

## Police seek information on 'pigeon drop' suspects

BY JONI HUBBED  
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A 79-year-old Farmington Hills man believed to be helping a gentleman who wanted to return to Africa this weekend, but ended up losing \$3,000.

Crime Prevention Administrative Lt. Jim Whitcomb said the victim was approached by a man who wanted a ride to a local church. There, they met a second man, who said he was trying to get back to Africa.

With only a few variations, Whitcomb said, it was a classic "pigeon drop" scam.

"Pigeon drops" always involved two people," he said. "Working in concert, they swindle the victim to get whatever they can."

Such incidents usually happen in a store where someone will "find" a bag filled with money, which generally shows some sign of being ill-gotten booty. The

first person will show the bag to the victim and a second person will come upon the scene soon afterwards.

"The second person will say he has a friend who's a lawyer, and they will call that person," Whitcomb said. "They all agree to put up good faith money for the lawyer to hold it."

The first person to withdraw funds, of course, is the victim. Once his or her money has been commingled with the found cash, the scam artists will ask to be taken to their bank to make similar withdrawals.

At some point, they switch the bag with the money for a bag full of cut paper, Whitcomb said, and literally leave the victim holding the bag.

People fall for the sound-to-good-to-be-true deal for a variety of reasons, but are urged everyone and particularly senior citizens to never expect something for nothing. The crooks generally offer a

fairly large sum of money with no strings attached - a kind of "windfall" profit.

"People because they realize the folly of their own greed or gullibility, some people may not report the crime."

"It's embarrassing," Whitcomb said. "That's what a con man or scam artist depends on. It gives them a little lead time to get away."

Because these crimes tend to occur in clusters, he urges citizens who know of or have been scammed to file a report. Information is also shared among neighboring law-enforcement agencies.

The suspects are described as two black men in their 40s. One is 6 foot 1 and weighs about 160 pounds. The other is about 5-10 and 200 pounds. Both wore mustaches.

Anyone with information is urged to call Farmington Hills Police at (248) 473-9600.

## Costick to speak at breakfast

BY JONI HUBBED  
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A decade of tradition will meet the future of diversity Tuesday morning in the fifth annual Rainbow Recognition Awards Breakfast.

Sponsored by the Farmington/Farmington Hills Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council, the event will feature guest speaker former Farmington Hills City Manager Bill Costick, who helped found the council 10 years ago. The council initiated the event five years ago to honor 30 people who have lived the council's vision for awareness and acceptance of diversity in the community, event chair Suzanne Paul said.

"These individuals are singled out for their work in the community and living the principles of the Multicultural/Multiracial Council," Paul said. "They were nominated by their peers."

A council subcommittee reviewed the nominations early this month and selected award winners. In addition, co-chairs Karen Bolson and Jim Hall selected a "Chair Award" winner, former Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi.

The council formed 10 years ago, following alleged racial incidents between high school students, said Bolson.

"Some parents, city officials and people from the school district decided to get together and talk about the issues," she explained. "Five years ago, we developed our guiding principles."

The list, composed and approved after extensive community meetings, is a simple one:

1) Racial, religious, cultural and ethnic diversity in our community will be respected, nurtured and celebrated.

2) We believe that healthy communities maintain a compre-

### RAINBOW

hensive and balanced program of services which are open and accessible to all citizens.

3) We believe in equal educational opportunities.

4) We believe in equal employment opportunities.

5) We believe in equal access to housing.

6) We believe in equally safe neighborhoods.

Since formulating those goals, Bolson said, the council has worked toward achieving them, through activities, forums, workshops and programs like the annual Rainbow Recognition Awards Breakfast.

For more information or to reserve a seat at that event, call (248) 421-8174. It begins at 7:30 a.m. at the William Costick Center, 28600 11 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. Tickets may be purchased at the door.

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Farmington Hills Library  
31737 W. 12 Mile Rd. (near Orchard Lake Rd. & Farmington Rd.)

**ROCHESTER**  
Wednesday, January 26, 2000  
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. (evening)  
Older Persons Commission (OPC)  
312 Woodward St.

**LIVONIA**  
Thursday, January 27th, 2000  
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. (afternoon)  
Livonia Civic Center Library  
32777 S. Mile Rd. (E. of Farmington Rd.)

**PLYMOUTH**  
Tuesday, February 1, 2000  
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. (evening)  
Plymouth Cultural Center  
525 Farmer Rd. (near N. Leonard & S. Main St.)

**NORTHVILLE**  
Wednesday, February 2, 2000  
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. (afternoon)  
Northville Public Library  
212 W. Cedar (Downtown Northville)

**WATERFORD**  
Thursday, February 3, 2000  
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. (afternoon)  
Waterford Senior Center  
6455 Harper

All seminars free of charge. No reservations necessary. For information, call (248) 540-8710.

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