

Burglaries Follow Set Patterns In Suburbs

(This is the fifth and last of a series telling how Operation Identification can help homeowners cut down the growing list of home and business thefts.)

FARMINGTON as a "typical burglar" operating in the suburbs.

Burglaries here don't come on a completely random basis but rather have definite patterns.

If you live in a corner house, you're more likely to be the victim of a burglary than your neighbor down the street.

These are some of the observations concerning breaks made recently by a criminologist who is a professor of sociology.

He points out that the old stereotyped concept of the burglar as a cunning sneak-thief, who wears a

mask and carries a tool bag, is no more accurate than the belief some persons have that every burglar is committed by someone with a drug habit to support.

"There isn't really a typical profile," he says. "You have to understand that there's a big difference between a kid who runs into a home and grabs some cash from a desk and the guy who might burglarize to fill an order."

"Burglaries are committed because of perceived needs, and these can vary. Maybe it's money, maybe it's status in a gang, maybe it's drugs, or maybe it's something you feel you need yourself — like a television — or something you can sell on the street."

He notes, however, that a greater percentage of burglaries probably are the product of addiction to hard

drugs than 10 years ago or so.

National studies on persons arrested for burglary (which he warns may be inaccurate because so few persons are apprehended and arrested for that offense) show that almost 75 per cent are under the age of 18 and about 23 per cent are under 15.

"Possibly young kids will break into a place because they realize there is a good chance of getting away with it. It's a future kind of crime. It's done when other people aren't around and frequently at night," he says.

The criminologist, who previously worked in the state corrections system, claims the majority of burglaries are amateurish in nature, whether they were carefully planned or impulsive "hit and run" type jobs.

For the most meaningful results, the burglary rate (like other crime statistics) should be figured on a basis of the number of break-ins per building or group of buildings rather than the number per person or population.

"Burglaries tend to be concentrated in certain areas such as low income housing, for example, and aren't a random thing throughout a community," he says. "They usually follow discernible patterns. . . Burglaries are often repeated at the same location."

"Most victims of a break-in," he adds, "have been victims of a previous crime."

He refers to a national study which indicates that homes which are located on street corners are burglarized more frequently than

homes located in the middle of a block. The homes located next door to corner homes have more break-ins statistically than those in mid-block.

"I'm not sure why," he declares. "Maybe corner homes provide a greater range of opportunities for entry than those down the block. Two sides are visible from the street, so the burglar feels he can get in easier and out faster."

One intriguing and seemingly logical idea supported by the criminologist is that the American society of today indirectly contributes to the number of burglaries by virtue of "portabilizing" so many items deemed worth stealing by thieves.

"We live in a 'portable society.' So much merchandise

today is capable of being easily carried away by hand — televisions, stereo sets, appliances, radios and other items of value. These kinds of things are becoming more compact and lightweight. It isn't like the old days of trying to steal a horse or heavy furniture."

He believes that much of the burglary problem in Observerland stems from theft rings, the members of which participate in all forms of larceny including break-ins. Some such rings have particular items such as TV sets or guns which they specialize in stealing.

"I'm not talking about organized crime in the usual sense here," he explains. "The rings may be comprised of friends who don't operate with much criminal

sophistication, but at least plan their targets and break into places regularly. And you don't need a fence to get rid of things on the street."

He stresses that burglaries are becoming easier and easier nowadays due to some times shoddy workmanship in constructing new apartment buildings and subdivisions houses, which allows burglars to get inside with less difficulty.

"It's really simple. Most new developments have lousy, cheap locks on the doors to begin with. All you really need to get into most places is a putty knife to slip the lock," he contends.

In addition, some persons actually make matters all the more easy for burglars by paying little attention to safely securing their residences.

"More non-victims have

dogs, and it doesn't have to be a huge, nasty police dog. More non-victims don't let their newspapers accumulate while they're on vacation. A lot of little things like these can reduce break-ins."

