

Residents to criminals: 'Stay out'

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At least 50 percent of the households on a block trying to form Neighborhood Watch should be represented at both required meetings, Lee said.

Experience has shown that if less than 50 percent of the households are represented and participate in Neighborhood Watch, the program is less effective, Lee said.

Convinced that Neighborhood Watch is about the best thing going in crime prevention, Lee said the police department's goal now is to establish the program in every Farmington neighborhood and apartment/condominium complex.

The simplest reason for that goal, Lee said, is because Neighborhood Watch works by making every "citizen become the extra eyes and ears of the (police) department."

BECAUSE NO police department can prevent crime without the direct help of residents, "we want citizens to become more aware about what's going on in their community," Lee said. "Our goal is to establish a formal net-

work by which citizens can report suspicious activity directly to the police. Here's how Neighborhood Watch works: Once the Neighborhood Watch program is formed on a block, each member of the group receives a "personal designator number." The first two digits of the four-digit number signifies the resident's street. The last two digits, Lee said, designate the resident's home.

When he (a resident) calls in with something suspicious, he gives the number instead of his name and address," Lee said. "The whole idea is to speed up the call."

For example, Lee said, the caller will say, "This is Neighborhood Watch No. 4053. There are two males, one black and one white, both wearing blue ski jackets and blue jeans. They are breaking into the front door of 14052 Forrer."

"We always keep that caller on the line so they can update information," Lee said. "Once the caller sees that the police have arrived, he has fulfilled his responsibilities and obligations."

But Lee said Neighborhood Watch members should remember that their responsibilities go no further than calling them to assist. "We do not want them to assist," he said.

In other words, the caller should stay in his house and not attempt to confront the suspicious person or chase after him if he is leaving the scene, Lee added.

"When the Neighborhood Watch member calls in, he is saying 'I care and I want to get involved. And I want to help.'"

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH works, Lee said, because criminals find it difficult to operate in areas where residents "take an active role in preventing crime." The key to the program is making residents aware of their neighbors and their activities so when something out of the ordinary happens next door they realize it really is out-of-the-ordinary.

"Lee would like to see all neighborhoods in Farmington Neighborhood Watch programs, he suggests organizing in small groups. For

example, Chatham Hills subdivision is interested in the program. But with such a big subdivision, the program will be less effective because it is difficult to be aware of so many neighbors.

The answer lies in organizing street-by-street, or block-by-block, Lee said. Once residents are interested in forming the program in their neighborhood, participants explaining the program are distributed to neighbors on the street. The police, with the help of a chosen block leader (chosen by the residents), organize two meetings.

A block leader has no legal authority but is responsible for the design of his neighborhood's watch program, monitor its success and acts as the liaison with the police.

If 50 percent of the residents do not attend, meaning they don't want to participate, the program is not only less effective, but the group may receive only the stickers for individual homes rather than the large street signs.

"The signs are a means of deterrence," Lee added. "At the meetings, police assign each household a designator number. They

also provide a slide presentation of actual crime scenes in Farmington. Other information includes how a house can be broken into; good and poor door locks, alarm systems, and how lighting can be used as a security device.

Residents also will learn how and what to report to the police when they notice something suspicious.

Once the Neighborhood Watch program is fully organized and off the ground, police will install signs at the subdivision entrances. After that each individual block may buy their own signs which the city will install.

Although Lee admits residents tend to shy away from calling the police when they are unsure whether a crime is being committed, he asks residents to call anyway. "They should call" on anything suspicious or out of the ordinary," Lee said. "We will respond. Let us make the determination of whether a crime has been committed."

If any neighborhood or homeowners association is interested in the Neighborhood Watch program, Lee suggests they call 474-1388 for more information.

Retiring after 32 years

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"I was teaching high school, and then I stayed home to get my own family under way," she said. "I was home for several years. When it came time to go back, I came back to elementary school."

She said she preferred teaching elementary school youngsters, although it's "much harder work than secondary."

"By the time children get to secondary school, they're partly formed," she explained. "My husband used to say that he never had any discipline problems when he taught college. If they couldn't get along, he threw them out."

"But in elementary school, you have to cope with them. You can't throw them out. You try to help them develop and overcome their problems. And it's very rewarding when you see them do so."

Districts eye investment pooling

The Walled Lake Board of Education is investigating the possible benefits of investing surplus district funds in a National Bank of Detroit "investment pool."

Supt. Don Sheldon recommended approval of a 20-year agreement with the bank, but the board thought that was hasty and instead voted to observe the fund for a month before making a decision.

"We cannot provide data that would show the exact dollar gain possible through this means as opposed to the conventional means," Assistant Superintendent for Business Russell Wright told the board.

The investment pool is authorized in legislation enacted in March, according to Paul Jensen, senior vice president of NBD's trust division. The first deposit was made into NBD's fund in June and the pool currently includes investments from about 30 municipalities and school districts, he said. The

present value of the fund is about \$12 million, Jensen added.

WRIGHT SAID the fund would operate like a checking account, permitting the district to deposit and withdraw funds whenever desired. The district's surplus funds would be deposited into the investment pool and invested and reinvested in various securities.

Fees charged to the district would include \$12 per investment transaction; one-half of 1 percent on the first \$500 million invested; and \$1,700 monthly to pay off computer equipment.

Arthritis Today Joseph J. Weiss, M.D. Rheumatologist 20317 Farmington Road Livonia, Michigan 48152 Phone: 478-7860

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The alternative is for the physician and patient to wait and if another attack occurs soon, then the need for daily medicine is evident. Otherwise the patient should be instructed on how to deal with a future occurrence, with no medicine in the interval.

The purpose of this new approach to gout is to keep patients on the minimum amount of medicine necessary for their continued health.

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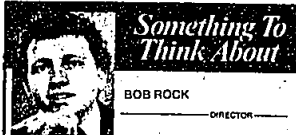
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