

Neighborhood Watch helps police stop, catch criminals

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

They make the job easier for police — and harder for criminals — and they are your neighbors. Neighborhood Watch, a nationally recognized group that maintains a vigil to protect people and property from crime, makes a big difference at the local level. A case where two bike thieves were caught in the act is a recent example of Neighborhood Watch, in action.

"They are truly the eyes and ears of the community," said Farmington Hills Crime Prevention Technician Chris Cogar. "They go through a training program to help them report crimes and recognize suspicious situations."

On Sept. 12, the actions of several neighbors in the Kimberly subdivision on the west side of Middlebelt north of 11 Mile helped police catch two would-be bike thieves and recover the bikes.

At about 5 p.m. neighbors saw

two teens running south from Barwell, with a bike. A woman who had seen the incident got into her car, drove after the two, and yelled at them to give up the bike. They left it behind and ran away.

A short time later, the two emerged from a garage on Westmeath with two new bikes.

"He was a new neighbor who had moved in from Connecticut," said Ann Neirynck, who saw the two boys, 15 and 14, take the bikes out of the garage from her Springbrook home living room. "I had seen these kids walking into the subdivision, and I thought they might belong to a family on Creekside."

But when the two returned to her new neighbor's house, Neirynck said she became suspicious. "They were looking around in a strange way," she said.

Neirynck is married to a retired Detroit police officer and her son who is a retired Detroit police officer and another son who is a police officer in Franklin.

"The neighbor came home and I told him," she said. "He said he'd just bought one of the bikes for his daughter and asked if I thought there was any way to call the police. I said he should."

And the call paid off as Hills police Officer Mike Fluhart was able to apprehend one of the teens a short time later on Nine Mile and Tredwell. After the other teen escaped briefly, he was also captured. Both boys were released to their parents' custody, and the bikes were returned.

"It was amazing," said Fluhart, a former Hills Police Officer of the Year. "I got the description and found them. They both started running and I was able to catch one of them. (Officer) Craig Hurt caught the other one."

"Usually, we don't get a call so quickly and unfortunately, it's a lot late," Fluhart said.

And with a growing population coupled with a police department that has a lot of space in terms of the numbers of officers, the public's help in catching criminals is important, Cogar said.

POLICE/FIRE CALLS

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week.

FIRE DEPARTMENT RUNS
Farmington Hills firefighters responded to 86 calls for the week of Sept. 18-24 including 45 (62 percent) emergency medical runs, 11 rescues, three fires, three spills, and four electrical equipment problems.

FIRES
Farmington Hills firefighters from Station 1 put out a fire in a 1989 Ford F-700 truck at 7:25 p.m. Sept. 19 on Haggerty Road between Nine and 10 Mile roads in Farmington Hills. The driver told firefighters that the truck, owned by Love's Landscaping in Novi, had backfired and stalled while pulling a trailer with a Bobcat and some brush. Damage was estimated at \$5,000.

Farmington Hills firefighters from Station 2 responded to grease smoking in a kitchen of a house on 13 Mile in Farmington Hills at 2:34 a.m. Sept. 22. The fire caused light smoke after grease was left burning on a stove. Firefighters turned off the stove and circuit breakers and used

forced ventilation to remove the smoke. Damage to the house was \$4,000. Damage to contents was \$100.

VANDALISM
A book bag was thrown at the windshield of a gray 1990 Pontiac Bonneville parked at North Farmington High School on 13 Mile in Farmington Hills Sept. 18 causing \$300 in damage.

A blue Ford Escort was damaged (\$500) when another car pulled out of the lot at Jean's Hardware on 12 Mile in Farmington Hills, scraping another car Sept. 22.

ASSAULT
A Farmington Hills girl, 16, told Hills police that another girl, 16, blocked her from driving her car out of her parking lot at North Farmington High School on 13 Mile in Farmington Hills Sept. 19. The second girl then argued with the first, and closed her car door on her face, causing injury.

Farmington Hills police arrested a Farmington man, 49, for assault after the man allegedly put a knife to the throat of a Westland man, 27, at the Pony Express Saloon on Eight Mile in Farmington Hills at 1:30 a.m. Sept. 23.

AUTO THEFT
Farmington Hills police arrested two Detroit boys, 10 and 14, after security guards at Botsford General Hospital on Grand River in Farmington Hills had caught them trying to break into a tan 1994 Chrysler LeBaron at 11:30 a.m. Sept. 22. The two had used screw drivers, pliers and had a Chrysler key in a failed attempt to steal the car, that caused \$100 in damage.

A 2000 red 1995 Buick LaSalle was stolen from the Clarion Hotel on 12 Mile in Farmington Hills Sept. 22.

A green 1993 Jeep Cherokee was stolen from the lot of Electronic Products on Industrial Park in Farmington Hills Sept. 24-25.

A maroon 1994 Chevy Cavalier (\$10,000) was stolen from a residence on Crest Forest in Farmington Hills Sept. 24.

DRUGS
Farmington Hills police arrested a Sterling Heights man, 20, for possession of 4 grams of marijuana on Glenmoor Heights in Farmington Hills at 4 p.m. Sept. 22. The man had been driving a gray 1986 Ford Fairmont.

Farmington Hills police arrested an Oak Park man, 17, for possession of 10.6 grams of marijuana, drug paraphernalia and for driving while impaired under 21. The man had a blood alcohol level of .05 percent. A level of .01 percent is considered too drunk to drive for anyone under 21.

