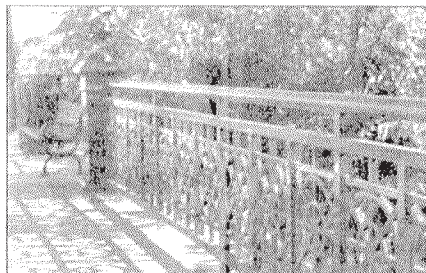
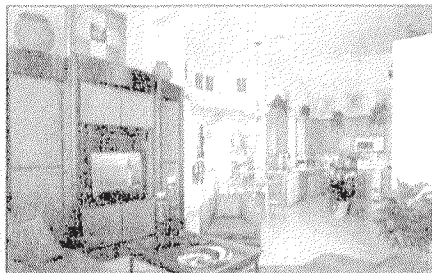


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REAL ESTATE WEEKEND

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Contents prepared by the Marketing Department

GUEST COLUMN

How to safeguard your home while you're away

By **JOHN R. MATH**

When you plan to be away from your home for long periods, it's wise to follow some of these tips to help prevent your home from being burglarized.

Thieves look for signs that homes are unoccupied. They will look for homes and apartments that are not well maintained and that have newspapers piled up and uncollected mail.

Here are some tips to avoid attracting attention from thieves:

- Have a friend pick up your mail and newspapers, or have delivery stopped.

- Advise the police department and management company that you will be away for a certain period.
- Use timers to turn on and off the lights inside your home, at different intervals.
- Leave shades and blinds in a normal position.
- Hide garbage cans in your garage or apartment.
- Lock and double-check windows and doors. Don't forget to lock the garage door.
- Turn down the volume on your telephones to its lowest level, so that burglars outside can't hear any ringing.

- Give a relative or trustworthy neighbor a key to your home so he or she can make inspections and security checks.
- Don't leave notes on doors or windows that indicate you are away.

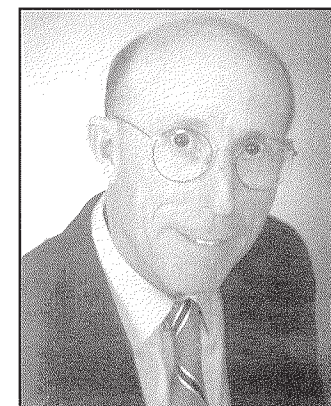
In addition, if you will be away for longer periods, such as going up North for the summer, you might consider the following:

- Shut off the main water valve to your home or apartment.
- Switch off circuit breakers, except for the air conditioning, security alarm and security lights.
- Arrange to have someone check periodically to verify that your air

conditioner and humidistat are working. Storms can trip circuit breakers and shut them off.

Overall, these are relatively easy things that you can do to secure your home while you are away, on short or long trips. Follow these tips, and your home has a good chance of being safe and secure when you return.

■ John R. Math is owner of Associated Property Management of the Palm Beaches Inc. For more information, call (561) 588-7210. Or, visit the Web site at assocpropmgt.com



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