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scams are a danger.

"There is a lot of cash changing hands," she said. "That's why we teach our people to talk through the exchange and not get complacent."

Cathy Hoffman, who works at the Metro Bank main office on Grand River and Halsted, said the increase in cash traffic can spell trouble for banks.

"We have a Telecheck system, but we have restrictions," she said. "It's usually a new account where someone opens it and then writes several checks."

Hoffman said attending the "Crime Watch" seminar also gave her an appreciation for what types of problems merchants face.

And police officers had some horror stories to tell: Professional shoplifters who wore clothing that would allow them to carry out a small stock room, clothes that "fall" store metal detectors (you know, the ones that pick up the special plastic and metal tags), grifters who fool cashiers into taking small bills and giving big

change, and thieves who steal the goods from one store and then return them for cash at another.

But prevention is the key word to keep merchants in good cheer. Here are some ideas to help prevent retail crime:

- If shoplifters are favoring a certain item, move it to where it can be better observed or put it into a case.
- Let it be known that you have security.
- Keep front windows clear enough that outsiders can see into the store to help prevent holdups.
- Have a policy for apprehending shoplifters and make sure employees know what it is.
- Check two forms of identification, preferably a driver's license and credit card. State ID cards are not preferred and names should match up with the first letter of the driver's license number.
- Make sure the credit card is signed on the back and the name matches up with that on the driver's license.

Quiet ordinance stirs loud protests

By BILL COUTANT STAFF WRITER

A Farmington Hills ordinance designed to make sure residents have some peace and quiet has stirred up a lot of noise — much of it directed at city officials.

Council members on Nov. 16 adopted a revised version of the ordinance, which had some residents befuddled until City Attorney John Donohue explained that without the change, there was little police could do to stop dirt bike enthusiasts from disturbing neighbors.

"The only thing we're taking out (of the ordinance) is the requirement that it be equipped with a muffler," Donohue said.

Several residents from a subdivision south of Nine Mile near Middlebelt said a neighbor and his children often rode their dirt bikes on their property last summer, making so much noise that the residents could not hear each

■ 'Police have been called so many times to this area, I feel like we're calling wolf.'

Cecile Chitwood

other in their own living rooms.

"This has been a problem we've suffered through the whole summer," said Kelly McLaughlin.

Farmington Hills Police have not been strangers to the neighborhood, but that hasn't helped, said Cecile Chitwood.

"Police have been called so many times to this area, I feel like we're calling wolf," she said.

Although an officer doesn't have to be present where the noisy bikes unwind, the law would be unenforceable as written before the council took action, Donohue said.

"I've had your complaint sitting on my desk all this time," he

said. "The way it's written, it couldn't be enforced."

Donohue said the ordinance had required dirt bikes and off-road vehicles to have mufflers that would make them as quiet as passenger cars. Since even on-road motorcycles can't be made that quiet, no court could enforce such a law, he said.

The amended ordinance prohibits motorcycles from making "excessive noise" within the city, something a judge would have to decide based upon police reports and the nature of the complaint.

Not having a more specific standard troubled some residents.

Resident Mark Hanson compared not having a specific noise level in the ordinance to not having a specific speed limit.

"What's too fast for whom?" he said. "It shouldn't be a matter of interpretation."

Others asked why excessive motorcycle noise is not considered "disturbing the peace." Donohue said motorcycles come under their own specific code.

City Manager William Costick said he will meet with residents, including the neighbor they complained about, and try to settle the problem before next summer. But even with the new ordinance, some were skeptical.

"For some reason, I have a horrible feeling this is going to backfire," Chitwood said.

Election from page 1A

five out of the next six years.

In an October memo to trustee Helen Ditzhazy, chairman of the Board of Education Finance Committee, Barrett said the administration was concerned with "logistical problems" because there are now double the precincts.

"We are concerned about potential 'burn out' of our citizen support base if we ask them to undertake sizable millage campaign efforts year after year," Barrett said.

"We are also concerned about the district's image if it appears to voters that we are constantly asking for 'more money' year after

year," he said. "Finally, in this new era of financial uncertainty, we believe it is our responsibility to use every means at our disposal to reduce financial variables, including those associated with annual millage votes, some of which could be competing for voters' understanding with other future school finance reform ballot campaigns."

School board member Cathy Webb proposed community discussion meetings as well as cablecast programs to educate voters.

"We're being very straightforward with this," Webb said. "There is no hidden agenda."

Police association helps needy

The Farmington Hills local of the Police Officers Association will be helping 10 local families enjoy a turkey dinner with all the trimmings.

Jeff Anderson, public relations officer with the Farmington Hills POA, said officers are giving the food through the Salvation Army to families who otherwise would not be able to afford such a holiday feast.

The POA will also deliver


Christmas gifts to 10 needy families Dec. 21. It will be the third year for the Christmas gift giving.

Anderson said there will be a wrapping party Dec. 11 at the Farmington Hills Police station.

"If we did not provide these Christmas presents, these families wouldn't have one," Anderson said.

The gifts will include both practical items, such as winter clothing, and toys for the kids.

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Holiday Depression

Coping with a Loss During the Holidays

—presented by—

Mary MacGregor
Director of Community Education, Angela Hospice Home Care

and


Amy Hernandez, B.S.N., R.N.C.
St. Mary Hospital Day Treatment Program

Do you get the "holiday blues?" You're not alone. At this busy time of year, a loss, whether it be the death of a loved one, a job, divorce, change of health, retirement, or change in body, often has a greater effect on our lives. Join these two health care professionals as they discuss coping mechanisms and strategies for dealing with a loss during the holiday season.

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