

Burglaries raise concern in one neighborhood

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Orchard View Terrace is a quiet residential neighborhood of large, stately homes on manicured lots, a place where people would occasionally forget to lock their doors. But that has changed.

No one expected that two of six recent burglaries, all within two weeks and two miles of one another, would have occurred in their neighborhood.

Residents wonder why the police took so long in warning people that burglars were in the area.

"We came here for the quiet and the beauty," said Gajula Raj. "My family is afraid. We never expected to have something like this happen."

He said that his wife and several neighbors wanted to know if police had increased patrols through the subdivision.

Randy and Patricia Xenakis have noted only a few minor childish pranks since they moved into Orchard View eight years ago.

The burglaries, the first major incidents that they remember, have changed the neighborhood's entire appearance, Xenakis said.

"I never have seen as many outside lights left on all night and so many closed garage doors, even during the daytime," he said. "People were probably a lot less cautious about these things before this all happened."

Ray Bobrowski, who moved to the Back Mountain from suburban New Jersey, said that one of the area's selling points was its peace and quiet.

"I heard that this was a nice area," he said. "Now we're starting to keep more of an eye out for one another. The burglar seems to

have been selective about which homes he hit - almost as if he knew what to get and where to find it."

Like several other families, Bobrowski said that his family was considering changing their daily routine in an attempt to discourage burglars.

He and a few other residents also want to get watchdogs.

Doug Robinson wanted to know why the police took so long in letting the people know what was happening.

"It's alarming," he said. "They waited for four or five incidents before they warned people."

Also a transplant from New Jersey, Robinson said that he was "surprised" to hear media reports of burglaries, common where he comes from but rather rare for this area.

"Still, I'm glad that it's been on the news," he said. "It's a good warning."

Richard Hiscox and Dr. Rakesh Sharma have become more concerned about locking doors and windows since learning of the burglaries.

"We also watch each other's homes more now," Dr. Sharma said.

A couple out for a brisk after-dinner walk said that they were "surprised and taken aback" by media reports of the crimes, which have made them more conscious of their home's security. They refused to identify themselves.

"I don't think that you should be writing about this," said a man who also refused to give his name to a reporter.

"What if you publish information about us, our homes, security systems or daily routines that might help the burglar?"



QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD - Orchard View Terrace was the scene of two of the six burglaries which occurred within two miles of one another between April 14 and 30.

POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

Burglars

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the house through an unlocked sliding screen door, police said.

• April 30: A resident on Ondish Road/Hill Street in the Roush Plot section of Dallas Township called police shortly after 11 p.m., when two people tried to break into the back door of his home.

By the time police arrived four minutes later, the pair had fled.

"We're investigating all of these cases' possible relationship to one another," said Kingston Township police chief Jim Balavage.

Police advise residents to lock their doors and windows at night and before leaving home, and to leave outside lights on when they go to bed. Windows with screens should also be locked because burglars can easily cut through one and get inside.

Anyone finding an intruder in their home should immediately lock themselves in a secure room and call 911, Miers said.

"Having an intruder brazen enough to enter the homes while the people were home concerned us."

Carl Miers

Dallas Twp. police chief

Robber takes school's equipment

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Gate of Heaven students had only two weeks to use their new Magnavox VCR and television set before they were stolen from a classroom May 2.

Three VCR's, two television sets and an older model computer valued at more than \$2,000 were taken from the school sometime between late Sunday night May 1 and 6:30 a.m. May 2, according to a Dallas Borough police report.

Principal Mrs. Mary Tighe said that when she came into the building at 7:30 that morning, she had noticed that "something sticky" had been spilled on the floor of the second floor hallway and a broom had been dragged through it.

She also saw that a broom was leaning against a wall in the hall and a janitor's closet light was turned on.

In her office she found three white plastic garbage bags on the

floor and garbage on the secretary's desk.

"I immediately began to unlock and check the classrooms in the primary wing," she said.

After finding nothing amiss, she unlocked an audio-video equipment storage room and saw that a television and VCR had been removed from a cart.

Teachers reported that two other VCR's, a second TV and a computer had been taken from their rooms and the library.

One television and VCR, purchased with cash vouchers from transactions in a special fundraising program at PNC Bank, were only two weeks old.

The others had been purchased partially through a Campbell's soup label program.

Police chief Jack Fowler said that investigating officer Jim Martin found no evidence of forced entry to the school's second floor, which houses the office and classrooms.

Maintenance man Joseph Stravinsky told police that he had seen the closet light on and the broom leaning against the wall in the hallway when he unlocked the building May 2 at 5:45 a.m.

The school's second floor is separated from the first floor, where the gym and the church are located, by a locked door, Fowler said.

He added that he does not believe there is any connection between this burglary and others committed between April 14 and 30 in Dallas and Kingston townships.

The school has reported its loss to its insurance company and is waiting for word on how it will be handled, Mrs. Tighe said.

"Several parents have graciously offered to donate money to replace the stolen equipment," Mrs. Tighe said. "We don't know what we'll do yet. It will depend on what the insurance company says."

"That the perpetrator has been brazen enough to enter homes while people are there concerns me," Miers said. "You never know what the burglar will do or if he has a weapon."

Shooting at an intruder is a bad idea because the intruder may also be armed, he said. Anyone who shoots an intruder will later have to prove that it was justified.

"You have to be able to prove that you were defending yourself, which isn't always easy," Miers said. "Actually, your best burglar alarm is a protective inside dog."

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Butterflies

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Put manmade waste in the tan bags and dead plants and leaves in the dark green bags.

Stay away from the edge of the wall and the road.

Wear gloves when working around the picky blackberry bushes.

Ask Mrs. Aldrow before you pull out a plant.

It's okay to pull out dandelions - be sure to dig out the entire root.

"We need the shovel over here," two girls called to RaeEllen Zekas and Jennifer Raub, who were busily digging out a sumac bush.

"This is hard work," they said, taking turns with the long-handled tool and scooping dirt from a hole with their hands.

Baseball caps pulled down over their foreheads in the brisk breeze, Paul Hiller and T.J. Daveski stuffed dried-up dead plants into a large green trash bag.

"Is this a weed?" T.J. called, holding up two six-inch green

plants.

"The one with the fuzzy leaves is. Put it carefully back in the ground," Mrs. Aldrow said.

Looking forward to the time of the butterflies' return, Amy Wenger and Marie Lord debated which weeds were dead as they worked.

Later this month the class plans to clear trash from the grove behind the school as another ecology lesson and earth-friendly school service project.

"They consider these tasks to be a privilege," Mrs. Aldrow said. "They tell their relatives and friends about it, so that every class has something to look forward to."

The class expects the flowers to be in bloom by the time school ends, bringing a blaze of color to the front of the school and a tasty meal for some hungry monarch butterflies at the end of their flight from the South

Huntsville Quilters to hold rummage sale

The Quilters of the Huntsville United Methodist Church will sponsor a Rummage Sale May 20 from 10 to 5 p.m. and Bag Day is May 21 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



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