

police/fire calls

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week:

HAIR BURNED

A 13-year-old Farmington Hills girl's hair was burned when she was hit in the head with fireworks outside Bonaventure Roller Skating Center, 24045 Haledale, June 17.

A 12-year-old Farmington Hills girl also was hit by fireworks, thrown from a car cruising the lot at 11:10 p.m.

Three male teens occupied the car, according to a Farmington Hills police report.

GRASS FIRES

Since Friday, Farmington Hills firefighters have extinguished at least a dozen grass or brush fires in all parts of the city. None caused a significant dollar loss.

The high number is related to dry ground conditions caused by lack of rain.

"The fires not only tax our system, but also pose a threat to nearby structures," said Deputy Chief Peter Baldwin of the Farmington Hills Fire Department.

Typically, the fires have been caused by people tossing smoking materials from moving vehicles.

CLOTHING RECOVERED

A 42-year-old Detroit woman faces a felony charge in connection with the theft of \$600 worth of new clothing from Lehmman's, 31085 Orchard Lake Road.

Arraigned Tuesday before District Judge Michael Hand of Farmington, the woman stood mute to one count of receiving and concealing stolen property over \$100. An innocent plea was entered in her behalf.

The woman was remanded to the Oakland County Jail in lieu of bond pending her positive identification. She faces a penalty of up to five years in prison and a \$2,500 fine if convicted.

She and a 33-year-old Detroit woman were arrested during a traffic stop on Orchard Lake Road at Firwood Sunday afternoon. The clothing, still containing price tags, was found in their car, said detective David Lee of the Farmington Hills Police Department.

The second woman faces arraignment on the same charge once medical treatment she is receiving at the Oakland County Jail is completed, Lee said.

Both women face charges in connection with an attempted escape from custody at the 47th District Court in Farmington. Four wires were found cut on their cell door. Af-

ter that discovery, the women were taken to the Farmington Hills Jail and searched by a female officer. A wirecutter found on the floor in one of their cells is believed to have been dropped by the defendant occupying that cell, Lee said.

CAR FIRE

Gas poured into the carburetor of a car ignited June 18, causing a fire that left \$1,500 in damage to the vehicle, according to a Farmington Department of Public Safety report. The car had run out of gasoline on Orchard Lake Road, north of Astor, before the incident occurred shortly after 8:30 p.m.

GARAGE FIRE

Damage was estimated at \$2,200 when a garage caught fire at a house on Glenarden Monday night. The fire started at 7:50 p.m. when gasoline vapors used to burn debris in a driveway crack ignited a garage wall. Damage was limited to the wall. Firefighters extinguished the

fire, according to a Farmington Hills Fire Department report.

THEFTS REPORTED

A fox coat and camera equipment valued at \$4,300 were reported stolen from a house on Statter Lane between Feb. 28 and June 13.

Tools valued at \$750 were reported stolen from a garage on Stratford Court June 12-16.

Tables and chairs valued at \$1,525 were reported stolen from Christ Community Church, 30333 10 Mile, June 12-19.

Two bicycles valued at \$450 were reported stolen from a storage cage at Gateway Apartments June 12-19. Jewelry, china, sterling silver, clothing, linens, figurines and a quilt valued at \$17,150 were reported stolen from Hunters Ridge Apartments June 17.

A camera and snack food money were reported stolen from Auto Designs, 23751 Research Drive, June 17-18.

Grass fire ignites barrier debate

By Bob Sklar
staff writer

Joan Barber is hopping mad about a grass fire along I-275 that came within 20 feet of an old chicken shed on her property Tuesday afternoon.

"I'm not at all happy," said Barber, who lives in a 154-year-old house on Nine Mile, 130 feet from the freeway roadbed. Her house is south of the shed.

"The fire burned through a wire gauge fence and scorched some of the evergreen trees I'm growing to block my view of I-275 and to dilute fumes and muffle noise from the freeway," Barber said.

A discarded cigarette is suspected of starting the half-acre fire, reported about 3:30 p.m. on the northbound shoulder of I-275, just north of Nine Mile. The fire was put out within 15 minutes, Farmington Hills Fire Marshal Stephen Hume said.

"With no rain, everything is drying out," Hume said. "A tossed cigarette was enough to ignite the grass."

BARBER TRANSPLANTED the evergreens to the west side of her property in 1977 because the Michigan Department of Transportation refused to put up a concrete barrier. "I'm not getting anywhere in getting better protection from the highway department," she said.

She wants a concrete or brick barrier "as tall as they'll build it." She envisions something similar to what divides homes in Canton from I-275 or homes in Flint from I-475.

Barber remembers a 1971 grass fire on I-275 that didn't slow until it reached unwowed areas 10 feet from her shed. And she remembers a 1985 incident when a car carrier crashed through the I-275 guardrail, skidded and fell down an embankment to the edge of the divider fence, 50 feet from her house.

Barber and her husband, Bob, live in a Greek Revival house built in 1834 by Stephen Yerkes Rodgers. Bob is a distant cousin of Rodgers, who came from the Finger Lakes area of Romulus, N.Y.

"I have a home that was here before the auto

was invented and Michigan became a state," Joan said.

"The state made much of centennial homes during its bicentennial. But I'm not getting any satisfaction."

"We were here first."

STATE HIGHWAY engineers say it's unlikely Barber will realize her dream of a concrete or brick barrier because her situation doesn't meet federal criteria that require four houses to be affected.

According to highway engineers, a wall 1,000 feet long would be needed to block noise from the Barber house. It could cost as much as \$250,000. A mile-long noise barrier would top \$500,000.

In 1986, the state rejected a city request for noise barriers along I-275 between Eight Mile and a point midway between Nine Mile and 10 Mile.

Barber, who calls state cost figures outrageous, sees Tuesday's grass fire reinforcing her bid for a divider wall. As she put it, "I haven't given up."

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