

Two in custody following copper thefts at library, home

County Line Reminder
BY PHIL FOLEY 8-31-07
STAFF REPORTER

ORTONVILLE — A local man accused of tearing copper down spouts from the library three times last month and gutting copper plumbing from a Brandon Township home is facing a laundry list of charges.



Richard Kwaitowski

Richard Kwaitowski, 33, of Brandon Township was arraigned Aug. 24 on charges of second degree home invasion, breaking and entering with intent, second offense driving with a suspended license, and possession of burglary tools.

Oakland County Sheriff's Office investigators tried to have Kwaitowski arraigned on five additional felony charges Monday, but a power failure in Clarkston closed the 52-1 District Court. He was back in court Tuesday and arraigned on three counts of larceny over \$1,000, malicious destruction of property over \$1,000 and receiving and concealing stolen property over \$1,000.

He's being held in the Oakland County Jail on bonds totaling \$175,000.

Investigators said at the time of his arrest, Kwaitowski

was being sought on a felony warrant from Pontiac, and misdemeanor warrants from Madison Heights and Dearborn.

Investigators said Kwaitowski's 39-year-old companion, Jayme Kimberly Smith, was arraigned in front of Judge Dana Fortinberry on charges of second degree home invasion and receiving and concealing stolen property over \$1,000.

Smith is being held at the Oakland County Jail in lieu of a \$100,000 bond.

Paula Gauthier, director of the Brandon Township Public Library, said she's pleased that sheriff's deputies have made an arrest. "I felt like they were stealing from the whole community," she said of the accused.

In addition to the estimated \$7,500 loss in stolen down spouts and damage to the building, Gauthier said the library board is now contemplating an \$8,000 upgrade to its security system to install additional video cameras around the building.

She noted that three years ago thieves took several bronze letters from the library's sign.

According to police reports, Kwaitowski first tore

a pair of copper down spouts from the library, located on South Street in Ortonville, sometime between July 13 and 16. Sheriff's investigators allege he came back July 27 and again July 31, doing roughly \$7,500 damage to the library.

A West Glass Road man told deputies July 21 he saw

two men running from a neighboring house. Deputies found the front door of that home kicked in and the home's copper piping ripped out and stacked in the basement.

Deputies said a well was left running in the home on the 300 block of West Glass Road, flooding the basement.

They also found a case of beer by the front door, several empty beer cases inside the house and signs that beer and soda had been poured on the floor.

At the time witnesses told deputies they believed two men and a woman had been living in the house.

Sgt. Mike Searing said

damage to the West Glass Road home was in excess of \$1,000. He attributed Kwaitowski's arrest to "good old-fashioned police work," which included surveillance and a photo lineup.

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