ANIMAL CRUELTY
A Farmington Hills man, 38, told Hills police that a neighbor of his on Colgate in Farmington Hills has been bothering the man's Neapolitan mastiff puppies, which he raises. The neighbor fired lightning bolts at the dogs Sept. 19-22, causing a burn on one of the puppies.

BREAK-INS
The door to Process Technologies and Controls on Research in Farmington Hills was forced open causing \$250 in damage and a \$500 25-inch color TV was stolen, Sept. 22-23.

A television, liquor and \$60 in cash were stolen from Ritter Engineering on Research in Farmington Hills after two doors were forced open and other items were damaged (\$1,000 total) Sept. 22-23.

The passenger door was forced open on a tan 1995 Jeep parked on Independence in Farmington Hills Sept. 23 and a \$300 car phone was stolen.

The passenger door lock was punched (\$300) on a red 1994 Chrysler New Yorker parked at the Gateway Apartments on Gateway in Farmington Hills Sept. 24-25 and a \$700 Infinity AM/FM CD stereo was stolen.

EMBEZZLEMENT
Between Sept. 8-23 \$325 was stolen from the Arbor Drugs store on Orchard Lake in Farmington Hills. Hills police arrested a Detroit woman, 28, for the crime.

DEATH THREAT
A Farmington Hills woman, 19, told Hills police that her father telephoned her from out of state at her and her mother's residence in Section 36 on Sept. 23 and threatened to kill both of them.

SPOUSE ABUSE
Farmington Hills police arrested a Walled Lake man, 32, for grabbing his girlfriend, 27 of Waterford, by the throat and hitting her in the face repeatedly at the Holiday Inn on 10 Mile in Farmington Hills Sept. 23.

DRUNKEN DRIVING
Farmington Hills police arrested a Hills man, 49, for driving a white 1985 VW Rabbit west on Eight Mile near Gill while drunk. The car was weaving when officers pulled it over at 1:40 a.m. Sept. 24. The man had a blood alcohol level of .14 percent. A level of .1 percent is considered too drunk to drive in Michigan.

Farmington police arrested a 32-year-old Southfield man Sept. 24 after the car he was driving hit a road sign near Nine Mile and Orchard Lake roads. The man had a blood alcohol level of .10 percent.

THEFT
Ten leather and blue jeans coats worth \$2,000 were stolen from an apartment at the Polo Club Apartments on Floral View in Farmington Hills since July 8. The wheels and tires (\$800) were stolen from a blue 1985 Ford Mustang convertible parked at Lucky's Collision on Industrial Park in Farmington Hills Sept. 23.

Wire wheel hubcaps (\$500) and a hood ornament (\$60) were stolen from a 1986 gray Cadillac Deville parked at the Muirwood Apartments on Crescent Court in Farmington Hills Sept. 23-24.

THE SPORTS AUTHORITY

EVERYDAY LOW PRICES JUST GOT LOWER!

HUGE SELECTION OF BRAND NAME FOOTWEAR!

SUPER SHOE VALUES!

AVIA 4300 WWDX LADIES' FITNESS SHOES

SPECIAL PURCHASE 29.98

HEAD SMASH II MEN'S TENNIS SHOES

SUPER VALUE 29.96

REEBOK CLUB C MEN'S TENNIS SHOES

SUPER VALUE 39.96

NIKE AIR TENACITY MEN'S BASKETBALL SHOES

44.97 (Originally \$59.96)

NIKE AIR NOSTRIKT MEN'S BASKETBALL SHOES

59.97 (Originally \$94.96)

NIKE AIR FLIGHT ONE MEN'S BASKETBALL SHOES

69.97 (Originally \$109.96)

BLADERUNNER ASTROID YOUTH IN-LINE SKATES

BLADE RUNNER 0000 BY ROLLERBLADE

SUPER VALUE 49.96

PRO AM CYCLONE ADULT IN-LINE SKATES

CLEARANCE 49.97

ROLLERBLADE BRAVO ADULT IN-LINE SKATES

CLEARANCE 99.97

CLEARANCE

WHILE QUANTITIES LAST

HUGE SELECTION OF ATHLETIC FOOTWEAR

19.97

HUGE SELECTION OF ATHLETIC FOOTWEAR

24.97

HUGE SELECTION OF ATHLETIC FOOTWEAR

29.97

• MEN'S • LADIES' • CHILDREN'S

WATERFORD
277 Summit Dr.
(in General Crossing)
733-5070

CLINTON TOWNSHIP
Gravel Avenue and Oakton
(14 1/2 Mile Road) 791-6400

MADISON HEIGHTS
Join R Rd.
(south of 14 mile Rd.)
589-2123

UTICA
M-65/142 Road and M-63
254-5650

LIVONIA
Pembury Road
(west of Middlebelt)
822-2150

DEARBORN
Corner of Ford Rd. and Southfield
Just North of Ford Road
284-5425

STORE HOURS MON-FRI 10AM-9PM SAT 9AM-6PM SUN 10AM-6PM

THE SPORTS AUTHORITY

The Sports Authority PRICE GUARANTEE

...means just that! If you ever find a lower competitor's price, we'll match it! Hassle Free!

Our Everyday Low Prices On Athletic Footwear Just Got Lower!