

# Pulling the rug out

## Carpet dealer faces lawsuits

BY ALICE ASHMORE  
STAFF WRITER

A local carpet dealer has been accused of pulling the rug out from under a number of his customers.

Irate customers are alleging John McDonald of Absolute Carpet and Tile of Livonia failed to deliver the goods they ordered.

Kathy LeBlanc of Livonia is fuming over the situation. "This guy's a jerk and I want him out of business," LeBlanc said. "I've got a judgment against him and I've not been paid."

She was awarded \$1,407 in general civil court.

LeBlanc said, "I am supposed to go into surgery, and I can't until I get my \$1,400."

She said she got a copy of her canceled check and used it to contact McDonald's bank. "I put a lien on his account. I got a whole \$37."

She noted that the store is still in business. "His sign says '100 percent guaranteed.'"

"I am just livid because of this idiot," LeBlanc said. "My lawyer and I are at a standstill."

Livonia 16th District Court records show 29 closed complaints filed against Absolute Carpet and Tile of Livonia.

Dolores Cooner, 69, of Canton says she is owed \$1,200 by the company.

"I'm really upset because I am a senior citizen," Cooner said.

Cooner had bought Pergo flooring through Absolute Carpet and Tile for her kitchen, dining and laundry rooms.

Cooner said she is embarrassed to have been taken in by McDonald. "He seemed so honest."

Patty Ziomek of Livonia said she is owed \$700 by the company. She been waiting since Oct. 24 for her Mannington vinyl kitchen floor to show up.

"I wanted it in by last Thanksgiving," she said.

"I haven't yet filed in small claims court yet, but I intend to. I don't want him ripping off anybody else."

When contacted by phone, McDonald admitted, "I do have some situations. My better half just went through bypass surgery - her note was 97-percent blocked."

"I also had a couple of accounts go sour," he said.

He added, "I am trying to pull things together. I don't want to leave anyone out in the cold."

McDonald said he is putting together a program where everybody will be contacted and arrangements made to fulfill his obligations.

Plaintiffs said McDonald offered a myriad of excuses as to why he didn't perform the work that was promised.

"One time he told me his 'better half' was in the hospital," Ziomek said. "Another time he said all his guys were out deer hunting."

**■ 'We had no floor in the kitchen for weeks. It was nasty.'**

**Stephanie Quiroz**  
Farmington Hills

Diane Kilgore, 47, of Garden City is tired of the excuses. She ordered her carpet from McDonald on Jan. 15, 2000.

Kilgore said she took him to court to get her money back.

"One time he said he missed a court appearance because his girlfriend had a seizure in the parking lot," Kilgore said.

"I don't know how he gets away with this - he is a complete jerk."

She's ripped off too many people. If they have gone through half of what I have gone through - I feel sorry for them," she said.

Kilgore said her house was torn up for three months before she hired another carpet company.

Stephanie Quiroz of Farmington Hills said she and her husband paid \$5,000 up-front for kitchen flooring and carpeting.

"It was some of our first home improvements."

The couple ordered the flooring in June 2000.

She said "hundreds" of phone calls later she has only a kitchen floor to show for her trouble.

The Pergo floor they ordered was finally delivered to their garage, but no one installed it for nearly a month.

"We had no floor in the kitchen for three weeks. It was nasty. I

had a baby who was crawling," Quiroz said. McDonald set-up seven different appointments to install their carpet.

"Nobody ever came with the carpet," she said. "I called him four, five, seven times a day. It was crazy."

The couple was awarded a judgment of \$2,405 in court in Livonia. "He never paid or gave us the product," she said.

Quiroz said she chose not to follow the matter further. "A sum of \$2,500 is a lot of money, but I just had this really bad, sick feeling that I should not pursue it."

She was also told by McDonald that his wife was in the hospital.

Chris DeWitt, state Attorney General's Office director of Communications, reported that there have been nine complaints about Absolute.

"For the most part they have failed to respond to the complaints," DeWitt said. "Generally, that is not a good sign."

Court records in Livonia show that civil complaints were filed by residents or companies from Plymouth, Canton, Garden City, Redford, Westland, Livonia, Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield and Birmingham.

"This is not about money," Ziomek said. "This is my mother-in-law's house. She is a senior citizen and she is being ripped off."

McDonald said he's trying to rectify the situation.

"I'm sorry it got to this point. I have had some problems and I am trying to get things corrected," he said.



STAFF PHOTO BY BRYAN MITCHELL

**Called on the carpet:** Customers from Farmington Hills to Garden City say they have been taken to the cleaners by Absolute Carpet and Tile, a Livonia business.

## Community ed hosts home building seminar

Farmington Community Education in cooperation with Oakland Builders Institute will offer a comprehensive seminar on How To Build Your Own Home, beginning May 8 at the community school, 30415 Shawwassee.

Everything needed to plan and build a home will be covered including estimating costs, buying property, financing, building codes and permits, insurance requirements, as well as the

basics of wood frame construction, concrete, masonry, roofing and more. The instructor will also discuss new techniques and materials now entering the home building market. The seminar costs \$175 plus \$25 for two textbooks to the instructor.

Pre-registration with payment is required by Friday, May 4. Please call (248) 89-3333 Monday - Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The instructor is a licensed

builder who can answer questions about home building. Oakland Builders Institute offers builder's education including builder's pre-license seminars in more than 40 school districts in Michigan.

Oakland Builders Institute is a member of the Building Industry Association of Southeastern Michigan and the National Association of Home Builders.

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## Guns from A10

citizens to get a permit to carry a gun.

There can be little doubt that there will be an increase in the number of homicides, accidental shootings and deaths, and children finding and playing with loaded weapons. And as we as a country adapt to new national leadership, we can only hope Michigan and the U.S. will look to our "Neighbors to the North" for a realistic example of what happens when effective gun control measures are passed on a national level.

**Brian J. Benner, founding partner of the Farmington Hills based law firm of Benner and Billicki, is past chairman of the American Trial Lawyers Association's Firearms Group. He has worked closely with SOSAD, a community-based violence prevention and crisis intervention program.**

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