

Hines Park lures distant kids

'It's kind of like a safety valve for southeast Michigan. The kids can go out there and and somewhat legally blow off steam.'

**—Lt. Thomas Harrett,
Wayne County Sheriff's Department**

It's a long ride from Birmingham to Edward Hines Drive but police say the distance doesn't deter young revelers. In recent years the 17.5 mile park in western Wayne County has become a sort of mecca for teens and young adults looking for drugs, pickups or just something to do. This year, the nature center appears to be the main hang out area. Oakland County is well represented there, according to the Wayne County Sheriff's Department which patrols the park.

"It's a kind of safety valve for southeast Michigan," said Lt. Thomas Harrett, chief of the park detail. "Quite a few are coming from a 50-mile radius of the park, places like Birmingham or Bloomfield Hills. The kids can go out

there and somewhat legally blow off steam. We only get involved when things get out of hand."

Things are getting out of hand more this year, though, Harrett acknowledged.

"Large amounts of marijuana are being used by all ages out there, but so far we haven't seen much of the hard drugs or the chemicals," said Harrett.

to be part of it. They grew up around there, they tend to think of it as their neighborhood park," said Harrett.

Harrett said heavy traffic complicated by the intoxication of motorists has created a problem of car accidents. Motorcyclists struck by automobiles have been fairly commonplace this year, Harrett said it's sometimes tough to determine whether it was the cyclist or the motorists' intoxication that caused the accident.

Speaking of the cyclists, Harrett said "it smarts a bit when they bounce off the pavement the first couple of times."

Continuing efforts to beef up the number of sheriffs assigned to patrol the park have so far been unproductive, said Harrett, who's attended three meetings of the Hines Park Task Force since assuming control of Hines park in January.

Harrett, who said progress of the task force has been slow, admits to "a little impatience" with the group, although he's optimistic that in the long run, efforts will pay off.

"It all boils down to getting the dollars. Without the dollars, you're not going to have horse patrols or mini-stations or more deputies or any of the other things we've been talking about," he said.

Harrett said heavy use of the park by people who travel a long way to get there is tied closely to intensive police crackdowns in other public parks.

"In Detroit, they had to close down Bellecourt Park after the problems they had there a couple of years ago, but so far Hines is still open, you can still go there and drink beer," he said.

College offers RV classes

Schoolcraft College will offer an introductory course on recreational vehicles for six Tuesdays, beginning June 13.

Designed for new owners of camping and travel trailers, pickup campers, motor homes and other camping vehicles, the course will help people get better acquainted with their vehicles.

Instructor Ernie Hickman, a well-known writer and lecturer on RVs, will help participants learn new skills on June 13, 20 and 27. The class will not

meet July 4, when class members can try out their new equipment. Campers then report back for July 11, 18 and 25 sessions to discuss their experiences.

Registration for families is \$25; \$20 for individuals.

The class will meet in room T-220 of the Applied Science Building near the north parking lot.

Registration or further information available by calling 591-6400, ext. 409. Schoolcraft College is at 18600 Haggerty, Livonia.

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