

'Pigeon drop' scams still popular with con artists

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Some con artists are still making money off an old trick. Farmington Hills police want to talk to a woman, who bank security cameras depicted during the latest "pigeon drop" scam in which a woman lost \$4,000 in savings March 5. The incident happened in the Target parking lot on Grand River.

Similar attempts have been made outside of Kmart on Orchard Lake at 14 Mile March 4, and Merchant of Vino on 12

Mile and Middlebelt March 9. Pigeon drop scams usually target seniors or people shopping alone, whom con artists figure have money in the bank and are vulnerable.

"They'll look for what they see as an easy mark," said Cmdr. Pat Browne of the Farmington Hills police.

In this fraud operation, a woman approaches the intended victim with a purse, wallet or money bag and asks if it belongs to her. A second woman shows up and acts like she doesn't know the other woman.

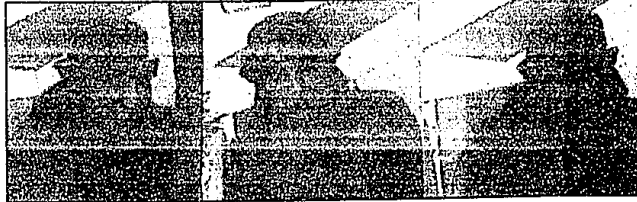
One looks inside the wallet or bag, which depicts a large sum of cash but is usually blank paper wrapped in a large denomination.

After suggesting they split the loot three ways, one of the women pretends to get inside a nearby building to "talk to her boss."

She returns and says he suggests that all three should come up with a large amount of cash, which can be used to launder money found. Then the women and victim can split the cash three ways.

In this case, the victim is driven to the bank where she withdraws several thousands of dollars and gives it to one of the women. The woman then goes into the building to give the money to her boss.

After several minutes, the vic-



Talk: Farmington Hills police are looking for this woman - pictured by a security camera - to talk with about a recent so-called pigeon drop scam in which a woman lost \$4,000 in savings.

tim goes inside and finds the women and her money are gone.

"There have been around 800 types of scams, but people put a

new little twist on them and still try them," Browne said. "There's always somebody who hasn't heard of it before."

People with information are asked to phone Farmington Hills police at 473-9684 or 473-9694.

Police investigate safecracking at salon

Farmington Hills police are investigating a brazen safe burglary where \$8,000 in cash and checks were stolen at Fantastic Sam's Tuesday morning.

Dearborn Heights police arrested a man and released him pending further investigation for a similar robbery there Wednesday.

Hills police believe the two cases are related and are examining clues that may lead to a possible suspect. Police executed a search warrant at an undisclosed place.

At 9 a.m. Tuesday, a co-owner of Fantastic Sam's opened the hair-cutting salon and found a safe missing and an 11-by-16-inch hole in a nearby wall.

Burglars dug out the safe imbedded into the floor, leaving behind mud and footprints, which police are examining. A crowbar was also found.

Thieves stole \$800 from an office filing cabinet and \$100 from a cash drawer.

They apparently worked up a thirst, stealing two 20 ounce bottles of Pepsi from a refrigerator. Investigators found two empty bottles covered in mud in the sink outside the office.

A delivery man told police he saw a late model green Ford Ranger pulled up to the back of Fantastic Sam's between 7-7:35 a.m. He saw a white male 30-35 standing outside the truck.

OBITUARIES

ALEXANDER DIMANNO

Funeral services for Alexander Dimanno, 83, of Farmington Hills were Friday, March 19 at St. Clare of Assisi Church.

Mr. Dimanno died March 12 in Elk Grove, Calif. while visiting family. He was the owner and proprietor of Varsity Lanes in Detroit, retiring at age 65. After retirement he worked for Conard's Sausage Co. and Burger King in Farmington Hills until 1996. He volunteered every day at the Farmington Hills Senior

Center until his death. He loved football and gardening.

Survivors include children: Ann Carol, Alexander (Barbara) and Mary; two brothers, one sister, three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Preceding in death was his wife Anna in 1958.

Burial was at Oakland Hills Cemetery in Novi. Memorials may be sent to Community Living Centers or to the Farmington Hills Senior Center.

PATRICIA JEAN MATHISON

Funeral services for Patricia Jean Mathison, 67, of Farmington Hills were Saturday, March 20 at First United Methodist Church.

Mrs. Mathison, who died March 11, was born June 6, 1931 in Highland Park. She was a piano teacher. She graduated from Cooley High School and North Central College in Naperville, Ill. She taught at Emerson School in Detroit from 1951-1959. She was a licensed lay speaker and active in the

First United Methodist Church of Wayne.

Survivors include husband Dr. Curtis Mathison, daughters Sharon (Robert) Mathison Sues and Joy (Gregory) Snadden, one grandchild and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

Burial was at White Chapel Cemetery in Troy. Memorials may be made to the First United Church of Wayne music department. The funeral home handled the arrangements.

Now Accepting New Patients

Robert Dodds, MD, recently joined the practice of David Clarke, MD, Christina DiMaggio, MD, and Kang-Lee Tu, MD. He specializes in Obstetrics and Gynecology, and has a special interest in treating conditions of infertility, urinary incontinence, and pelvic prolapse.

After earning his medical degree at Wayne State University, Dr. Dodds completed his internship and residency at Providence Hospital. Among his other awards and activities, Dr. Dodds was honored as Resident Teacher of the Year each year from 1995 through 1998. He is also a member of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the American Medical Association.

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Yard waste pick up resumes

Starting the week of April 5, the city of Farmington Hills will resume yard waste pick-up -

depending on weather conditions. Only paper bags or rigid containers with proper stickers are acceptable for curbside yard waste.

Yard waste stickers are available free of charge at city hall and the Department of Public Works building. Residents can also buy paper bags at both places.

Dan Rooney, DPW superintendent, said best options for yard wastes are:

- Grasscycle - leaving clippings on the lawn;
- mulch - placing grass/leaves around plants; and
- backyard composting.

To learn about backyard composting and what happens to recyclables once they leave curbside, people can attend an open house Sunday, May 23, at RRASOC, 20000 W. Eight Mile, Southfield. The event runs 1-5 p.m. and includes a compost bin sale. Call 248-208-2270 for information.



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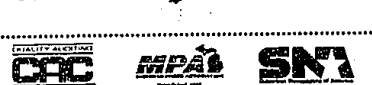
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The Farmington Observer



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