

Crime from page A1

affects. "A homeowner feels they've been personally violated," Dwyer said. "We're always pleased to see there's been a decline in burglaries."

The decline has held steady for the past 15 years, from a high of 932 in 1984 to just 347 last year. During that time, Farmington Hills population has swelled from around 60,000 to an estimated 80,000 citizens.

What's the magic that has made the Hills a relatively safe community? "Our Neighborhood Watch

program has been successful," Dwyer said. "The alarms installed in homes today, compared to '84, have increased, which I think is a deterrent."

Dwyer also pointed to unemployment rates, which have been very low for the past few years. A causal relationship exists between unemployment and crimes like robbery and burglary, he said.

Businesses are most often affected by robbery, which typically occurs at fast food places and convenience stores or gas stations. With several major

thoroughfares running through the community, Farmington Hills might be something of a magnet for would-be thieves.

Not so last year, Dwyer said. "When you have 26 robberies in a city of this size, it's almost unheard of," he commented.

While the crimes that are more often associated with violence have dropped, the more "white collar" crimes of fraud and forgery both showed a significant uptick. Dwyer said many of those involved store employees.

Though the statistics may be

higher, Chamber of Commerce President Carleigh Flaherty said business owners haven't expressed a particular concern about those crimes. A crime-prevention seminar co-hosted with the West Bloomfield Chamber in 1999 wasn't well attended, but that might have had something to do with timing and the hours retail store owners often work, she said.

"I can't say it's been a real area of concern," Flaherty added. "I don't hear it consistently from business owners."

Crash from page A1

Orchard Lake roads.

The victim did not attend the Farmington Alternative Academy, but had friends there who were also mourning his death.

"His friends thought and spoke very highly of his kind and caring demeanor," said Dianne Duthie, principal at the academy. "We have had many students who have mourned his passing deeply. He was a true friend who was always there for them, especially when they were in need."

Duthie said she expected academy students to do something in Sinishtaj's memory. Prior to attending the Farm-

ington Community School, Sinishtaj, a resident of Farmington Hills, attended Harrison High School.

Leland said many students and teachers were planning to attend Sinishtaj's funeral services, scheduled 10 a.m. Friday at Our Lady of Albanians Catholic Church in Southfield. Visitation is 2-9 p.m. Thursday at McCabe Funeral Home, 31950 W. 12 Mile Road in Farmington Hills.

Sinishtaj, who enjoyed sports, is survived by his parents, Frank and Tonia, sisters, Diana and Lisa, and brother, Andy.

Alcohol and speed were likely factors in the fatal crash near Shilawasse and Beech Roads, said Southfield police. Sinishtaj died after his green, Nissan Maxima struck a tree. Southfield police spokesman John Harris said the force of the collision caused the vehicle to tear in half.

Sinishtaj was taken to Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills, where he was pronounced dead. Doctors determined he had a blood alcohol content more than twice the legal limit, Harris said.

Southfield Eccentric staff writer Mary McDonough contributed to this report.

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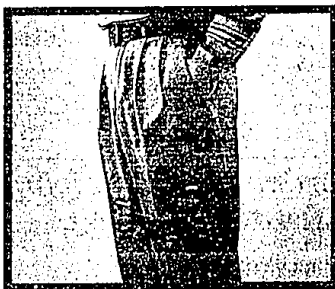
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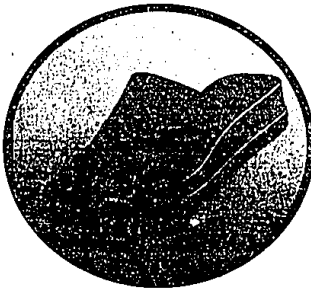
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Census

from page A4

little census message," Lampi said. "I think that's kind of unique."

In addition to revenues, census information is vital to the city's planning studies. Population figures are used in grant applications and demographics are important to private developers as well. Lampi's department provides that kind of information to developers who are considering building in the community.

Initial population estimates should be available in late summer or early fall, Lampi said, and the official count will be on the president's desk by the end of the year. Additional reports should begin coming into the city next spring.

Anyone who hasn't received a form or has questions about the census should call (800) 471-9424.

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