

## crime watch

The following column is the third of a series of articles written for the Farmington Observer by Chris Coar of the Farmington Hills Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit.

Few people like to work in the dark, except the burglar. Studies have shown that thieves look for homes with poor lighting and dark streets. During the first half of 1985, in Farmington Hills alone, 71 percent of the attempted and successful residential burglaries occurred between the night-time hours of dusk to dawn.

Since concealment from detection is a major factor in a burglar's choice of homes, a good security lighting system can greatly reduce the chances of your home becoming the next target. It is also one of the least expensive security measures you can utilize.

To assess your current lighting deficiencies, the following areas of your home and property should be evaluated:

• **INSIDE YOUR HOME** — A house that looks empty is very tempting to a burglar. Disguise the fact that you are away by using timers to turn lights, television or radio "talk" stations on and off at appropriate times. If the thief thinks you may be home, he'll probably look for a less risky target. Some timers have multiple settings which can be programmed to give a continual lived-in appearance. You may also wish to consider light switches which are activated by sound to deter intruders.

• **ENTRY POINTS** — Since statistics show that over twice as many burglaries occur at unlighted points of en-

try, all doorways, secluded windows and porches should be well lit. Remember, the higher the light fixture is positioned, the larger the area of illumination. A spotlight might be best for your needs but there are also many other kinds of lights available which are as effective and have lower operating costs.

• **GARAGE** — Garages can be very vulnerable due to their location and limited use. Since a garage affords an excellent point of entry for the burglar, you will need to consider the lighting needs for this area as you would for the rest of your home. In addition to illuminating side doors and windows, plan lighting that eliminates in-between car shadows which provide hiding places. For safety purposes, be sure to place fixtures so that the lights do not shine

directly into your eyes as you drive toward the garage.

• **YARDS AND APPROACHES** — Lighting that illuminates driveways, walks and landscaped areas will help ward off prowlers. Lights should shine on the perimeter of the home as opposed to shining from the house out into

the yard. This enables neighbors and passing patrol cars to see movement around the home without being blinded by "spot" or "flood" lamps. Ornamental post lanterns or low landscape lighting are means of reducing dark spaces and night blind spots. Yard and entrance lights can also be equipped with photo-electric sensors which will

activate the fixtures from dusk to dawn. Since lights are on only when they are needed for protection, you can save unnecessary operating and maintenance expense.

• **CHOOSE COLORS WISELY** — Light colors can reflect from 35 to 75 percent more light than dark colors.

## Good haul

### Amnesty week reaps overdue books

By Lisa Simon  
staff writer

The Farmington Community Library's Fines Amnesty Week was a roaring success, according to Carol Bohrer, amnesty week coordinator and head of the Farmington Hills branch.

Exactly 3,432 overdue books were returned; the longest overdue book was borrowed in 1974. "The majority were from the early '80s," Bohrer said.

Adult non-fiction, children's picture books and old magazines made up the

majority of overdue stock, she said. "I'm really pleased with it. We got back some real good material," Bohrer said.

"This is not going to be any type of yearly event," Bohrer stressed. "We want all our books." If amnesty week occurred every year, borrowers would keep books until that time.

**STARTING MONDAY**, all library notices for overdue books will be computerized through a new cooperative system that involves several communi-

ties including Livonia, West Bloomfield, Plymouth and Rochester Hills. Southfield and Novi will be added within the year, Bohrer said.

Of special interest is the computer system's follow-up ability on irresponsible book borrowers. After \$15 in fines or five, three-month overdue books are accumulated by a single borrower, the computer won't accept the borrower's library card number. It is similar to the rejection of a credit card due to unpaid bills, Bohrer said.

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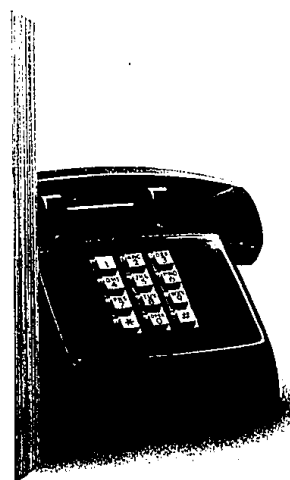
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