

# Inmates prepare braille U-M maps

Incoming students have a difficult enough time finding their way around the University of Michigan campus. For blind students, a new college environment presents an even greater challenge.

Thanks to the efforts of the Ann Arbor Lion's Club and the Braille Transcribing Unit at Jackson State Prison, blind students will now have an easier time getting the "feel" of the U-M campus.

The two groups Thursday donated 20 braille maps of the university for use by blind students.

The maps, coded in braille and containing three-dimensional reliefs of roads, sidewalks and buildings throughout the entire 2,579-acre Ann Arbor campus, were produced by the Braille Transcribing Unit at Jackson State Prison.

"The maps which are being presented to the university are believed to be the most comprehensive and largest braille maps in the world," said Albert Watson, program manager of Disabled Student Services on campus. Watson notes there are 21 visually impaired students currently enrolled

at the U-M's Ann Arbor campus, 13 of them totally sightless. He says the maps will be loaned to these students for the duration of their college careers, to be returned for use by other blind students.

The maps are the work of Lloyd Tisi, an inmate of Jackson State Prison who has been working in the braille unit since 1968. He was assisted by another inmate, Anthony Elsworth.

Tisi said it took about three and a half months to complete the maps, with the inmates first using topographical maps to fashion a three-dimensional model of the entire campus out of illustration board. Tisi and Elsworth then used this model as a mold for the final maps, which are made of a durable rubber-base synthetic material.

Tisi noted that, in addition to streets and buildings, the maps note such details as curb cuts, ramps, steps and the presence of elevators in buildings.

# Recovered property waiting for owners

By JOE MARTUCCI

Area residents who've had their homes broken into may find the stolen items sitting in the property room of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department.

Oakland County Sheriff Johannes Spreen Friday urged victims of breaking and enterings to examine property confiscated by police during a major fencing operation begun on Jan. 1 of this year.

Twenty-one persons have already been arrested and the number could climb as high as 51 if more of the stolen merchandise is identified, Spreen said.

The fencing operation, believed to be the first of its kind in Michigan, was set up by undercover officers in a Waterford Township television repair shop.

The purpose of the operation was to purchase stolen property from thieves and burglars while undercover officers posed as a "fence"—a person who buys and sells stolen merchandise.

The project, undertaken by the sheriff's department and federal Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents, was named "Operation Chain Link."

Thieves were photographed by special video equipment and in some cases officers were able to get the thieves to reveal where they had stolen the property.

DET. SGT. Gregory Putman of the sheriff's department, who was credited with masterminding the operation, said efforts will be made to introduce

the video footage as evidence in court.

Thousands of dollars worth of the recovered stolen property has not been identified and will have to be auctioned unless claimed by the owners. Many of the stolen goods were purchased for about a month of their value, the sheriff said.

The stolen goods include a Chevrolet van, several rifles and handguns, television sets, bicycles, stereo equipment, tools, tires, chain saws, CB radios and miscellaneous other items.

Perhaps the most unusual item was a piece of radio equipment stolen from a patrol boat belonging to the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Dept.

Spreen said the fencing operation was modeled after other similar operations in larger cities, including Washington D.C., but that it was done on a smaller scale.

One alleged thief, while selling stolen merchandise to an undercover sheriff's deputy, said, "You know they did a deal like this in Washington where the police were fences."

About 10 undercover officers participated in the operation. Sgt. Putman said not one person came into the shop during the operation to have a television set repaired.

Spreen would not comment when asked if other undercover fencing operations are underway in Oakland County.

He encouraged citizens to participate in Operation Identification programs so that owners of stolen merchandise can be located and thieves successfully prosecuted.

# SBT relief asked for small firms

Relief for small, lower profit business under Michigan's single business tax has been proposed by two Oakland County commissioners.

A resolution addressed to the state legislature was offered by Commissioners Robert McConnell (R-Farmington Hills) and Robert Gorsline (R-Milford) and routinely referred to the general government committee.

The resolution asks the state senate finance committee to "give consideration to incentives for growth of labor-intensive industry in Michigan. Such credit could be based on the increased number of persons employed or other payroll factors

after eliminating the impact of inflation."

It asks the legislature to "enact a bill which would provide revenue stability, taxation based upon ability to pay and simplicity in the tax forms."

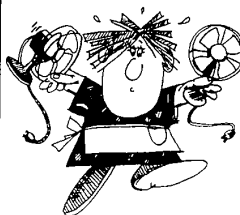
McConnell said the current SBT, a value-added tax at the rate of 2.35 per cent, had the effect of shifting the tax burden from capital-intensive firms (businesses with a high amount of invested capital per worker) and highly profitable businesses to "professionals, less profitable firms and unincorporated businesses dependent upon intensive labor."

Thursday, May 5, 1977

(WbT.S.F. RoSa)

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