to auctions," said Camille Gutowski of Farmington Hills. "I've bought everything from tires to car radios. It's a lot of fun."

Gutowski had her eye on the two plastic flamingos. "I might bid on the pink flamingos," she said. "I'll see what they go for."

Police auctioned items they had or recovered in investigations, but for which they couldn't find the rightful owners.

About \$1,800 of the \$2,300 raised at the auction will go into the city's general fund.

Because some of the items were confiscated during drug-related arrests, the remaining \$500 will go into

a drug forfeiture fund. The fund is used to fight drug-related crimes and promote drug education, said Farmington Hills Police Lt. Richard Murphy.

Some people came to browse, others to see what was for sale and still others for specific items.

"I'm playing hooky from work," said Dick Weir of Farmington Hills. He was scouting the auction for a bike with wide tires for a friend.

"I came just for the heck of it," said Bill Shortt of Farmington Hills. He was hoping to buy bicycles for his grandchildren.

"I've never been to a police auction," said Judy Gangier of Farmington Hills. "I came just to see what's going on."

**OTHERS CAME**, ironically, to replace items stolen from them. "We had a bike stolen and we're looking at replacing it," said Pam Grassnick of Farmington Hills.

After having three hood ornaments stolen from his cars, Tom Scott of Farmington Hills bid \$18

and took home a bag of the ornaments. His take included a Mercedes-Benz ornament, which he's planning to give to a neighbor who had one stolen.

Still others came for a potpourri of items.

Larry Soldan of Farmington Hills came looking for a chair to go with his desk as well as a bookcase and perhaps even a bike. "If I could find a good bike . . . I walk a lot," he said.

Police also auctioned briefcases, calculators, car stereos, helmets, office equipment, a 1980 Harrison High class ring, even a 1980 Chevrolet Chevette.

Items ranged in price. One Schwinn 10-speed bike sold for \$2. A calculator went for \$4 while an envelope of jewelry went for \$190.

The unseasonably warm weather attracted many passersby.

"I just came here to pass time," Farmington Hills resident Dan Stasik said as he leaned over the Chevette engine.



For \$18, Tom Scott of Farmington Hills bought a bag full of hood ornaments to get one like the one missing from his 1978 Cadillac. He has had hood ornaments stolen three times over the years. He also found an ornament that matched the one stolen from his neighbor's Mercedes-Benz.



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Marty Firmont of Farmington Hills picked up this 10-speed bike for \$15 for her son, Mark.

## Police auction: the spoils of crime

### police/fire calls

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week:

#### ● leaking tank

An underground gasoline tank being removed from a Farmington site April 27 began leaking, and caused Farmington public safety officers to be put on alert.

The tank was being removed Friday from property at Chesley Industries, owned by the Hussmann Corp., at the city's south end. The Chesley plant recently closed. The company has put the building up for sale.

According to Farmington Fire Marshal Joe Schornack, the tanks had not been used for many years and contained a mixture of some gasoline and water.

"There wasn't that much product they found," he said. "It was probably confined to that site."

State Department of Natural Resources officials were called in by the company to take the appropriate soil samples, which will be tested.

#### ● pleas guilty

A Farmington Hills man faces up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine after pleading guilty to a federal bank fraud charge in connection with the defrauding of a Pontiac bank.

On April 30, Henry Leo Ewald, 47, entered his plea before U.S. District Judge Paul Gadola of Detroit, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen Reynolds.

Ewald is free on \$50,000 unsecured bond pending sentencing. He

also may have to pay restitution. From November 1988 to October 1989, First Federal Savings Bank and Trust of Pontiac was defrauded of money "through false and fraudulent pretenses and representations," U.S. Attorney Stephen Markman said.

In January 1989, the bank approved a \$6.5 million loan as a first mortgage for Westland Towers, an apartment building actually owned by others. Approval was based on several documents, filed with the Wayne County Register of Deeds, that turned out to be false or forged, Markman said.

"The documents purported to show that Ewald owned the Westland Towers free and clear of any encumbrances," Markman said. "In reality, Ewald did not and never had owned this building."

