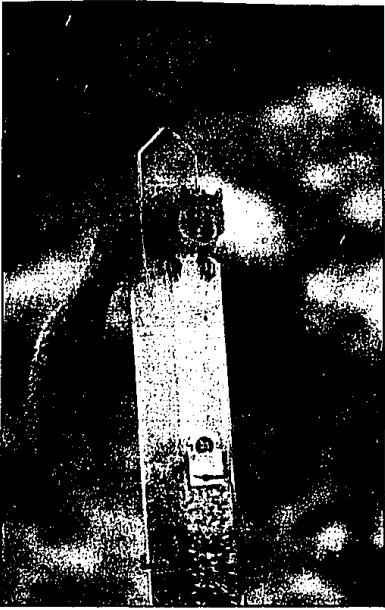


Caught in the act



Squirrelly: The Thrift family of Barrington Hills realized something was amiss with their backyard bird feeder. "We had never seen him doing it, but we knew something was going on. Bird seed was disappearing at an alarming rate. Then last week, Jennifer came home and caught the thief red-handed. Or red-pawed."



Business owner files complaint over cruise parking, noise

BY SUE BUCK STAFF WRITER sbuck@oe.homecomm.net

The owner of Magic Brain, a computer store at Thomas and Farmington Roads, lodged a formal complaint about the noise coming from the Classic Car Show held Monday nights in the city parking lot behind his store.

Owner Bill Laverty filed a police report about 6:30 p.m. July 8 complaining about what he called the annoying noise level coming from a disc jockey at the car show, which is in its fifth year. The majority of classic car owners park in the municipal lot.

Show hours are 5-9 p.m. Monday nights through the summer, beginning in May. This is the first police report filed this year.

Laverty told police that he complained to the disc jockey but the disc jockey wouldn't talk to him. He was also upset with the traffic congestion.

The show has a city permit and the disc jockey is allowed also, the police report said.

Laverty plans to attend the next council meeting to discuss the matter, according to police.

Earlier this year, Laverty came to a Farmington City Council meeting and complained about the congestion produced by the car show. He said his customers had to find parking spaces a distance away which was a nuisance because they carried heavy computers and equipment requiring repair.

The city instructed Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss to work with organizers Roger Ratkowski, owner of the Pasta Stop and owner Dennis Page, of Pages Food and Spirits, to come up with a way to reserve a nearby spot for Laverty's customers.

Ratkowski said he has special signs that he keeps in his van to reserve spaces. "We have reserved signs for the doctor's office and Magic Brain and the doctor's office hasn't even asked for them," Ratkowski said. "If we

■ Laverty told police that he complained to the disc jockey but the disc jockey wouldn't talk to him. He was also upset with the traffic congestion.

think it will be a busy night, we put them up. We put them up at 3:30 in the afternoon."

Ratkowski uses both signs and pylons. "We clip the signs right to the handicapped signs," he said.

However, on evenings when organizers don't expect as many car buffs as one night when some drivers went instead to a charitable fundraiser, Ratkowski monitors the number of spaces but doesn't put signs out.

Not happy

Goss said Ratkowski and Page have reserved spots, which are available to Laverty's customers.

"He (Laverty) is not happy, and he's not going to be happy," Goss said.

Goss said he was out Monday night and there were spots avail-

able. There's not much Ratkowski or Page can do if a car pulls into a spot, he said.

"It's difficult to reserve a spot," Goss said. "The car show has become almost a cultural thing in the city. It was there before he (Laverty) was there."

Laverty couldn't be reached for comment Wednesday.

"It took two years to tweak the music so it is not blaring into the neighborhood," Ratkowski said.

"We listen to what the community wants."

There used to be three large speakers, he said.

Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff was there Monday night and he didn't see a problem, Ratkowski said.

Lauhoff is on vacation until Monday and couldn't be reached for comment.

All of the Farmington Road businesses are suffering because of the road construction, Ratkowski said.

Colleen Hynes, a business manager for Dr. Eliezer Monge's office on Farmington Road, which is next to Magic Brain, said that it was their understanding when the organizers first announced they were con-

sidering a classic car show that the weekly show wouldn't start until after business hours.

"Our biggest concern is that they block spots during regular business hours," Hynes said. "We stop seeing patients at 5 p.m. When patients come in at 4 p.m., they have limited parking."

The municipal parking lot isn't only used by the customers which come to the businesses adjacent to it but also by customers who frequent the businesses across Farmington Road, Hynes said.

Dave Cornwell, who owns businesses on Grand River which about the city lot said he hasn't heard complaints.

"There was a miscommunication with one of our tenants about the timetable," Cornwell said. That was worked out within the first two weeks of the show, he said.

He and wife, Joyce, listen to their tenants and respond, he said. Beginning Sept. 1, when dance classes resume at Dancing Feats, those private spaces will be reserved for dance clients, he said.

"We need to support the community," Cornwell said.

'Cruis'n the Grand' takes to the road

BY SUE BUCK STAFF WRITER sbuck@oe.homecomm.net

Car owners who participate in the Classic Car Show Monday nights in the parking lot behind Page's Restaurant on Farmington Road typically showcase their cars but don't "cruise."

They will, however, take to the road for a special cruise night planned Wednesday, Aug. 14 from downtown Farmington to the Jack Roush Racing garage in Livonia.

Cruisers will meet in their usual spot at 5 p.m.

Roger Ratkowski, owner of the Pasta Stop on Farmington Road and one of the organizers of the

weekly Classic Car Show, explained the route. Car fans are welcome.

"We start the cruise west on Grand River, with a police escort to Halstead Road, turn left, south on Halstead Road, to Amrhein which is the first traffic light south of the I-96 expressway in Livonia," Ratkowski said.

"Then we go east on Amrhein to Levan Road. At this corner, we will regroup to pick up any stragglers and head south on Levan to Plymouth Road. Turn right, south on Plymouth Road."

The final leg is easy. "Cruise just past Ramchargers and turn right, north, on Market Street," he said.

The garage's address is 11851

Market.

"We have about 100 cars here," said Sue McClennan, a Roush manager. The company has a specially designed showcase.

This is the Classic Car Show's first cruise to Roush, she said. Other car groups have also visited by appointment.

Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff presented a Roush trophy to the May Cruiser of the Month in Farmington.

"You will notice that the Roush trophy is personally signed by Jack Roush himself," Ratkowski said in a newsletter. "Jack personally signs only the 'Cruis'n the Grand' trophies."

For more information call Ratkowski at (248) 477-7600.

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