

9 ticketed for sale of alcohol to teen

His booze buying binge would've rivaled any performed by noted top-hat tippler W.C. Fields.

Here's how the alcohol shopping spree went for a Farmington Hills male Thursday night:

■ At Farmington Party Store, he bought a pint of Bud Ice.

■ At Merchant of Vino, he came away with a 22-ounce bottle of Killian's Irish Red.

■ At Arbor Drugs on Orchard Lake and 13 Mile, it was a bottle of Molsan Ice.

■ At Rite Aid on 14 Mile, a 24-ounce bottle of Samuel Adams.

■ To add to the mix, he even bought a bottle of Bartles and James kiwi strawberry malt flavored drink at Warren Prescriptions.

Cashiers rang up his purchases, he paid and was on his way. Only one problem: He was 18 — not 21 which is how old you have to be to buy alcohol.

He took the bottles outside and handed them to two plainclothes officers.

They, in turn, went back inside and issued tickets to those five establishments and four others as part of a Farmington Hills police liquor sting. The three officers visited 38 businesses with off-premise liquor licenses and one place where alcohol is sold and consumed on property.

While those ticketed face up to 90 days in jail and \$500, the liquor license holders could be charged by the State Liquor Control Commission after the state Attorney General's office reviews the case.

No leniency should be given to offenders, said the Farmington Hills police.

"These places that sold ... they are aware that we have been doing this since 1986. There is absolutely no excuse," Hills police Chief Bill Dwyer said. "It's disappointing with all of the

■ **'These businesses should be dealt with very severely by the liquor control commission.'**

Bill Dwyer
—Farmington Hills police chief

efforts that have been put out there by the city, the schools, Farmington Families in Action, the Call to Action Summit.

"These businesses should be dealt with very severely by the liquor control commission."

Also ticketed were: Rite Aid, 35584 Grand River; 7-Eleven, 22323 Middlebelt; 7-Eleven, 22069 Farmington; and Arbor Drugs, 29555 Orchard Lake.

Police also ticketed Roosevelt's Billiards at 27843 Orchard Lake after the teen bought a bottle of Foster's Lager at the bar.

In all cases, cashiers sold alcohol to the 18-year-old without asking for identification. A woman operating the register at Arbor did ask the teen his birth date. She said he told her Feb. 22, 1977, though his actual birth date is Feb. 22, 1980.

"The point is, you don't ask for a birth date, you ask for his ID," Dwyer said.

The department cited four businesses during a similar sting in December, which is a marked decrease from 26 tickets issued when the enforcement started.

Liquor stings are conducted around the holidays and graduation in order to prevent underage drinking, which leads to traffic accidents and deaths.

"I thought we were doing a pretty good job," Dwyer said. "If businesses continue to sell to minors, I think they should lose their licenses and perhaps lose them permanently or for a substantial amount of time."

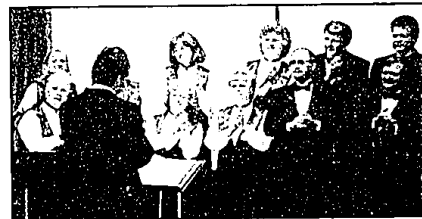
Academy rewards



Sheepskin celebration: Romanian-born adult education graduate Paul Pocol celebrates with his brother, Dan, his fiancé, Nicole Aguirre, and her brothers, Torre and Brett, at the combined Adult Education and Alternative Academy graduation at Farmington High on Wednesday.



Scholar honored: Alternative Academy graduate Marisa Kaplan receives a scholarship from Alternative Academy Director Dianne Duthie.



Harmony: Farmington Community Chorus performs annually at the Adult Education and Alternative Academy combined graduation.

Farmington budget boasts tax cut with an increase in city services

Farmington residents can enjoy more bang for their tax bucks, according to the \$10.5 million 1998-99 city budget that was approved Monday by council members.

Basic city services will continue at their existing level, at a 2.8 percent increase, as part of the \$6 million general fund budget, said City Manager Frank Lauhoff. But included in other parts of the overall budget is money for renovation of the Department of Public Services building and implementation of a sidewalk repair program.

And it all comes wrapped up in a neat package that will reduce the tax rate from 15.66 to 15.16 mills. What it amounts to is a savings of \$32 for the owner of a \$150,000 home.

"So it's significant," Lauhoff said.

The half-mill reduction is due to the completion of debt payment for late-1970s improvements to the city's water system as well as favorable interest earnings.

Lauhoff called the 1998-99 budget a straightforward document that is consistent with recent years.

"We're maintaining all city services at a high level," he said. "That's one of council's directives. And we're continuing to emphasize the same things we've emphasized in the past — (making) infrastructure improvements, maintaining subdivisions and paying attention to commercial areas."

"This balance is absolutely necessary."

The planned renovation of the 36-year-old Public Safety Department is included in the Capital Improvement Fund budget, with about \$687,000 earmarked for what Lauhoff called "one of the largest renovation projects that the city has ever undertaken in terms of dollars."

He said architects intend to bid on the project in July, with construction expected to follow in August.

During the six-month project, the Public Safety Department will relocate to the Department of Public Services building at Farmington and Nine Mile roads.

But, Lauhoff emphasized, public safety records will be avail-

able at city hall and dispatchers probably also will still be stationed there, though probably at a different part of the building.

Ensuring safe sidewalks in the city is another objective the budget addresses. A dedicated fund was established and will receive annual tax revenue in the amount of .10 mill (\$30,000 this year).

According to the budget, "When funding is available, this

new program will repair sidewalks without property owner participation. This program will enable the city to more effectively manage the replacement of the city sidewalk system due to deterioration and provide safer walkways."

The sidewalk program will allow officials to review major sections of Farmington at three- or four-year intervals, to determine problem spots.

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