Shoplifting stings retailers and other shoppers

By JACKIE KLEIN

Millions of dollars leave Southfield stores from late November through December each year, but not in

armored cars.

That's the value of merchandise ripped off by the sick, the needy and the greedy. An estimated one of 10 customers are shoplitters, according to Southfield police. As much as 20 per cent of all merchandise goes this route.

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Shoplitting is up 12 per cent the first inne months of this year compared to the same 1977 period, police statistics show. Best defense against the crime is for store personnel to be observant and stay with the customer, especially if he or she appears suspicious, according to members of Southfield's Crime Prevention Bureau.

Merchants are advised by police to be wary of customers in unseasonal colobes, carrying unlatched unbrellas or boxes from other stores or crouching behind counters.

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The term "shoplifting" actually refers to the crime of larreny in a building, a four-year felony. Merchants and employees can make citizen arrests and seek warrants in felony cases if they've seen the crime committed.

ony cases it they be sometime, if the offender pleads guilty to a lesser charge than larceny in a building, the case can be disposed of as a shop-litting misdemeanor in district court.

SHOPLIFTING is an intriguing phenomenon more constant and predictable than most violations, said 48th District Court Judge Norman Feder. Yet the offense has long been a thorn in the sides of law enforcement offi-

Police contend shoplifting is less ommon in states where all offenders

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straite, which encompasses the western portion of West Bloomfield
and the northwest section of Farmington Hills.
The results reveal
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are apprehended and prosecuted. If pity is shown to the elderly, pregnat and impoversisted, the larceny rate is higher. Emotional factors influence instances of the pitch of

by internal and external stimuli and the turill of getting something for nothing." Felonious intent may include carrying stolen goods from one department to the other, not necessarily out respectively one of the control of the other, not necessarily out the control of the con

MOST OFFENDERS, according to Dale Chrysler, probation director for the 46th District Court in Southfield, are upper or middle class white women who can well afford the items

women who can wen about the remo-they steal.

Shoplifting is a cross-cultural, social phenomenon from which Southfield is in no way spared, Chrysler said. The city is a shopping community which fosters a high percentage of larceny, he said.

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In any event, shoplifting is a hole in the pockets of consumers who pay for what the retailer loses.

"Sticky Fingers" snatches more than candy bars and \$2 tubes of lip-

Students make gains

ing seventh graders of 1978 outscored the 1977

ing seventh graders of 1978 outscored the 1977 entering seventh graders in terms of their attainment of the reading and math objectives measured through the Michigan Educational Assessment Programs show that district-wide, the percentage of entering fourth graders achieving 75-100 per cent of the reading objectives has shown an increase from 61.8 per cent to 67. per cent of the math objectives also has increased from 77.1 per cent of the math objectives also has increased from 77.1 per cent this year.

*While 76.1 per cent of the entering seventh graders attaining 75-100 per cent of the math objectives also has increased from 77.1 per cent of the math objectives also has increased from 77.1 per cent this year.

m assessment tests

stick from enticing store counters. "Sticky Fingers" looks like any customer including the little old lady with the ever-ready change purse.

How does a shopiliter bilk a store-owner of merchandise valued between \$2 and \$3,000 in one looting spree? How does he or she get away with expensive watches, jewelly, leather and store the store of th

ONE SHOPPER put a special cage under her maternity top to appear pregnant. Another carried a "booster" shopping bag filled with old, wrinkled bags, the better to stock with merchandise.

Another woman in the film wore a girdle, three or four sizes too large. She covered that with a loose dress and coat to slip merchandise under when she ran out of girdle room.

when she ran out of girdle room.

A successful technique is called "crotching" in "Sitely Fingers" jargon. That means placing merchandise between the thighs. Dressing rooms are common areas to conceal stolen goods. An employee counting garments taken into the rooms must be one step ahead of the shoplifter.

Other devices include ticket switch-

ing, but most merchants have solved that problem with adhesive price tags that tear apart. Employees are advised to waster. Employees are advised to waster. Employees and at the problem and to be courteous and attentive to potential shopliffers to deter them from lifting merchandise. The fifting suggests merchants avoid high piles of suggests merchants avoid high piles of suggests merchants avoid high piles of under.

The use of mirrors in stores and television cameras take away the shoplifter's prime requirement—

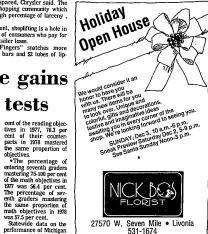
Trained shopping center personnel are the only ones in the state licensed to make misdemeanor arrests in sus-pected shoplifting cases. Security guards are retained to protect prop-erty and prevent crime. Retailers call

We'll teach you

When a merchant decides to prose When a merchant decides to prose-cute a suspect for larceny, he must notify Southfield police. But police say security personnel in stores and park-ing lots won't keep the pros and semi-pros from stealing. It's the merchant's responsibility to train employees to keep an eye on customers and see that suspects are prosecuted after all ele-ments of the crime have been obtained.

"Sticky Fingers" is one of an army of shoplifters. One teenager stole a book on how to steal by Abbie Hoff-man. An amputee stole \$300 worth of merchandise and stuffed it in his empty trouser leg.











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