

# Store owner fined \$5,000 for obscenity violations

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

A \$5,000 fine levied against a Farmington Hills party store owner charged with selling hard-core pornography to a minor during a June 1989 police crackdown will be split and given to community youth programs.

Dawood Toma Sorokl, 42, owner of the Grand Square Liquor Shoppe, 38441 Grand River, pleaded no contest Oct. 15 to two felony counts of distributing obscene material to children and two misdemeanor counts of second-degree obscenity.

Sorokl, who refused to discuss the case, faced up to two years in prison and a \$10,000 fine for each of the felonies and one year in prison and a \$5,000 fine for each misdemeanor. But Oakland County Circuit Judge Fred Mester levied a \$5,000 fine for all offenses Monday.

"This court has unfortunately seen too much of this denigration of the human body," Mester said as he sentenced Sorokl. "This type of thing is contributing to a lowering of standards."

Mester also agreed to split the \$5,000 fine between the Farmington Public Schools for a student assistance program, and the Farmington Families in Action for substance abuse education books.

"This gives you an opportunity to contribute something back to your community, of which you are a part," Mester told Sorokl.

**THE FELONY** charges stem from a Farmington Hills police undercover operation June 8, 1989, in which the 15-year-old son of a police officer from another city bought three pornographic magazines reportedly on display in the Grand Square Liquor Shoppe.

The state obscenity law charges, the misdemeanors, stem from the police department's early 1989 investigation of the city's party stores and bookstores by an undercover police officer.

"I was disappointed that the judge didn't place him (Sorokl) on probation. He received no jail time or probation," Farmington Hills police Chief William Dwyer said. "When you plead no contest to two felonies and two misdemeanors and a person only pays \$5,000 . . ."

Sorokl, who appeared calm and smiling at his sentencing, refused to talk with the Observer. He said he was angry the Observer published his photo in the Monday, Nov. 26 edition with a story about his scheduled sentencing.

Sorokl told Mester he had nothing to say before sentencing, but his attorney, Jack Bain of Farmington

Hills, spoke on his behalf.

"This is not somebody who blatantly decided to break the law," Bain said. "Now my client will probably lose his business as a result of this. He will have plenty of problems."

**BAIN DESCRIBED** Sorokl as a hard-working family man. Bain also talked about the undercover operation conducted by Farmington Hills police in which they sent in a minor to buy hard-core pornographic magazines.

"The magazines in question had been in store for literally years," Bain said, adding police conduct monthly liquor inspections of the store. "At no time was it suggested to Mr. Sorokl that those magazines should be removed."

But Dwyer responded later that "we can't arbitrarily tell them not to have them (magazines). We can suggest it. But we can't demand."

Farmington Hills police and city officials plan to again ask the Michigan Liquor Control Commission to revoke Sorokl's liquor license. The city council recommended revocation last year following a public hearing on Sorokl's violations, the result of police undercover operations using an underage cadet.

The Grand Square Liquor Shoppe, according to city records, has been charged with selling alcohol to minors three times since 1986. Management pleaded guilty or was convicted in all three cases.

Attorney Bain told Mester that Sorokl has had three LCC violations in seven years.

Dwyer lauded the police department's citizens crime prevention advisory committee, which requested an investigation into the sale of pornography in Farmington Hills.

"I'M EXCITED that the city is having an intensely proactive effort to (curb) drugs, pornography and things that make a city undesirable. This will help protect our city from becoming like other communities that in our estimation have gone down the tube," said committee chairman-elect Ralph Rebandt, pastor of Oakland Hills Community Church, Farmington Hills.

The investigation, initiated in March 1989, showed that of 36 establishments, 15 did not sell materials that fall under the obscenity law. The remaining establishments sold adult entertainment, such as Hustler and Playboy. Five of the establishments sold hard-core material, the type bought by the 15-year-old.

"We revisited all of the locations that we initially investigated and we found that all but one location — whose owner is facing pornography charges — has removed these type of hard-core magazines," Dwyer said.



DANIEL LIPPITT/staff photographer

## For he's a jolly Goodfellow

As traffic whizzes by, Farmington's Dick Armhen distributes his Goodfellows newspapers at Farmington Road and Grand River Friday. Armhen was one of dozens of Farmington Area Goodfellows working to see that needy children and seniors have a happy Christmas. Last year, 161 families (including 354 children) and 132 seniors were recipients of food, clothing, toys and gift certificates. This year, the need is even greater, said Richard Tupper, president and general chairman of the Farmington Area Goodfellows. For more information about donating, call Head Start (489-3373) or Neighborhood House (478-7699 or 477-1153).

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SHARON LAM/EUX/staff photographer

Dawood Sorokl, fined \$5,000 on pornography and obscenity charges, stands as his attorney, Jack Bain, speaks for him during Sorokl's sentencing in Oakland County Circuit Court.

Jack Bain, speaks for him during Sorokl's sentencing in Oakland County Circuit Court.

# City to kick off holidays with old-fashioned flair

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

Enjoy a ride on a turn-of-the-century trolley car, take in a free movie, stop and listen to Dickens-style carolers or just check out special holiday promotions.

And (ho, ho, ho) don't forget Santa arrives at 1 p.m. in the Downtown Farmington Center parking lot this year by helicopter.

It all happens Saturday, Dec. 1, during Farmington's fifth annual holiday event, this year called "An Old Fashioned Downtown Farmington Holiday." Events begin at 10 a.m. and run through the 5:30 p.m. tree lighting in the downtown center.

Some events and programs will also continue each Saturday through Dec. 22.

"It's really a two-fold thing," said Wendy Strip Sittsamer, executive director of the Downtown Development Authority, which is co-sponsoring the event with the Downtown Farmington Business Association, a downtown merchant's group. "It draws people downtown, but, equally as important, it provides something for people who are already loyal to downtown."

"I think we've created a tradition."

*"I think we've created a tradition."*

— Wendy Strip Sittsamer  
DDA director

**ONE OF THE** strengths of the event is the involvement of a number of community groups, and businesses donating time and money to community events, Strip Sittsamer said.

For example, the Farmington Players perform throughout the day in Dickens-era costume, the Farmington Community Library downtown branch is hosting a "create-an-ornament" program from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and the Farmington Area Jaycees are offering a charitable gift-wrapping service and is, again, sponsoring the annual holiday tree lighting. The Henry Ford Community College Brass Quartet is also scheduled to play at 2 p.m.

"The whole idea is that families can make a whole day of it — and we hope they do," Strip Sittsamer added. "There are a lot of different things happening."

Some other highlights this Saturday include:

- Santa arriving by helicopter at

1 p.m. After his arrival, he will visit with children from 1-3 p.m. at the H&R Block building and from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Village Commons.

On Dec. 8, 15 and 22 he will be at the Village Commons from 1-5 p.m.

- Farmington Area Jaycees offer gift-wrapping services at the Village Commons from 1-5 p.m. Dec. 1, 8, 15 and 22. Proceeds go, respectively, to the U-M Hospital Burn Center, the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, Muscular Dystrophy Association and St. Jude Children's Research.

- Bring a non-perishable food item or unwrapped new toy to a Salvation Army canteen in the fountain area — where the holiday tree is set up — and receive a map of downtown with various promotions and coupons and a sing-a-long sheet for the 5:30 p.m. tree-lighting program. Donations go to the Farmington Area Goodfellows.

- The Civic Theatre will show the G-rated movie "Prancer" free at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. The Merceyaires will perform at 4 p.m.

- Free, old-fashioned trolley car rides will occur in 20-minute cycles from 1-7 p.m. throughout nine stops in the downtown area. Each stop will be clearly marked.



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