



Leaving for France

Farmington area students will be taking a five week study-tour of Grenoble, France this summer. They are traveling under the auspices of the American Institute for Foreign Study. Mrs. Miriam Hall of Harrison High is chaperone for the group. From left: Sharon May-

kovich, of North Farmington; Kathy Shipice, Harrison; Kathy Halpern, Pontiac Catholic; Ann Pelletier, Doug Braddock and Charles Ross. Also on the tour are Amy Liberman, Marcella Valone, Mary Anne Gibson and Kandis Kroeger.

Auctioneer gets license revoked for misdealings

By SUSAN L. SILK
OAKLAND COUNTY First efforts by the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office, Consumer Protection Division, to enforce an obscure 1925 state statute may offer the consumer some relief from the "hard to find" traveling merchant.

As Joseph Alberstadt, licensed auctioneer of the Lionel Leasing Co., Roslyn, Pa., began his auction of office machinery and furniture before about 40 customers gathered in a Southfield motel June 27, Corp. John Hood, Southfield Police Department information officer, told him the sale had been at least temporarily halted.

The auction was closed down due to Alberstadt's failure to post a \$500 county bond and \$25 state license fee — as required by the 1925 law — and Southfield's revocation of a two-day auctioneer permit, said Hood.

Southfield decided to lift the city permit after learning of the consumer protection division's investigation, a consumer complaint and the suspected presence of stolen merchandise among those items offered at the auction, Hood said.

MRS. MARILYN APPEL, chief investigator, consumer protection division, began an investigation of the firm after learning of the experiences of three Oakland County businessmen who had attended previous Lionel Leasing auctions, she said.

In June, 1973, according to one complainant, \$1000 in machinery was purchased from Lionel and later found to be inoperative, Mrs. Appel said.

The businessman waited until September, 1973, when Lionel Leasing returned to the Southfield motel to ask that the equipment be repaired.

When the "repaired" equipment was shipped back to the businessman it still did not work, said Mrs. Appel.

"WE HAVE a responsibility to the legitimate, permanent area-businessman who stands behind his sales, and to the consumer, to investigate such operations," Mrs. Appel said.

The existence of a \$500 bond, although not as effective as when initiated in 1925, would still help to repair such injuries, Mrs. Appel explained.

Lionel Leasing's traveling auctions offer used equipment returned from leasing, new equipment purchased in volume and equipment "from other sources," said Alberstadt's assistant Max Schreiber.

All sales are "as is," there are no guarantees, Alberstadt told the customers.

However, the equipment is all in clear plastic covers, the electric machines are not plugged in.

"A CERTAIN amount of good faith is involved here," Alberstadt, told a reporter.

Lionel Leasing under its former name of Atlantic Leasing Co., came to the attention of the Better Business Bureau of Metropolitan Detroit in 1971.

Then the BBB told its members that a Warren Police check of the operation conducted in a Warren motel found a stolen electric typewriter among the list of serial numbers supplied to them.

However, by the time Warren Police had verification the auction was over and Atlantic Leasing had

left town, according to the BBB report.

Mrs. Appel conferred with Southfield Police regarding the company.

UNAWARE OF the transient merchant statute the Southfield City Clerk's office issued the company a two-day auctioneer permit for June 26, 27 on June 14, Hood said.

During the evening of June 26, after learning of Mrs. Appel's investigation, the Southfield police processed the serial numbers Lionel had supplied them. One electric adding machine was reportedly stolen from Trenton, N.J.

"We sell more than 13,000 pieces of equipment a year and we've never had this experience before," Alberstadt, who said he has been with the firm for five years, told the prospective bidders.

"But if that's the law (the required bond and license) we intend to comply with the law," Alberstadt said.

Alberstadt said that he had never before been told of the county requirements. Admittedly he would not have been told by the Southfield city clerk's office, which did not know of the statute either until the day before police

took action, said Patrick Flannery, city clerk.

THE STOLEN equipment was never found. Alberstadt said he had no way of checking if it was sold the day before since sales were not recorded by serial number, according to Miss Sheri Perelli, director of the consumer protection division.

Southfield police officials are satisfied with Alberstadt's explanation that the merchandise in question was never really stolen, according to Police Chief Milton Sackett.

Alberstadt told Hood that in compiling the hand written list of serial numbers two digits on the number in question were transposed and the item was not the stolen property sought, Sackett said.

Alberstadt, after agreeing to service the customers' equipment who complained to Mrs. Appel, was told that if he posted the county bond the sale could start.

But, as Alberstadt told his customers, most of whom lingered on hoping the sale would resume, it might have been as late as 12:30 p.m. when the sale could begin, too late for them to maintain their traveling schedule.

Engineer recruits students

A bright yellow mobile unit will be at the Tel-12 Mall in Southfield July 8-14 to recruit engineering students.

John V. Stockell, a 1974 mechanical-engineering graduate from Farmington Hills will head a group of three University of Michigan engineering students who want to communicate the story of engineering education to young people and their parents.

"High school students just aren't aware of the many fields engineering embraces," he notes.

"Further, they are very surprised to learn that, despite inflation and the energy crisis, the demand for engineers is at an all-time high—and is expected to remain that way throughout the '70s."

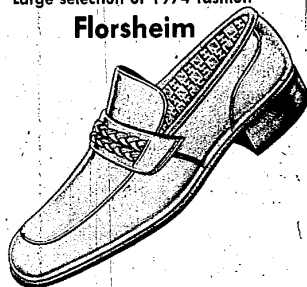
STOCKELL says that shopping malls have proved to be the best place to talk to people on "an informal, one-to-one basis," and that the highest level of interest in the

Mobile Display Unit has also been at malls.

Among the displays representing different branches of engineering are a full-scale, cutaway Wankel rotary engine; a holography exhibit, demonstrating lensless three dimensional photography; a lunar soft landing simulator, with TV screen depicting a rapid approach to the moon and a spacecraft orbit simulator with synchronized tracking map.

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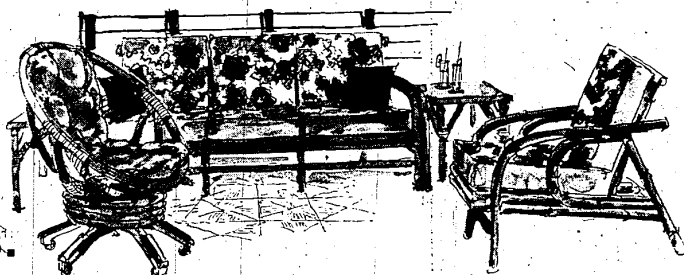
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