

A secure home helps fight break-ins

The following column is the sixth in a series written for the Farmington Observer by Chris Cogar, a technician with the Farmington Hills Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit.

Thieves are anywhere that temptations exist and many take advantage of additional opportunities made possible by a careless homeowner.

According to national statistics, in over 25 percent of nearly three-million homes burglarized last year, illegal entry was gained through an open or unlocked door.

Farmington Hills exceeded the national average during the first six months of 1985, when 37 percent of residential burglaries resulted by way of

an exterior door which was left unsecured.

If unable to easily walk into a home, many burglars will persist in their efforts to enter a residence by physically compromising a door, frame or lock.

For that reason, when considering your home security, you should concentrate on the following suggestions, which will help you secure this major point of access into your home:

• Replace or reinforce all exterior



Chris Cogar technician

crime watch

rior door. The ideal door is of hollow-core metal or solid wood construction, which is at least one and three quarters thick. Since many existing doors are hollow-core wood and are not strong enough to withstand brute force, it is best that these doors be replaced. If that is not possible, reinforce the door by attaching a half-inch-thick sheet of plywood, with long wood screws, to the inside of the door. An alternate measure would be to cover the door with sheet metal. All solid wood or metal exterior doors should be equipped with a 180-degree, wide-angle door viewer

to provide visual identification of the caller prior to opening the door. Since they are relatively inexpensive, these viewers can be installed at more than one height in a door for each member of your household to use.

• Reinforce decorative panels. An exterior door with decorative wood panels, beveled down to an one-quarter-inch thickness, may be aesthetically appealing but are also prone to attack. These panels can be easily forced or kicked out and in many cases, allow an area large enough for a small person to crawl through or just reach in to

unlock the door. Next to replacing this type of door, consideration should be given to protecting these weak areas in the same manner you would to reinforce a hollow-core wood door.

• Safeguard glass inserts. Exterior doors with glass inserts are easy targets. All glass should be eliminated or given special attention particularly if the glass is located within 40 inches of the locks on the door. Glass inserts can be protected by mounting a piece of wrought iron grillwork, break resistant polycarbonate panel, or security film to the inside of the glass portions in the door.

• Install good locks. All exterior doors require a quality single-cylinder deadbolt lock. (The Farmington Hills Police Department does not recommend the installation of the double cylinder deadbolt lock in residential use for this device can prevent escape during an emergency.) A heavy metal strike plate, which accepts the bolt of the locking mechanism, should be securely fastened into the door jamb, or frame, with screws that are over 2 1/2 inches in length.

• Check your door frames. A door and lock is only as strong as the frame it fits into. Most often a door can be forced open by leverage of a crowbar inserted between the door and the frame, or more simply by a well-placed kick. For proper security, there should be no more than a one-eighth-inch clearance between the door and the frame. Also, a door hung on a rotted frame can be easily forced open so be sure to repair any areas that show signs of deterioration. As an added precaution, you may wish to consider installing metal edging strips to the frame, which would make the use of a prying device more difficult.

Although we are all faced with the possibility of becoming a victim of a burglar, you as an individual have the ability to minimize your risk of falling prey to a thief. Remember to always close and lock all exterior doors, including garage service doors. Good crime prevention habits are just as important as improving the physical security of your home. By removing the opportunities for a burglar to enter, in most cases, you will deter the crime.

You can help keep kids warm

More than 40,000 children in metro Detroit area will not have a coat to keep them warm this winter.

To help provide these children with coats, K mart has joined, for the second year, with WJBK Channel 2, WJLB FM 98 and Volunteers of America to warm up the Metro Detroit needy kids.

"Coats for Kids" is a community service project whose primary goal is to collect used, wearable coats for needy

children in the Metro Detroit area.

Coats can be deposited in "Coats for Kids" containers near the entrance doors in all 50 Detroit-area K mart stores during regular hours. There are K marts in both Farmington and Farmington Hills.

"Coats for Kids" 1985 campaign will run through Dec. 6, enabling coats to be distributed in time for the holidays.

"THIS YEAR'S campaign goal is to

collect over 40,000 infant to adult-size children's coats. The results from last year provided over 50,000 kids with a warm coat through the winter and with everyone's involvement, 1986 "Coats for Kids" will again be a success," said central regional vice president Richard Williams.

"K mart is active within its communities, and if our efforts help provide needy kids with coats through the

winter, it makes everyone's Christmas a little brighter and warmer," Williams said.

Donated coats will be cleaned, courtesy of local cleaners, then distributed in time for the holidays.

Cash donations can be made by writing a check payable to "Coats for Kids" and mailing it to "Coats for Kids," 2030 Penobscot Building, Detroit 48226.

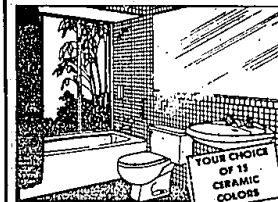
Based in Troy, K mart Corp. operates more than 2,100 stores across the nation. K mart's Central Regional Office, one of six regional offices across the United States, is in Plymouth.

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YMCA highlights

These YMCA Highlights appear courtesy of the Farmington YMCA, 28100 Farmington Road, Farmington Hills. For more information, call 553-4020.

YOUTH SLEEPOVER — For children registered in Fall Youth Sports Programs (golf, polo, basketball or floor hockey) a special sports night is planned. Register today; space is limited. Saturday, Nov. 16 through Sunday, Nov. 17, 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. Fee for members is \$8 and non-members, \$12.

WALKING CLUB — The YMCA walking club will hold its monthly meeting at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 20.

TURKEY TOURNAMENT — The Farmington Area YMCA is hosting the

annual racquetball classic on Nov. 15 and 16. Pre-registration is being taken at the YMCA. (Minimum and maximum requirements established in each division).

BOWLING LEAGUE — Looking for a wholesome and rewarding way to spend quality time with your family this winter? Try the Farmington Area YMCA's new bowling league. An organizational meeting has been scheduled at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 20. Interested families should send one adult representative to this meeting. Cost is \$3.50 per person each week for three games. All league play will be held at Northwest Bowling Lanes, 32905 Northwestern Highway.

SWIM MEET — The first swim meet of the season saw the Farmington Area YMCA Devilrays off to a flying start.

Head coach Laura Dickinson led her swimmers to a 333 to 310 point victory over the Downriver YMCA Chiefs from Wyandotte.

In addition to taking two first-place ribbons in individual events, 12-year-old John Cowan qualified for our state meet. Double honors also to Adam Kammer, 10, and Charlie Jacobs, 6.

Girls double first-place ribbons were awarded to 11-year-old Becca Trippie, 10-year-old Chrissy Jacobs, 8-year-old Mac Kendie Reese and 13-year-old Krista Ferrell.

Not to be forgotten are all three Plezia family swimmers: Greg, 14, Mike, 8, and Beth, 12. Their double first-place victories added much excitement to Saturday's event.

The Devilrays next meet is Nov. 16 against Royal Oak.

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