

# Police caution shoppers to be aware

BY WILLIAM COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

For some Farmington and Farmington Hills shoppers, the abduction and murder of Dr. Deborah Iverson from a Birmingham parking lot just proves that you can't be too careful.

"I constantly look to make sure that it's safe," said Kim Nowicki, a Detroit mother of two young sons, ages 2 and 4 months. "I shop here (West River Plaza on Grand River). I try to park around the side, close to the store. And I try to shop before it gets dark."

Romeo Lauzon of Redford said he parks as close as he can to the Target store in the plaza after he drops his wife off at the front door.

"A lot of times it's hard to park close," he said. "And there aren't lights out there in the back."

But for many, the incident is a rare and unfortunate one, not something they see as likely for them.

"It was a horrible thing," said Sue Young of West Bloomfield as she came out of the F&M store at the Hunter's Square shopping center on Orchard Lake and 14 Mile. "But what are you going to do, stop shopping?"

Young said she tries to be careful but said she isn't consumed by worry.

Eddie Arbit of West Bloomfield said she probably should be more concerned, but isn't.

"I suppose I should be," she said. "Here I am with three kids in a parking lot. But I guess it's something you don't think can happen to you."

Farmington Hills police Chief Bill Dwyer said although the Iverson murder was a random incident, it should be a warning to residents to be vigilant.

"People who are going to plan a robbery will target someone, especially the elderly," Dwyer said. "It doesn't take a genius to plan an attack."

Dwyer said Dr. Iverson was a target because the perpetrators saw her park her Toyota Land Cruiser while alone, and put in change at the meter for one hour's parking.

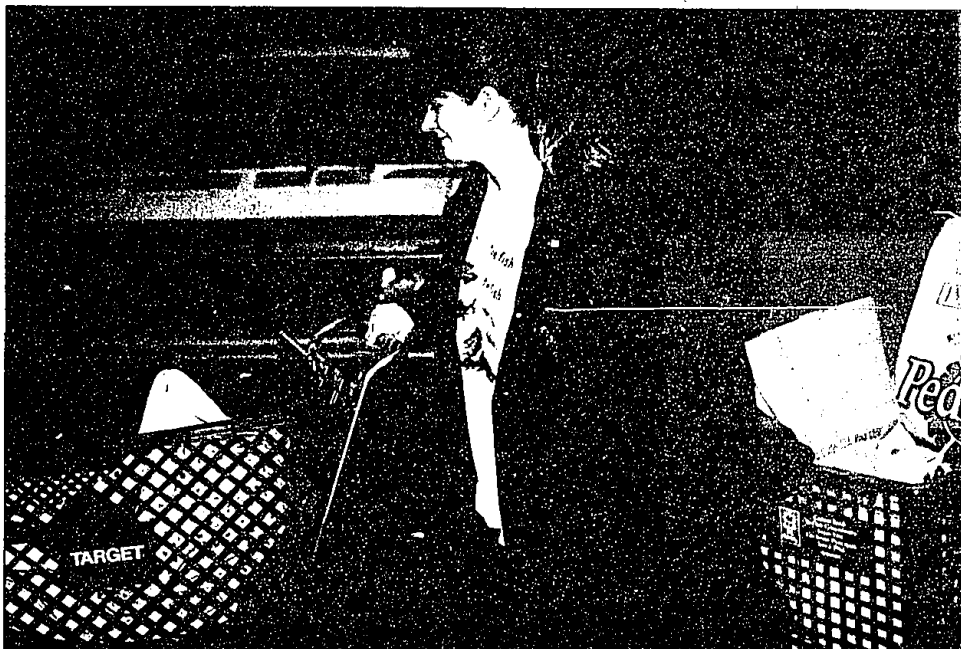
"They saw that it was an expensive car, that she was alone and vulnerable," Dwyer said.

Dr. Iverson, 38, was kidnapped from a Birmingham Municipal Parking Lot, across the street from The Community House on May 16, 1996. Her body was discovered the next day in the back seat of her Toyota.

Oakland County Sheriff's deputies arrested Anitra Coomer and McConnell Adams Jr., both 21, early Tuesday morning and prosecutors have charged them with the murder.

"What we've been saying for years is that people should be concerned," Dwyer said. "People should be prepared, have your keys out and quickly enter and lock your vehicle."

Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss



Cautious steps: Kim Nowicki of Detroit always keeps an eye out when navigating through parking lots outside shopping centers like the one at Target in Farmington Hills.

said there were only four incidents in parking lots in Farmington in 1996, but added that common sense and taking precautions are important.

