

Editor's Mail

Pick-pocket rifles patron's purse

Dear Editor:
I'd like to offer my letter as a warning to anyone attending the Flea Market in Stouffville.

Last Saturday, I visited this location with my two sons. I'd just been to the bank and had \$50 in my wallet inside my purse.

We were looking at a jewellery counter inside the main building with no one else around.

Suddenly, we were accompanied by a group of three or

more men. They were squeezing in beside us where there was really no room. They appeared also to be looking at the jewellery display.

I felt my purse being moved or jostled. I turned to see these men pushing past me to get closer to the display.

Instinctively, I looked into my purse that had been closed initially. I discovered my wallet with all my money and I.D. gone.

Two of the men had disappeared. I ran after them, catching up to only one whom I immediately questioned concerning my missing wallet. He appeared not to speak English. I asked him the whereabouts of his other friends but received no answer that I could understand.

Earlier, there had been an announcement concerning pick-pockets on the premises, but we hadn't heard.

I was getting nowhere with the one man and it was obvious my wallet had been taken by another who'd mysteriously left his friends.

I quickly went to the office to report the theft, only to find out three other people had also had their wallets stolen, one loss amounting to \$500 in cash.

I was told to report my theft to the police officer directing traffic at one of the entrances. After doing so, I returned to the office and was told by one of the gentlemen working there that many wallets had been taken periodically, including 14 at Christmas in less

than an hour. All but three were later found intact on the property, but missing all the cash.

I then learned that the suspects travel around flea markets, shopping malls and densely crowded areas stealing wallets, only for cash. They almost always are in groups of three and four.

Needless to say, my sons and I were angered by so blatant a theft.

I'm happy to report I did receive my wallet back thanks to an honest lady named Diane. She found it discarded under a car in the parking lot. Everything was in it except the money.

I always said it could never happen to me, but it did, and so fast. I hardly knew what to do. Next time, I'll be prepared.

Please, anyone who visits such places like the Sales Barn, keep a tight hold on your purse or you could end up a victim.

It's a very frustrating experience.

Thankfully, I received my wallet back. Probably many don't.

I hope everyone will be careful with their hard-earned dollars.

Sincerely,
Barb Scaife,
Stouffville

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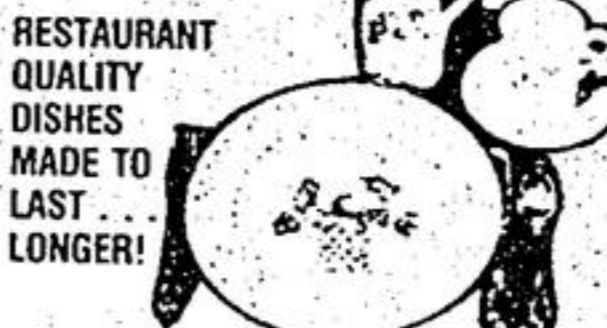
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