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Georgetown Loblaws store manager John Del Guidice shows off some of the merchandise thieves recently tried to steal from his store. Del Guidice estimates that in the last six months about \$60,000 in merchandise has gone missing from his store. While some arrests have been made, Del Guidice believes out of town thieves are targeting smaller municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area and are peddling their haul in the black market.

Photo by Lisa Tallyn

## Grocer says theft 'getting out of hand'

Watching his inventory decline at an increasing rate due to theft has left Georgetown Loblaws store manager John Del Guidice extremely frustrated.

Del Guidice said in the last six months about \$60,000 worth of merchandise has gone missing from his store.

"That's extreme," said Del Guidice who estimated the norm would be about \$10,000. "It's really started to increase. It's getting way out of hand."

The main targets have been cosmetics, film, razor blades and tooth brushes.

Two weeks ago Halton Police arrested a man and woman from Etobicoke, and charged them with theft under \$5,000 in connection with the theft of about \$2,500 worth of items from the store including cosmetics, film, razor blades and tooth brushes.

Del Guidice said about three weeks ago the store's loss prevention officer stopped a man attempting to wheel out a cart containing boxes full of \$6,000 worth of items— including razor blades, film, Tylenol and tooth brushes. The man fled, leaving his haul

behind.

"This is marketing. It's not, 'I need shampoo and I have no money.' It's being peddled in the black market. There's a business out there for selling this stuff," said Del Guidice, who believes the criminals are coming from out of town.

Similar thefts have occurred in other Loblaws stores, but the problem is more prevalent in the outlying areas, such as Georgetown, where criminals assume there isn't as much loss prevention coverage.

To combat the problem, stores increase their loss prevention staff, make employees more aware of what to look for, and install more technologically advanced cameras.

The Georgetown store was hit again 10 days ago. The culprits managed to flee, but they left behind a duffel bag full of videos, DVDs, razors and film.

"Store theft is becoming a problem," said Halton Regional Police Detective Kim Duncan. She said several area stores have had problems with theft.

Brian Bahm, of Brian's Food Basics, said over the last six months he has noticed an increase

in thefts from his store.

"The people we are experiencing are professionals," said Bahm. "They take large ticket items." He said meat, shrimp rings and razor blades are popular targets.

He said to combat the problem they have increased security and try to limit the amount of stock, such as razor blades, they have on the shelf.

Duncan said in many instances the thieves go from town to town, hitting the same store.

"It's difficult to deal with," said Duncan.

"Hot items should be changed to a location where they can be better observed by staff or video cameras," said Duncan. She said stores should also take steps to beef up security.

Del Guidice said in light of the recent thefts security measures have been increased at Loblaws.

He said he also works with other stores, such as Zellers, to keep them informed about shoplifters.

He added he'd like to see the courts take shoplifting more seriously and stiffer penalties in place.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

### Learn about the Proposed Kelso Conservation Area Master Plan

We are inviting your comments on what we should do over the next twenty years or so at the Kelso Conservation Area (including the Glen Eden Ski and Snowboard Centre).

To find out more check out the full text of the proposed Master Plan at our web site [www.conservationhalton.on.ca](http://www.conservationhalton.on.ca) or attend one of the public open house listed below.

Date	Where	Time
Wednesday, August 15, 2001	Conservation Halton Administrative Offices 2596 Britannia Rd (just west of Guelph Line)	1 pm to 4 pm
Saturday, August 18, 2001	Glen Eden Chalet Kelso Conservation Area	9 am to 12 pm
Wednesday, August 22, 2001	Conservation Halton Administrative Offices 2596 Britannia Rd (just west of Guelph Line)	5 pm to 8 pm



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