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*Profile of a cop*

# Cranston tells his story

BY LOUISE OKRUTSKY

It would have made a boring night at the movies.

Not a shot was fired. None found a body stabbed away in an alley.

The chase wasn't choreographed by Sam Peckinpah to include nerve-shattering, bone-wrenching turns through the streets.

In fact, Officer Ray Cranston of the Farmington Hills Police Traffic Bureau likes to avoid careening through the streets.

I tell people that the car does 110 mph I don't," he said. "Nothing is worth dying that fast."

Cranston, 29, is a four-year veteran of the department. He turned to police work

after a stint as an Oakland County Health Department representative, because he wanted a job with some action in it.

He applied to the township police on the advice of a counselor at Michigan State University's department of police administration.

I got there at 4:30 the last afternoon that they were taking applications. They got the application warm from my hot little hands the next morning," he remembers.

**AFTER PASSING** written and oral examinations Cranston was admitted to the force.

He usually drives the night shift, between 6 p.m. and midnight.

It's a high activity period. If you're here you might as well be busy," he says.

Cruising through Farmington Hills Cranston encounters speeding motorists late-watching residents and keeps an eye on the area's "dummy spots."

Dummy spots are places where people do dumb things," he explains as he pulls out a stolen parking lot. "Dumb things like leaving liquor in a car."

He checks as he watches the parking lot clear. It's faded illumination," he explains.

Intimidation also works with speeders and potential lead fish.

Spotting a sedan busily cruising down the freeway, pushing the speed limit on a

road recently cleared of ice, Cranston arches drives alongside the offending vehicle.

The other car slows to a more sedate speed until the police car is half as up the exit ramp. Then it resumes its old speed.

Setting into what promises to be a slow night, Cranston flicks on the dash-mounted radar which reads the speeds of drivers ahead of the police car.

**THE DEVICE** will on occasion try to read the speeds of all the cars on the freeway at the same time as the patrol car drives alongside it on Fulson.

Once in a while, a low flying plane will outpace the device, and it will try to read the speed of the plane.

Drawing down Middle Belt, the system registers the speed of a car that is doing 30 in a 40 mph zone.

As the driver spots the patrol car he slows down.

It reads the radar unit. 48, 45, it blinks out in digits.

It reads as if it's far away to the passing motorist who is probably sure he's beat the system without knowing that the unit has a 200-foot range.

Although that driver avoided a ticket, Cranston does stop the owner of a new Pinto who ran a red light on Eight Mile and Grand River.

He emerges from the patrol car wearing his blue helmet that makes the tail

(Continued on page 11A)

Visit with Santa at the **VILLAGE MALL** in Farmington Friday 5-8 p.m. Saturday 2-4 p.m. • 5-8 p.m. Have your picture taken with Santa.

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Ray Cranston of the Farmington Hills Police Traffic Bureau spends the end of his shift catching up on the voluminous paper work that accompanies his job. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

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