

Limo rides — his line of work

By Janice Brunson
Staff writer

After 11 months in business, entrepreneur John J. Mifsud Jr., 25, said Miffies Limousine Service Inc. has held its own.

He attributes the modest success to "A-1 service," which, he believes, should be expected when renting a limousine.

In Mifsud's mind, A-1 service means pampering the customer by providing personable, experienced drivers who are dressed in tuxedos and who know metro Detroit. "And cleanliness. I'm fanatical about that. And maintenance. My cars never break down," he said.

Mifsud owns a fleet of four automobiles, a standard Lincoln for customers preferring a low profile, two standard stretch-limos with all the interior extras and a wide-body stretch-limo that Mifsud says is the only one of its kind in Michigan. He is negotiating for a second wide-body.

The wide-body is a standard stretch limo but wider by a foot. It contains a TV, a stereo, crystal service, a privacy divider and an intercom.

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Jeremy Rosperski

Jeremy, 14, delivers the Observer in the Old Hamstead subdivision. He has delivered the Observer since February 1984.

The University of Detroit High School 10th grader's favorite subjects are math and French.

His hobbies are collecting baseball cards, baseball, football, soccer and listening to the radio. He is a member of St. Alexander's Youth Group, South Farmington Baseball League and Farmington Soccer Club.

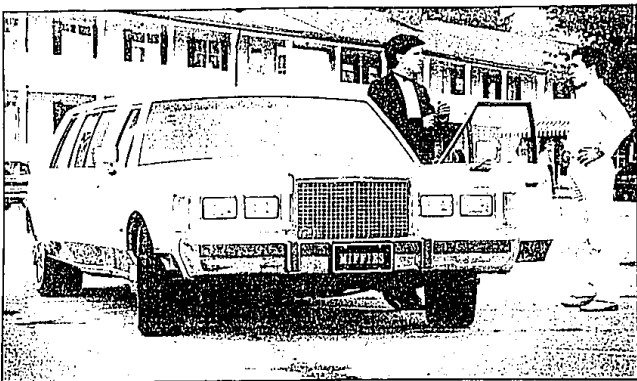
He was a team member of South Farmington Tournament Baseball Team in 1982, 1984 and 1986 and was on the All-star baseball team five times. He was voted Most Improved Player at U. of D. High School and won the Presidential Fitness Award.

Jeremy plans to go to a Big Ten College and become a baseball player or a residential builder.

Responsibility and managing money are two of the skills Jeremy feels he has acquired on his paper route.

Jeremy is the son of Lawrence and Therese Rosperski. He has one sister, Cathie, 3, and three brothers, Jason 12, Jeff, 9, and Jon, 6.

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John J. Mifsud Jr. (left) and his chief driver, Jim Macielak.

"Everything you'd expect in a limo. Yet, you'd be surprised how rare that is in this business," he said.

THE LIMOUSINE service business is highly competitive, a condition caused by operators who, Mifsud says, often are here today, gone tomorrow because of business problems or poor service.

Mifsud said he has seen industry figures showing that up to 70 percent of all limousine service operations are not properly insured in the event of an accident.

He said he could easily name over a dozen one-man operations that have gone out of business this summer. "They got into it in the first place because it looked great — easy work and good money."

They attempt to run a one-vehicle, one-driver operation, generating business by undercutting existing hourly rates, he said.

A glance at the Yellow Pages for metro Detroit would seem to support the contention. Twenty-one limousine companies are listed.

Mifsud identified another industry problem — owners in the business strictly for tax advantages. He said write-offs for vehicle depreciation, leasing services and public relations are very appealing to people looking for write-offs. He contends they have little or no interest in quality service.

MIFFIES INC. is on the Farmington Hills-Livonia border at Eight Mile and Merriman. He is purchasing storefront property in Farmington Hills where he plans to expand the business. In addition to offering limousine service, he will sell the vehicles.

Mifsud's rental rates range from \$40 to \$60 an hour. Corporate discounts and coupon rates are offered. There's a flat rate of \$40 for airport delivery or pick-up. Customers are not charged for the time it takes to get to them, providing they're less than one hour away. After the first hour, an hourly rate is charged.

Mifsud is not Mifsud's first business. Five years ago, he, a brother and a sister bought Miffies Forklift Industries in Detroit from their father. Mifsud left the business to start the limousine service last year.

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