Although he agrees that several precautions can be taken to thwart burglars, he is opposed to the general philosophy of police departments which urge people to report "suspicious looking leiterers" and strange occurrences in their neighborhoods.

"We're getting back to stereotypes when every unknown person who passes through a residential neighborhood is immediately suspect. You can't tell a burglar by his appearance, and attempting to is dangerous."

"It might lead to a situation in which the remedy is worse than the problem," he says.

Council Head Maps Big Rap Line Year

Continued from Page 1A

of a portable building behind Farmington school administrative headquarters and out of offices at Cloverdale School, using space donated by the schools.

The group made a movie last year called "The Bridge," which is available to clubs and schools for use.

Last week, Rap Line volunteers manned a booth at the Founders Festival and entered a float in the parade.

The FAAC receives donations from service clubs, the largest amount coming from the Jaycees. The two cities and the county support the program extensively.

FAAC has been approached by other groups on the question of consolidation of youth services such as Rap Line, youth employment and Youth Assistance.

"I'm taking an open mind into these meetings. I think the city has the strongest youth program in the area and I don't want to jeopardize our program for consolidation."

"There are no real social services available locally in Farmington and Farmington Hills. You have to go to the county to get help."

"We have a top notch social service," Borbi concluded.

Festival Parade Winners

Here are the prize winners in the annual Founders Festival Parade in Farmington:

PARADE HONOR AWARD: North and South Farmington Elementary Band.

JUNIOR CORPS: first place, Crimson Brigade, second place, Red Charmers; third place, Seaway Mini Corps.

FLOATS: first place, Farmington Historical Society; second place, St. John Lutheran League; third place, Wheeling Pairs Square Dance Club.

DRILL TEAMS: first place, Cavaliers of Sterling Heights; second place, Troy High School Cadets.

SENIOR CORPS: first place, St. Roberts Cardinals; second place, Sabrettes, Marine Corps League; third place, Royalettes.

BEST OF PARADE: (Music) — Guardians of Flint.

BEST OF PARADE: (general effect) Seaway Squatters, Allen Park.

CHAIRMAN'S GRAND AWARD: Burger King Float.

OUTSTANDING UNIT: Drakeshire Cup, won by Townsmen of Leamington, Ontario.

local news

By MARIE LONG GR 4-3114

With the passing of Mrs. Clara Wixom many of us have lost a dear friend and one who was a great pleasure to have known over the years.

A gentle and very sweet little mother, she lived a full life to the age of 93 years. She was well and alert to the end and could relate a lot of Farmington history.

It is sad to think she passed away a day before the Founders Festival as she was a member of the Farmington Historical Society, and took an interest in all old and new things taking place around her. To her family we offer them our deepest sympathy.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Quinn of Pickett attended the American Legion convention in Grand Rapids last week. Hal and Trena are very active in the American Legion. "Yours truly's" son, Bill, and wife, Joan Long, of Mio, Mich. are currently entertaining her sister, Mrs. Linda DeGroot and children, Kimberley and Rickie of Fenton,

along with her parents of Farmington.

They will attend the Mio Festival which is held every year on the Ausable River, where all types of skills are performed. Bill and his sons have opened a building called "Long's Ice Cream Barn," a mile out of Mio, on Star Route No. 4. The building recently was completed and has all the latest equipment to serve special treats to the public.

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Houghton, of Novi, are happy to welcome the birth of their second daughter, Kerry Ann, born July 25 in Providence Hospital. New baby was welcomed home by a sister, Tammy, 2½ years old. Maternal grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Leo Kujala of Westland, and paternal grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Paul Houghton of Wilmarth.

Farmington. Gary is a graduate of Farmington High. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kaiser Jr., of Wixom, are the proud parents of a daughter, Angela Andrea, born July 6 in Providence Hospital. — weight 5½ lbs. Maternal grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Joseph F. McDonald of Tulare, Farmington, and paternal grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. F. Robert Kaiser of Walled Lake, Mich.

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