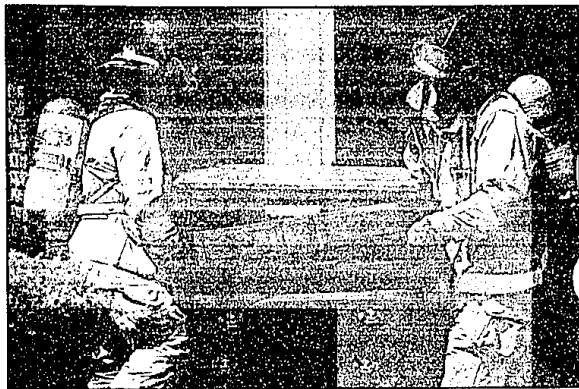


Drawer fire



Source: Farmington Hills firefighters Kathy Baker and David Jones remove a dresser where a fire started in a Valley Creek home Tuesday morning. Firefighters doused the flames within five minutes. Two males, ages 14 and 18, were treated for smoke inhalation. Careless use of matches is believed to be the cause.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRESLER

Plenty of items up for bids in Hills auction Saturday

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER
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From unsold bikes to 100-meg computers, the annual city of Farmington Hills auction likely has it on the block.

On Saturday, June 26, people will put on their bidding hats to have a chance to land a number of items. The auction takes place in the police department parking lot on the south side of 11 Mile Road, west of Orchard Lake.

Items can be viewed starting at 9 a.m. with the auction following at 10 a.m. A professional auctioneer conducts the event.

"We have some really good items this year," said Kelly Monico, Hills city purchaser. "A lot of items are from police drug forfeiture, which is nice because the money we get goes to (anti-drug) education and crime prevention."

Other auction money raised goes into the general fund, which lightens the taxpayer load somewhat.

Big ticket items up for bid include gold chains and earrings, rings appraised for \$2,000 to \$4,000 and a Gruen watch. A 60-inch screen TV seized during a gambling raid two years ago is also on the block.

People can also put in offers on an assortment of bicycles, computers and office furniture.

During the past two years, the city has updated its computer systems. As a result, some 100-meg

Big ticket items up for bid include gold chains and earrings, rings appraised for \$2,000 to \$4,000 and a Gruen watch. A 60-inch screen TV seized during a gambling raid two years ago is also on the block.

Pentium machines will be available as will hard drives and memory cards.

While the computers are not considered speed demons by industry standards, "They'll still run the same software," Monico said.

Bargains are usually had. In the past, bikes and furniture have gone for as little as \$1.

Sometimes the auctioneer will lump items together to make an attractive package. So, someone who offers to buy a set of golf clubs might get a file cabinet thrown in.

New stuff is being added as police property room and city storage areas are emptied, said Monico, who is compiling the list.

One of the more bizarre pieces includes dental equipment, which was likely stolen.

Municipal auctions are popular events. Despite rain and cold, last year's Hills auction drew 200 people. Police Chaplain Corps will be selling refreshments.

Hills man served country, community

See obituaries page A7

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER
loconnor@oe.hometown.com

John J. Murphy could listen to an argument as well as give a compelling one.

As a baseball umpire, the long-time Farmington Hills resident handled a fair share of rhubarbs. He wasn't afraid to step into the political fray either, friends say.

Murphy is remembered as a caring, passionate man who championed civil rights and equality. He died in a Livonia nursing home June 21. He was 85.

"When he would walk into a room, he'd talk to everybody," said son Tom Murphy. "He was a gregarious person."

Whether it was baseball, politics or his service as a U.S. Marine during World War II, Murphy had plenty to share.

Murphy and his wife of 61 years, Martha, moved into then Farmington Township after the war in 1945. They remained in the same home on Westhill Street in the Orchard Lake-10 Mile area for 54 years.

The Cranston, R.I. native worked for Ford Motor Co. as an inspector until retirement in 1983.

