

## Merchants Hear How To Stop Shoplifting

Big skirts, loose coats, large handbags, fake boxes—all are the tools of professional shoplifters, Farmington retail merchants were told last week.

And the careful store owner can cut his losses to a fraction of what the lax manager suffers, the representatives of 60 stores learned.

They saw a film on how everything from T-bones to TV's can be snatched. The program was set up by the Board of Commerce.

Public Safety Director Robert Deadman and Fred Dobson, of Ernest and Ernst accounting firm, were the featured speakers at the Tuesday morning session in the Salem United Church.

"AGGREGATE annual losses due to shoplifting exceed \$2 billion," said Dobson, "and there isn't a type of merchandise that can be deemed secure."

"Every merchant has the right of retail theft before him every day."

"While the activities of amateurs is not nearly as subtle as that of the professionals, the merchant and his employees have to be on the alert all day every day."

He also pointed out that "it is always the hands that do the stealing, while the eyes do the watching." Best safeguard against the monetary privacy needed by a shoplifter is an alert sales staff, Dobson said.

Deadman estimated that nationally there are 2,790,000 incidents of shoplifting a year, and said the average value of items stolen is \$20.

"In the suburbs, much of the shoplifting is to support the narcotic habit," he said.

## Merlo Trial Tuesday

The Circuit Court trial on a first degree murder charge of John C. Merlo, accused of pumping three fatal bullets into his wife in a Farmington Township beauty salon last January as she worked on a customer's hair, is scheduled to open Tuesday before Judge Robert L. Timplin in Pontiac.

The parade of witnesses is expected to include the six women who were in the Crest Beauty Salon, 2742 W. Eight Mile Rd., at the time of the shooting, as well as several employees of a Philadelphia bank where Merlo was captured two weeks later after a nationwide man hunt.

Merlo, 26, has been held in the Oakland County Jail without bond since he was returned from Pennsylvania.

On Jan. 6, it is charged that he entered the beauty shop where his wife, Sharon Ann, 14, was employed and that after a short conversation between the two Mrs. Merlo returned to a customer to work on the latter's hair.

The customer, Mrs. Lois Whitaker, testified at Merlo's Farmington Justice Court examination that suddenly a bullet whizzed by her face, and when she turned to see what was happening she saw Mrs. Merlo slumping to the floor.

Mrs. Martha Stanfield, owner of the beauty shop, said that after Merlo shot his wife he pointed the gun at her and another beauty operator, then fled out the door and escaped in a car.

All customers remained seated during the fray, and one of them shielded a five-year-old boy who had come to the shop with his mother.

Mrs. Merlo and her husband were separated at the time, said she was living with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Kamen, of 19340 Gaylord, in Redford Township.

At the request of defense counsel, psychiatric examinations were ordered by Judge Timplin last May to determine Merlo's competency to stand trial on a first degree murder charge.

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"Cigarettes, meat and personal items also are high on the list."

Half of the shoplifting incidents are committed by persons under the age of 18, said the police chief.

He urged prosecution of all offenders, and asked that the police department be kept informed of all incidents.

"THE EFFECTIVENESS of procedures adopted to cope with the problem can probably be traced right back to the conduct of the retailer, store managers and department managers," said Dobson.

"While it may seem remote, the owner or store manager who takes away merchandise—whether it be paper clips, clothing, food, household appliances or whatever you will—without charging himself therefor, is indicating to employees that the taking of merchandise is condoned."

"In short, the prevention of retail theft starts with the owner or store manager."

In the entire realm of retail theft, losses range from about 0.7 per cent of sales for the well-managed department store to about 4.5 per cent for the loosely controlled operation, it was said.

Dishonest employees account for about two-thirds of retail thefts, and the other one-third is traceable to shoplifters, it is estimated.



FOR THE HELP OF OTHERS — Students of Farmington's East Junior High School have concluded a drive to gather discarded clothing to be sent to the Appalachian area. Bundling the many items for shipment are, from left to right, Shirley Mc-

Daniel, Teacher Betty Jefferson, Dorothy Spencer, Teacher Claudia Ferguson, Susan Golling, Ralph Josephson, Lee Friedrich, Teacher Peggy Gilbert and Deborah Tomchak.

## Garcia Named To MSU Post

Jack Garcia, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Garcia, of 28257 New Castle, Farmington, has been appointed public relations chairman of the 1968 "Greek Week" at Michigan State University. He is a junior at M. S. U., majoring in advertising.

The week-long event will open May 13 under sponsorship of the Inter-Fraternity and Phi-Kappa Kappa Councils. Each of the 22 sororities and 37 fraternities participating will support a community project to help some of the underprivileged in the Lansing area.

## Four Attend Dedication

Four Farmington residents who are employees of Ross Operating Valve Co. joined British and German diplomats recently in ceremonies ded-

icating the company's new plant in Madison Heights. The four were Daniel Abbott, Walter Kesselring, Frank No-wack and Louis M. Lusan.

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