



Trafficking in Nativity: A kneeling Joseph and a stop sign were typical of the items taken during a scavenger hunt gone too far Saturday night.



Unusual inventory: Farmington Hills police Detective Kathy Tiano looks at photographs identifying figures, signs and other goods taken during a scavenger hunt Saturday night.



Taking stock: Farmington Hills police Officer Jeff Anderson looks over items stolen Saturday night during a scavenger hunt.

Hunt for red December items

30 teens arrested in scavenging spree

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

The hunters became the hunted last Saturday when Farmington Hills police were tipped off to an elaborate scavenger hunt involving teen-agers.

Police arrested 30 teen-agers after being alerted to the thefts of traffic signs and holiday decorations in northern Farmington Hills.

At least five cars with teen-agers became involved in a hunt for items — which carried point

values — that included a "Harrison High School State Football Champions" sign, stop signs and many figures from Nativity scenes from churches, businesses and residences.

Farmington Hills police were called at about 7:50 p.m. Saturday with a report of several teens taking Nativity figures from a residence. A Hills man and his son reported teens taking figures from the Prince of Peace Church on New Market at about 9:15 p.m.

The man stood in the drive

and held up his hands to stop the car, but it didn't and the man moved aside.

Police caught up with one car and found a four-page list of items with points attached and also found out where the cars were planning to meet on Hills Tech Drive. Police were waiting.

"A patrol officer was able to get a copy of the list that told where the finish line was," said Detective Kathy Tiano. "This kind of thing has been going on every year, but this is the first

time it's been this organized."

Of those arrested, 12 were juveniles, police said, and most were North Farmington High School students. The Oakland County Prosecutor's Office will make a decision on what charges to file.

Police, in the meantime, have been photographing the "treasures" and trying to get them returned to their owners in time for Christmas.

The police also will return shopping carts and an Ohio li-

cense plate that apparently were treasures of the hunt.

"That was actually on the list," said Officer Jeff Anderson, school liaison officer at North Farmington High.

Inspector Tom Godwin said whether the mischief was caused by boredom or young people not realizing they had gone too far, there were plenty of people unhappy about the thefts.

"These are probably good people," Godwin said. "But they just got carried away with something they thought was fun."

Santa gives kids a jingle

Hopefully Old Saint Nick will have his voice back to keep Dasher, Dancer and company on the right course Christmas Eve.

But after talking to several Farmington Hills youngsters Dec. 13, "Santa Claus was a little hoarse," said Andy Lang, Farmington Hills recreation superintendent.

Santa called about 160 kids as part of the Santa Calls program, in which children and their parents fill out a questionnaire about their wishes for Christmas presents and information about them, and send them to the Farmington Hills Recreation Department.

From 4:30-8 p.m. Dec. 13, Santa called the kids to see if they were

being "naughty or nice," and talked with them about the upcoming holiday.

"A lot of the kids were amazed that Santa knew so much about them," Lang said.

Although in past years Santa has gotten help from his better half, Mrs. Claus was busy with other projects this year.

Don't let fire hydrants get snowed under

Although it doesn't look like a white Christmas, the snow will fall soon enough — and out will come the snow plows.

Farmington Hills firefighters warn that when plowing a lot or driveway, owners of residences and businesses should be careful that fire hydrants aren't covered

or obstructed by piled snow.

A "lost" hydrant could translate into a lost building if there is a fire.

"We've been lucky so far," said Lt. Mike Carr, fire prevention specialist with the Farmington Hills fire department. "We've dug them out before when there isn't

an emergency, and it takes time. We wouldn't want that to happen if there were a fire."

Businesses, apartment complexes or shopping centers that have contracted outside snow plowing should make sure those doing the plowing respect the space needed to make the hydrant visible and usable.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Honor the WWII vets

The Farmington area is one of many communities where people are commemorating the 50th anniversary of World War II.

In fact, the Department of Defense has designated Farmington/Farmington Hills as a "commemorative community." Locally, the goal is to locate and recognize as many WWI veterans, their widows or extended family members as possible.

The Defense Department's position is that this era of our history should not be forgotten, that the war veterans be honored and that their memoirs be left to the community's history, especially in the library and school system.

Three history teachers in the Farmington Public Schools — North Farmington's Jerry Maxwell, East Middle School's Ray Naglik and Farmington High's Renee Losala — are members of a committee that intends to honor local WWII veterans.

The teachers have been given a list of veterans who are willing to be interviewed and are also willing to speak to their classes.

Naglik designed a commemorative search letter to help students get involved. Julie Harwin, a North Farmington student, put together a panel of 16 juniors and seniors to help veterans and widows write their war memoirs and remembrances.

Teacher Losala is starting a 20th Century class Jan. 13 for 25-30 students who will have mandatory assignments featuring interviews with veterans.

Special flags to remember World War II are available to display at 22 public school buildings and the administrative center, said Jack Curd, chairman of the Commemorative Community Committee.

"It would be nice to have this special flag on display with a history exhibit inside each school," Curd said in a letter to Superintendent Robert Masfield.

The 1995 Memorial Day Parade will be dedicated to all World War II vets, Curd said.

"My hope as committee chairman is to see a sea of blue flags, which say 'A Grateful Nation Remembers — 1941-45 and 1991-95' and being carried by the youth of America — today's school children."

For more information on the committee, call the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce at 474-3440.

Memory Lane

From the Dec. 16, 1954 edition of the Farmington Enterprise:
■ Ground beef was advertised at 29 cents a pound, or four pounds for \$1, at Farmington Meats on Grand River.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48333, faxed to 477-9722 or dropped off at the newspaper office.

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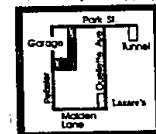
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