Ewald used \$4 million of the loan to invest in a Southfield insurance company, Reynolds said. So far, the bank has recovered about \$3 million of the original \$6.5 million loan, according to news reports.

The case was investigated by the FBI, in cooperation with the U.S. Attorney.

In the wake of the guilty plea, the government agreed to not charge Ewald with any other crimes resulting from the case.

#### ● marijuana found

North Farmington High principal Deborah Clarke found a baggie of marijuana inside the school Tuesday afternoon. She turned it over to the Farmington Hills police for disposal.

#### ● Sauna fire

Farmington Area YMCA officials plan to rebuild the men's sauna after a patron left a newspaper on a heater unit Tuesday night, causing a fire that left about \$5,000 in damage.

No one was hurt. An employee put out the fire with a dry chemical extinguisher. "It was what you would call a small fire," said Kevin Bush, executive director of the YMCA, 28100 Farmington Road.

"It (the newspaper) was carelessly left in the sauna," he said. "We have always had rules (for the sauna). But people don't always follow them."

Flame damage was confined to the redwood inside the sauna, according to a Farmington Hills Fire Department report.

#### ● alcohol violations

Farmington Hills police reported these alcohol-related tickets:

Early Saturday, a 19-year-old waitress at Shot's Tavern, 30859 10 Mile, was ticketed for furnishing alcohol to a person younger than 21 when she served beer to a 19-year-old police cadet accompanied by two plainclothes police officers.

On Friday night, two men in their 20s were ticketed for transporting open intoxicants in a motor vehicle when wine cooler and beer were found in a car parked behind Mr. Sports One of A Kind, 30860 Orchard Lake Road.

At Putt-Putt & Games, 30749 Grand River, a 17-year-old man was ticketed for possessing beer. At the Beechview Swim Club, 20880 Westmeath, an 18-year-old man and a 17-year-old woman were ticketed for possessing beer.

## Couple sentenced in tax evasion

A U.S. District Court judge sentenced a Farmington Hills couple to one year in prison and handed down fines after separate juries convicted them of failing to file income tax returns.

On Wednesday, District Judge Virginia Morgan of Detroit sentenced Michael C. Tarrant, 43, and Marlene L. Tarrant, 42.

In addition to the prison term, Michael Tarrant was fined \$10,000. His wife was fined \$5,000. They also must pay the costs of prosecution as well as the interest and penalties on taxes due.

Morgan put each on five years' probation after their prison term.

Michael Tarrant was convicted March 28 of five counts of willfully failing to file U.S. individual income

**Michael Tarrant was fined \$10,000. His wife was fined \$5,000. They also must pay the costs of prosecution as well as the interest and penalties on taxes due.**

tax returns for 1982-86. His wife was convicted of the same charge Dec. 14.

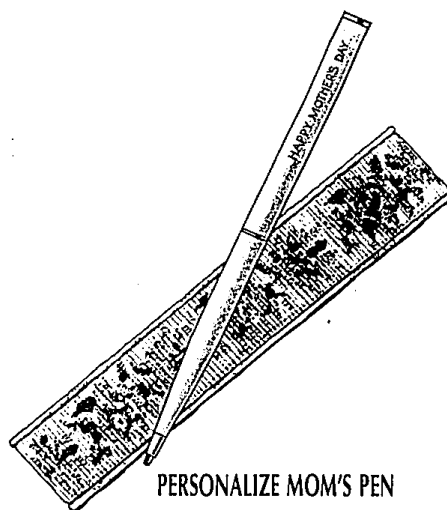
Michael, a Ford Motor Co. engineer, and Marlene, an insurance company employee, were indicted by a federal grand jury April 13, 1989. Since then, they have maintained their innocence.

Both convictions will be appealed, defense attorney Richard Lustig of

Birmingham told the Observer in March.

"We honestly believe we had a valid argument with the IRS and we were deprived of representing that valid argument to the jury," he said. "We believe the charges will come back for re-trial in both cases."

The Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigation Division, in cooperation with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Detroit, handled the case.



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