

A WHOPPER

Suspects nabbed in record jewelry heist

By RON GARBINSKI

The biggest armed robbery in Farmington's history netted gunmen \$180,000 in jewelry, but the suspects' opportunity to enjoy their stolen treasure was short-lived. Two gunmen, working with a getaway car driver, entered Kramar Jewelers, 3157 Grand River, last Friday evening

and escaped with more than 300 pieces of jewelry after leaving five persons tied up in the back of the store. Three suspects were arrested last week-end by Stark County Sheriffs in Canton, Ohio and detained for Farmington police on charges of receiving and possessing stolen property. Farmington police secured warrants

Wednesday morning for two of the suspects on charges of armed robbery. A warrant for the third suspect may be obtained by Thursday afternoon, police indicated.

Kramar store manager Allen Dupart and his brother, Charles, were working in the store at the time of the robbery, according to police. Allen left the store about 6:30 p.m. March 26, to get something to eat, leaving Charles alone to attend the store.

A MAN WALKED into the store shortly after Charles left and began talking with Charles about the gift silver sets located in the middle of the store. Charles came around the counter to show the man Kramar's selection of gift silver. Minutes later, Allen re-entered the store through the front door and was followed by another man. The second man was looking at pocket watches in a showcase near the main door. After inspecting the watches, he asked Allen about gift certificates. The man, then accompanied a hold-up drawing handguns and leveling them at the two clerks. The robbers directed the salesmen into the failure to renew the millage will result in reducing teaching staffs, shortening the school day, closing schools, increasing class size, cutting athletic and extra-curricular programs, reducing maintenance personnel, eliminating supervisory positions within the individual building and ultimately lowering the educational quality now offered in the Farmington School District. There are several probable actions the school board will implement by the end of this school year if Farmington residents fail to renew the four mill.

store's safe, but found nothing inside at the time. Police report that it is customary for the store to lock its valuable jewelry in the safe only after closing.

THE TWO robbers then took the keys from the victims, apparently to open the showcases. At this time, a customer walked into the store. One gunman acted as a salesman, asking what the customer would like to see.

According to police reports, the young man knew someone who worked in the store and asked if that person was around. The robber responded by pulling his gun and leading the customer to the back room where he was tied up along with the store manager.

Minutes later, a young couple who previously had purchased a wedding set at the store walked in. They were directed to the back room, forced to lie down and tied up. The victims said that after everyone was tied, at least three more minutes passed before the robbers went to the display cases containing the store's most expensive pendants, rings and other jewelry. The two men stuffed the jewelry into a pillow case and told the victims to wait five minutes before attempting to free themselves. (Continued on page 7A)



A bad joke

We think this is a damn poor excuse for a road. So does the Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce. For the uninitiated, this is Eight Mile, between Orchard Lake and Farmington Road. The Chamber is fighting delaying tactics by county officials in both Oakland and Wayne. Unfortunately, while disgruntled drivers wait for the road to be widened, the two counties road commissioners keep saying maybe. Thanks to Digger & Aerial Sales and Service, we were able to show what the counties aren't doing. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)



Farmington's Sgt. Murray Switzer (left) and Officer Peto Amato check more than \$129,000 in jewelry recovered from last weekend's Kramar Jewelry Store armed robbery. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Hard times loom if mills fail

By RON GARBINSKI

Farmington area voters have only two choices on the April 6 special millage renewal election: ballot-boxes and no. If they vote yes for the renewal of four mills of operating revenue, the Farmington School District will be better able to cope with the problems of providing quality education in a period of rising costs, school officials maintain. But if they vote no, hard times soon will fall upon the school district. Failure to renew the millage will result in reducing teaching staffs, shortening the school day, closing schools, increasing class size, cutting athletic and extra-curricular programs, reducing maintenance personnel, eliminating supervisory positions within the individual building and ultimately lowering the educational quality now offered in the Farmington School District. There are several probable actions the school board will implement by the end of this school year if Farmington residents fail to renew the four mill.

analysis

And then, only students suffer when budget reductions are made. First, programs are cut or eliminated. Then teachers are laid off and operators are cut across the board. When teachers are laid off or schools are closed, class sizes increase. More students are crammed into the classrooms and receive less attention from instructors. The two men stuffed the jewelry into a pillow case and told the victims to wait five minutes before attempting to free themselves. (Continued on page 7A)

