

Determined girl foils 'gassnatcher'

By JUDITH BERNIE

Gas snatching may be the area's fastest growing crime. As gasoline prices rise and more gas stations turn to self-service, West Bloomfield Police are getting "an awful, awful lot" of calls to head off gas thieves, reports Police Sgt. Robert Scott.

Frustrated by the audacity of one gas grabber, a female service station manager attempted to capture him herself.

Andrea Dalrymple, 23, is in charge of the self-serve Total station at Maple and Haggerty on the West Bloomfield-Walled Lake border.

Last Friday, the Birmingham resident ran into a problem.

A PICKUP truck pulled into the station and the driver started to fill up, when Ms. Dalrymple noticed he had no rear license plate.

She told the driver, who had already rung up \$13 worth of gas, it was station policy he would have to pay first.

Although he assured her he was good for the money, she stood next to him while he completed his \$18 fill-up. Then he hopped into the truck cab, pretended to look for his money, slammed the cab door shut and prepared to leave, recalls Ms. Dalrymple.

A woman was in the passenger seat. Ms. Dalrymple leaped into the open back of the truck as he attempted his get away. But that didn't stop him. He sped away at an estimated 50 mph, weaving from side to side, reports Ms. Dalrymple, in an attempt to throw her off.

"I was scared and I was mad," she said, recounting that she yelled for help to some road workers who merely stared at her as she passed.

Finding a tire iron in the back, she warned she was going to knock out the rear window if he didn't stop. When he continued, she did as promised. "The

glass went all over them," she said.

It was then that discovered the woman was holding a baby, whom she hopes wasn't hurt by the splintered glass.

About 14 Mile and Halsted, the driver stopped the truck, and Ms. Dalrymple jumped out and started to run. "He knocked me down and hit me," she

described, before he drove off.

Mud-covered, Ms. Dalrymple was picked up by one of her regular customers, as she sought a ride back to the station.

POLICE ARE still looking for the driver, described as a white male, about 25, driving a white pick-up truck.

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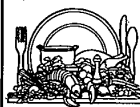
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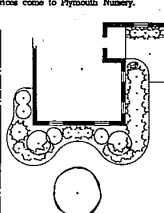
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