

Thefts of glass collectibles crystallize

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BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Some thieves apparently have crystal clear vision, stealing glass collectibles from area gift stores.

The latest victim was Cards & Gifts on Grand River in Farmington. Someone broke into a display case and made off with 20 pieces of Silver Decrcrystal worth \$2,728 and a sometime after 6 p.m. Nov. 18, according to police reports.

Similar thefts have been reported at gift stores in Farmington Hills, Livonia and Canton.

"First, we thought it was just

us," said Michelle Martin, an employee and buyer for Cards & Gifts. "Then we found out it was the whole area."

Veena's Cards Gifts & Collectibles on 12 Mile in Farmington Hills reported \$1,000 worth of crystal stolen Nov. 12. Some of the five pieces taken included a hummingbird, a bumblebee and a sharp.

One of the culprits in the Veena's heist is a woman described as white, in her 30s, 5-foot-4 and 100 pounds with a round face, brown hair and wearing a long

dark coat. A man described as white, 59, 6-foot, 150 pounds, wearing a waist-length blue jacket was seen entering the store with the woman.

The display case was locked, according to owner Veena Bhatia. "We (store owners) have talked to each other," Bhatia said. "You have cases that are locked, you think you are safe."

Farmington police believe thieves used a knife to break the lock on the display case in the Cards & Gifts theft.

Swarovski crystal, which is

made in Austria, is a particular target. In a Nov. 8 theft at the Plate Lady on Middlebelt in Livonia, one piece worth \$1,200 was stolen.

"It happens very fast," said Nancy White, owner of Plate Lady. "It has to be professionals. They know how to get into the case."

The pieces come with letters of authenticity and special containers. However, thieves have not made off with those, which could limit their resale value, Martin said.

a 6½-year sentence for bank robbery and extortion in a Florida county jail.

The FBI promptly made contact with authorities in Florida, who checked his last known address, but didn't find him there.

Daytona Beach police waited at the library where the pickup was to take place and arrested him on a parole violation.

As of Wednesday morning, it was uncertain what charges will be filed and who will prosecute. Extortion and mail fraud are both federal offenses.

Farmington police commander Charles Lee said they'd prefer the

man be prosecuted in Florida. To bring him back to Michigan leaves open the possibility he could post bond and then be within close proximity of the family.

"I say let's keep his butt in Florida, 2,000 miles away," Lee said.

Authorities were concerned about the tone and the specifics in the letter. The letter police found on the man also vowed revenge.

"This is not a guy you should take lightly," Lee said. "You should believe every word he says."

POLICE/FIRE CALLS

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week.

BREAK-INS

The passenger window of a silver 1991 Ford Escort parked on Gloucester Circle in Farmington Hills was broken Nov. 17-18, causing \$200 in damage and a Sony radio face plate worth \$25 and a vinyl cassette to ease with 10 cassettes worth \$100 were stolen.

A Dale computer (\$2,000) and Hewlett-Packard laser III printer (\$1,000) were stolen from Diamond Bride on Northwestern Highway in Farmington Hills Nov. 17-18 after the lock was jimmied.

A Gateway computer (\$2,000), a PC Source computer and an Epson laser printer (\$3,000) were stolen from The Appraisal Co. on Orchard Lake in Farmington Hills Nov. 19-20 during a break-in.

The front door of a residence on Hunters Circle in Farmington Hills was kicked in Nov. 20 causing \$300 in damage to the frame and \$900 in cash and two gold

bracelets worth \$400 were stolen.

THEFT

Four hub caps worth \$400 were stolen from a red 1998 Pontiac Grand Prix parked on Nine Mile in Farmington Hills Nov. 14-15.

A \$300 spare tire was stolen from under the rear of a 1986 Plymouth Voyager mini van parked on Leestock in Farmington Hills. The cables holding the spare in place were cut.

Hand and power tools (\$2,000) were stolen from an older model blue Ford Econoline van parked on Edgemoor in Farmington Hills Nov. 21.

A car phone worth \$510 was stolen from an unlocked vehicle parked near Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Farmington Nov. 20.

A Shop Vac worth \$75 was stolen from a garage at a Macomb residence in Farmington Nov. 20.

A sum of \$1,100 in cash was reported stolen from an employee's computer supply drawer at The Hair Gym on Grand River in Farmington Nov. 19. Fry marks were found on the drawer.

A nail gun worth \$200 was reported stolen from a storage area at Mini-Max Self Storage on Nine

Mile in Farmington Nov. 19.

A total of 29 crystal figurines worth \$2,728 were stolen from a display case at the Card & Gift Center on Grand River in Farmington. The lock on the display case appeared to have been tampered with. Police have no suspects.

A Detroit News box worth \$200 was stolen from in front of A&W in the Cross Roads center in Farmington Nov. 18.

VANDALISM

The windshield of a red 1982 Dodge Omni parked on Colgate in Farmington Hills was shattered Nov. 19, causing \$225 in damage.

A car drove into a garage on Wendy Lee in Farmington Hills Nov. 20 causing it to collapse and causing \$300 in damage.

Four tires were slashed on a 1987 Ford Taurus parked at the Farmington Manor Apartments on Nine Mile Nov. 21 causing \$240 in damage.

A passenger side window was shattered with a ball bearing on a 1991 Olds Silhouette parked in front of Big Boy Restaurant on Grand River in Farmington Nov. 20.

Beige paint was spilled on the steering column and driver's seat of a 1980 Olds Toronado parked in front of a Colchester residence in Farmington Nov. 19.

AUTO THEFT

A cream 1988 Mercury Cougar was stolen from the Motel 6 on Grand River in Farmington Hills Nov. 20.

A 1986 Pontiac Trans Am was stolen from a parking behind Pizazz One on Grand River in Farmington Nov. 19.

FRAUD

A 45-year-old Dearborn man found a \$625 charge made on his credit card to Office Max on 14 Mile in Farmington Hills Nov. 7 that he did not make.

FIRE

Farmington Hills firefighters from station 5 put out a trailer fire caused by heat tape in a crawl space Nov. 19 at about 6:45 p.m. The mobile home had a smoke detector that did not sound. Damage to the property was \$200 and damage to contents was \$76.

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Parts of the current parks and recreation plan would be altered to accommodate the plan. About \$1 million to be set aside for land acquisition and expansion of the San Marino Golf Course would be used to pay off debt instead.

However, since about 20 acres at the Mercy site can be used for soccer fields and other recreational purposes, it serves as land acquisition at a "bargain rate." The city could also borrow short term to expand the golf course if land, which is not now available, could be acquired.

Another advantage of the 12-year schedule is that it calls for a

\$1,127,600 payment of principal and interest in the 1993-2000 fiscal year.

"We'll have the luxury of knowing if another re millage has passed by then," Sever said.

Council members rejected the idea of paying extra for the option of callable bonds, which would allow them to be redeemed prior to maturity.

The council voted 7-0 to authorize the \$4 million bond sale to cover the purchase cost of \$3,050,000 and renovation costs of \$950,000 to be paid back over 12 years.

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