He remained active in the Farmington Committee on Aging and in the Farmington Demo-

cratic Club, where he was a precinct delegate.

Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi considered Murphy a political ally.

When Vagnozzi was mayor pro-tem in the early 1990s, his selection to mayor by colleagues looked precarious. Murphy came out to a Hills city council meeting in support of him.

"I went into the meeting with a 2-5 vote and came out with a 4-3 one," Vagnozzi said.

Neighbors on Westhill Street looked to Murphy as a political barometer, too. "If it was anything political, they'd always check with John," Vagnozzi said.

Murphy grew up in a family of nine children and was proud of his Irish-Catholic heritage. He'd often tell his son how family members stuck up for one another.

"That absolutely was the most important thing to him - his family," his son said.

He often related his experiences fighting in the Pacific during the war. He was part of the Marine invasion of Okinawa.

"As he got older that became more important to him," Tom said. "He was just extremely proud of being a Marine, fighting for his country and the comradeships he developed."

He is survived by wife Martha, son Thomas (and Barbara) of Farmington Hills; brothers Frank and Robert. He also has three grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

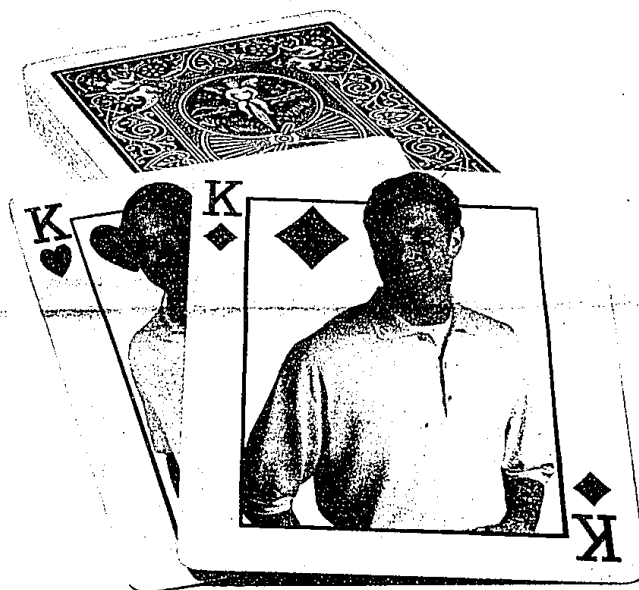
Memorial services took place Wednesday at Thayer Rock Funeral Home. He was cremated.

Memorials may be sent to Henry Ford Hospice.



John J. Murphy

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RECREATION NEWS

The following are Farmington Hills parks and recreation programs. For more information or to register, call 473-9570.

STARS IN THE PARK

The Farmington Community Jazz Band will perform as part of the Stars in the Park concert series at 8 p.m. today, June 24, at Heritage Park in Farmington Hills. This musical series is presented by the city's Department of Special Services and features local talent every Thursday night. There is no charge.

SUMMER FUN CENTERS

Kids ages 6-12 will have a great time playing games, doing arts and crafts and other fun activities. For information on this year's FREE Summer Fun Center sites, call 473-9570.

SAFETY TOWN

The Recreation Division is now taking registration for the Safety Town program. This program is designed for ages 4-6 and consists of two-week sessions (morning and afternoon)

that teach several safety aspects to kids.

CIRCUS

The Recreation Division is bringing back the Kelly-Miller Bros. Circus for your enjoyment on Thursday, July 8. Advance discounted tickets are available at the Recreation office.

SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

The Founders Softball Tournament/Men's Double Elimination is scheduled from Friday, July 16 through Sunday, July 18, at Founders Sports Park in Farmington Hills. The cost is \$160 per team and includes softballs and umpire fees. Registration deadline is Tuesday, July 13.

VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

Founders Two-Person Sand Volleyball Tournament will take place on Sunday, July 11 at Founders Sports Park in Farmington Hills. The cost is \$30 per team. Registration deadline is Friday, July 2.