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Employees' actions lead to arrests



Thanks to the quick thinking of two Play It Again Sports employees who spotted stolen property, police were able to step in and nab two 19-year-olds who later confessed to stealing hockey equipment and golf clubs.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Police are crediting a pair of sporting goods employees for a heads-up play in spotting stolen property.

Their actions led Farmington Hills police to arrest two 19-year-olds, who confessed to stealing hockey equipment and golf clubs among other items after breaking into cars in a Novi neighborhood.

Clerks at Play It Again Sports on Orchard Lake in Farmington Hills became suspicious when the teens later tried to sell some of the stolen hockey and golf equipment Dec. 6. They managed to delay the seller until police arrived.

The store specializes in resale athletic equipment and often buys used gear from customers.

"They tag-teamed the customer very well," said Mark Wolf, Play It Again Sports manager. "They kept going back

STOLEN PROPERTY

and forth getting appraisals.

"We train all of our employees and they followed the manual to the T," Eric Eckler said he and a co-worker—who didn't want to be identified—

Please see **STOLEN**, A9

Murdered prof is remembered

BY TIM SMITH
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Wayne State University Professor Andrzej Olbrot usually had the answer for any question directed at him in life. And it didn't matter whether queries were about his chosen field, engineering, or not.

"His head was like a computer," said his former wife, Henryka Olbrot. "Sports, music, books, if you give the question he'd give the answer."

Yet, no one could immediately explain why a 48-year-old graduate student burst into his classroom at Old Main at about 7:20 p.m. Thursday and shot the 52-year-old electrical engineering professor to death. The victim, shot several times, was giving a final examination to 15 students when the shooting occurred.

Friday afternoon, members of Olbrot's family struggled with the irony of his life and death at their Farmington Hills home.

"I have no clue why," said his 17-

year-old son, Wojciech, a senior at Harrison High School. "He didn't go out and start trouble for anybody. He just worked hard to make his life and our life as good as could be."

There were indications that their life might be getting better, too. Wojciech's parents, the murder victim and Henryka, who divorced in 1993 after a 21-year marriage, were at least considering getting their family together again.

The couple also have a second surviving son, Pawel, 26. He sadly described the murder of his father as being "quite a shock."

Henryka Olbrot's eyes welled up as she mentioned her mother, Holorita Zakrzewska of Warsaw, Poland — whom she described as one of Andrzej's favorite people, even after their divorce.

"Whenever he went back to Poland after the divorce, he'd bring her flowers and gifts ... She (Holorita) always was thinking he'd come back to us" following Andrzej's subsequent second

Please see **MURDER**, A8



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL STELZER

Mourning: Henryka Olbrot, Andrzej Olbrot's former wife, and their son, Wojciech, 17, a senior at Harrison, talk about the Wayne State University professor who was murdered while teaching Thursday night.

THE WEEK AHEAD

Help: The Salvation Army is in need of volunteer bell-ringers to stand outside stores in the Farmington Hills area Mondays-Saturdays. Two-hour time slots are available. Call 477-1153.

SUNDAY

Don't forget: The Holiday Art Fair continues 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. today in Building H on the Oakland Community Campus. The fair is brought to you by the Michigan Guild of Artists and Artists, the same folks who bring you the summer Ann Arbor Art Fair.

MONDAY

Planning: The Farmington Planning Commission will discuss a proposal by Jack Demmer Ford for a used car lot, as well as plans for the Sunny Day Care Center, at 8 p.m. in city council chambers, 23600 Liberty.

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Early childhood recommendations to be reviewed on Tuesday

BY TIM SMITH
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Home-based visits from teachers, to teach babies and toddlers up to age 3, are among an early childhood study committee's formal recommendations to the Farmington Board of Education.

The report will be detailed during Tuesday's 7:30 p.m. board meeting, by Alameda Early Childhood Center principal Mary Lou Somerville. The meeting is scheduled for the Lewis Schulman Administrative Center, on Shilawassee.

Somerville said the committee is recommending the adoption of "a new culture that includes preschool, and not just K-12. And I'm talking about from birth."

The catalyst for that "mindset" change is new brain research about how children learn from birth to age 3.

"There are windows of opportunity (for learning growth) between ages zero and 3," Somerville said. "We recognize this district doesn't have a lot available for children" in that age bracket.

If the board approves the recommendations.

Please see **EARLY**, A7

Rudy Flyer



Gary Galvin

Transformation: Gary Galvin, alias the "Rudy Flyer," is the scarf-waving wild and woolly mascot for the University of Dayton, whose team is aptly nicknamed The Flyers.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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When Orville and Wilbur Wright invented their flying machine, little did they know they'd spawned Gary Galvin's alter-ego.

The Farmington Hills native's "Rudy Flyer" persona is a byproduct of the Wrights' concoction. On game night, the University of Dayton senior transforms into a scarf-waving wild and woolly mascot for his school, aptly nicknamed The Flyers.

With goggles and earflaps, Rudy Flyer's setup depicts something of a World War I barnstorming air-fighter pilot. Last season — Galvin's first as a mascot — Rudy had been resurrected in the form of a \$5,000 high-tech costume that veered from a goofy grin to a scowling growl.

"It's more of a Chuck Yeager look. He's not a little weenie anymore," said Megan McCallister, U. Dayton assistant athletic director. Galvin, who played football and lacrosse at Detroit Catholic Central High in Redford, revels in

whipping collegiate crowds into a frenzy. He's a prominent feature at University of Dayton basketball games in the Arena and other athletic events.

Rudy's identity is concealed from the Flyer faithful, although his friends are in on the secret. They acknowledge him by dispensing less-than-discreet high-fives to him at contests.

Rudy is also a magnet for children, who follow him from atop their dad's shoulders or latch onto

UNMASKING the mascot

Please see **MASCOT**, A8

Walgreens eyes site

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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A developer for a national drugstore chain submitted plans to build an outlet on 10 Mile and Orchard Lake in Farmington Hills.

If the site plan is approved, construction for a new Walgreens could start in the spring on the southeastern corner. Wendy's and Big Boy restaurants as well as a bike shop would be leveled to make room for the new structure, a Farmington Hills city official said.

Farmington Hills Planning Commission is expected to review site plans at its Dec. 18 meeting.

"Their proposal is basically to tear down and build a Walgreens," said Ed Gardiner, Hills city planner.

A retail drugstore fits in with existing property uses. The land is zoned for general business use.

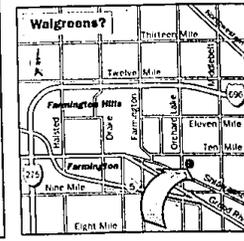
Though the outlet would be the first Walgreens in Farmington Hills, the Illinois-based chain will go head-to-head with a Rite-Aid outlet in the Orchard-10 Plaza across the street.

Rite Aid bought out the independently-owned Orchard Drugs two years ago. "I think they all — Arbor, Rite Aid and Walgreens — kind of look for the same criteria. That's why you see that," said Andrea Enricola of GNI Developments in Rockford, Ill., which handles Walgreens expansion projects.

"We compete with them in a number of different areas," added Yvette Anne Venable, Walgreens communication specialist.

However, the Walgreens spokeswoman termed plans for the proposed Farmington Hills site as "premature." The chain usually confirms sites after a lease has been signed with the develop-

Please see **STORE**, A9



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