UNDER THIS law, the district's total state-equivalent valuation (SEV) was reduced to \$6,913,160 for the 1976-77 school year because of the reduction of personal inventories. Another important factor is Section 143 of the State Aid Act. This section allows the district to recover some of the funds lost through the single business tax but it has several catches. Section 143 says that to receive any funds through the bill, the Farmington School District must levy at least the same amount of operating mills as levied for the 1975-76 school year. If the district fails to pass the four mill renewal April 6, it would cause the district to lose any funds provided under Section 143. Four mills are needed to help maintain programs at the present levels even after adjustments were made when the governor slashed state aid to the district earlier this year. The Farmington District historically has (Continued on page 7A)

Councils mulling service concepts

By STEVE BARNABY

Increased governmental bureaucracy could lead to a director of special services for the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills. In a meeting between the two city legislative bodies this week, the concept of a special services director was discussed as an alternative to the growing number of inter-city commissions being established jointly by the cities. The idea surfaced during a discussion of formation of a Farmington area arts commission. Presently, the two cities have an arts council uncontrolled by government. "It's just paying for the same services over and over again," said Hills councilman Fred Lichtman. "Let's at least have one central, working staff, instead of all these bureaucracies."

City of Farmington, Councilman Dick Tupper, warned that the Hills and the city have some special services separately. Formation of a special services director could cause some problems, he said. Farmington Hills City Attorney Terry Brennan suggested that one city formulate the special services director and the other city could contract for that office's service. He warned that the creation of a number of commissions with directors has caused empire building. "Personally, I feel these things should be staffed through the existing departments. In that way we can avoid the empire building which already exists in some departments," he said. Brennan explained that for years commissions such as the library and recreation commissions were run entirely by volunteers without city involvement. "The easy part is formulating a joint commission. The nitty-gritty part comes when establishing a staff," he said.

IF DEFEATED, the district will lose \$13 million in operating revenues. If approved, the millage renewal will add nothing to a resident's tax rate. It's a disastrous situation for a school district if revenues decrease by \$13 million, while at the same time expenses for the next school year are projected to increase by almost \$12 million, school administrators say. This year, the district's expenses totaled \$23,197,732. District Business Manager William Frank estimates expenses will exceed that amount, reaching \$23,148,294. What happens to a school system when faced with the possibility of losing \$13 million?

Go ahead: Right turn legal

Local public safety officials are hoping for a smooth adjustment to the new right-turn-on-red law taking effect today. The new state law, which should improve the movement of traffic and conserve fuel, allows motorists to make a right turn at a red light after coming to a complete stop and yielding to on-coming traffic. A left turn onto a one-way street made at a red light also is allowed under the new traffic code. "We don't foresee much of a problem resulting in Farmington Hills from the new right turn law," said Lt. Arlo Newell, head of the Hills traffic division. "In fact, I think it is a really good thing

because it will help move traffic better. The movement of traffic is a constant problem, and after all, that is the name of the game—improving the flow of traffic," he continued. BECAUSE IT may take Farmington-area motorists some time getting used to the new law, pedestrians should be careful when walking across the street, officials warn. "Only time will tell how effective this new law will be," said Farmington Public Safety Director Daniel Byrnes. "Our main concern now is that motorists may fail to yield on right turns, or they may not come to a complete stop when the light is red. "But as long as a driver is cautious of pedestrians stepping out from corners

there shouldn't be any problems," Byrnes explains. Thirty states have implemented the right-turn-on-red law, and reports from those states indicate that the movement of traffic does improve. "We're talking about standardization of a law that is used all around the country," Newell says. "The provision is not something new. It dates back a number of years and many people are familiar with it." It's just that Michigan has come around to implementing it and it should be a while before motorists adjust to the change," Newell added. Pedestrian traffic in Farmington Hills can't set up the same in many other suburban areas that are heavily populated. The city has few sidewalks where a lot of pedestrian crossings occur during the day.



While the state's new right-turn-on-red law takes effect today, local motorists should guard against making turns at Grand River-Farmington Road, one of five major intersections in the Farmington area, where the turns are prohibited. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

"BUT WHAT we must watch for when it comes to pedestrians and traffic enforcement is making sure motorists come to a complete stop before making a right turn," Newell said. "Even though it may cause a lot of frustrations at first on the part of some motorists, it will relieve a lot of congestion at most intersections," Byrnes said. "But as long as people understand that they should stop first and then turn, there shouldn't be any trouble," Byrnes continued. After all, this law is no different than having motorists stop at stop signs. They should take the same precautions now as they have when they approached stop signs. DRIVERS WILL be able to make the right-turn-on-red at most intersections in Oakland County, but there are several places in the Farmington area where the turns are prohibited. All turns on red are banned at these locations. (Continued on page 7A)

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