

Trabing

Mostly about People

By Wally Trabing



The Key To Car Thievery

The key to car thievery is — the key!

The simple act of removing it when parking — requiring only an erg or two physically and perhaps an ohm of thinking power — would cut this crime from 50 to 60 per cent.

More than 50,000 cars are stolen every year in California—from 10 to 18 a month here in Santa Cruz, within the city.

In more than half of these cases, all the thief has to do is to get in the car, turn the key conveniently left there by the owner, and drive away.

Last month, according to the police files, 10 cars were stolen in the city. Seven have been recovered and three arrests have been made so far. It's only a matter of time that the other hieves will be found out.

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I thumbed at random through he stolen car file and here are some actual cases.

January 13: Youth, 20, whose ar had been "grounded" by father because of speeding citation, walking home from friend's house t 3 a.m.

It was cold. He spotted pickup n service station, looked inside, saw key in ignition, got in and drove it to within a block of his residence where he abandoned it. He was later arrested.

January 13: Boy 14 walking down business district, talking about cars with a friend.

He glanced into a car, saw keys in ignition, got in and drove it away. He drove it about town for an hour and finally lost control and crashed it. He was arrested.

January 15: Young man came to police station, saying he took his girl to show in dad's car; parked in Safeway lot at 8 p.m. After the show he discovered the car was gone.

He said he took the keys from the ignition, but laid them on the floor board.

September 9: Woman reported parking her car on Rigg street at 8 p.m.; returned in hour to find car gone. Her doors had been left unlocked and she left the keys in the ignition. The car later was recovered in San Jose.

August 13: Police arrested man who went into car lot, took the keys from an Olds and had duplicate made at locksmith, later returning the original. That evening he took his new key to the lot and drove the car away.

February 12: Man reported car stolen from Goss avenue. He said he had taken the key out but left the ignition switch unlocked, so that the thief did not need the key. He simply turned the switch.

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Here are some more Santa Cruz city car theft statistics.

March: six stolen, five recovered, one juvenile arrested.

April: Twelve stolen, 10 recovered, six persons arrested.

May: Eighteen stolen, all recovered, seven arrests.

June: Eleven stolen, nine recovered, six arrests, including two juveniles.

Police Detective Lt. Sam Taylor said that unless the car is in a deserted location not many potential thieves will attempt to take a car that has no key and locked.

Through excellent local police work, most of the cars are recovered. But thieves are not easy on automobiles, many are recovered damaged.

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Here are some tips to keep your car where you park it.

1. Always take the key, and if you drive a model in which the ignition can be left in an open position — lock it.

2. Lock your car, including the wind wings.

3. Park in a well lighted area if possible.

It also will help to spray the ignition system with liquid plastic which prevents use of a jumper wire or metal foil to short circuit the system.

It is also an idea to punch out the identifying numbers on car keys, after first recording the number at home.

This will make it more difficult for anyone else to duplicate your key.

Another Benefit Car Wash Sunday

"Happiness Incorporated" will be washing cars again Sunday between the hours of 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. at the Chevron station, corner of East Cliff drive and 15th avenue. Donations are \$1.

The informal group of Camp Harmon counselors will stage the car wash — their second — to raise money for a Christmas party for crippled children of the camp which is located above Boulder Creek. Michael Stinson is in charge.

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