"Three of these were purse snatchings and the fourth involved someone pulling a knife on a 56-year-old man and stealing a case of beer," Goss said. "All four occurred during the day."

Goss said one of the incidents occurred near the T.J. Maxx store on Grand River and three were outside of the Farmer Jack at the Crossroads

Shopping Center on Nine Mile and Farmington.

"I think this is part of our lives anywhere in the metro area," he said. "People in Farmington feel secure, and they should. But that sometimes makes you let your guard down."

Goss recommends being aware of your surroundings; leaving with someone when going into a lot; getting into and locking your car quickly if possible after checking the back seat; and calling police when there is something suspicious.

"If you are uncomfortable, walk away," he said. "We would rather go out and investigate someone and find out it's nothing serious than to take a purse snatching or robbery report."

Or worse.

"I hadn't really thought about it until now," said Belle King of Farmington, while shopping at the Downtown Center at Farmington and Grand River. "But maybe I should."

## Hills plans community meeting at Wm. Costick Center Jan. 30

The Farmington Hills City Council will hold the fifth in a series of community meetings at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 30, at the William Costick Activities Center. The meeting is open to the public.

"These meetings will help us be more specific in responding to issues of special interest to people in particular geographic areas within the city," said Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi.

The agenda for the meeting will include a review of the Traffic Study currently underway, an update on police and fire service changes as a result of the public safety millage, cellular antennas, the Youth & Families Program and an update on the hospice development at 11 Mile and Middlebelt along with plans for the park at this corner.

Featured speakers will include public services Director Thomas

Biasell, police Chief William Dwyer, and fire Chief Richard Marinucci. Several police officers assigned to this area of the city will also be present.

The mayor and members of city council will conduct a question and answer session as part of the informal meeting.

The William Costick Activities Center is located on 11 Mile Road between Middlebelt and Inkster.

## Farmington police seek clues in shopping center burglaries

Farmington police are investigating a burglary of two businesses in the Crossroads Center during the New Year's holiday.

Fantastic Sam's and Kowalski's Sausage Co. were both broken into sometime 3 p.m. Dec. 31 and 8 a.m. Jan. 2.

Thieves stole more than \$200 in cash and caused nearly a \$1,000 in damage. A rear-door lock was pried open at Fantastic

Sam's and a floor safe was damaged. About \$190 was stolen from the business.

Thieves got inside Kowalski's next door by busting an 18-inch by 36-inch hole through drywall in the bathroom. A sum of \$41 was taken from a cash drawer.

Employees at both stores called police after noticing the damage when they arrived for work.

### AGENDAS

**Farmington Hills Council/Parks and Rec Study session**  
6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 6

Agenda items include:

- Background and review by Dan Potter on: Time schedule and review process; length of millage renewal, projected revenues from renewal; previous ballot language; wish list; blue ribbon committee; role of the city council, parks and recreation commission and departmental staff; current millage commitments; parks and recreation survey; and open space opportunities.
- General discussion.

**Farmington City Council City Hall, 474-5500**  
8 p.m. Monday, Jan. 6

Agenda items include:

- Proposed 1997 goal statement
- Consideration of request for transfer of Class C liquor license: Marco's Restaurant, 32758 Grand River
- Consideration of resolution regarding Michigan Coalition to Protect Right of Ways from Telecommunication Encroachments
- Consideration of adjustment to city attorney retainer fee
- Consideration of public safety department request to support GRIP program
- Consideration to renew membership in the Michigan Municipal League
- State maintenance contract permit resolution.

**Farmington Downtown Development Authority City Hall, 473-7261**  
8 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 7

Agenda items include:

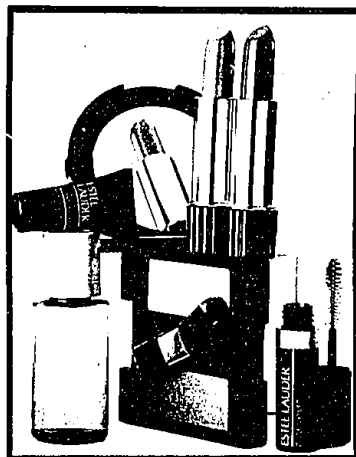
- Business recruitment report
- Consider downtown garden center
- Service award recognition
- Executive director's report.

Study session

**Farmington Public Schools Board of Education Schulman Center, 489-4300**  
7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 6

Agenda items include:

- Discussion on proposed millage and bond elections
- Budget parameters for 1997-98
- Discussion on schools of choice implementation for 1997-98
- Preview of Jan. 13 board meeting.



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