

Recovered hoard of bicycles overwhelms police facilities

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Nearly 2,000 bicycles have been seized in four raids by Toronto police investigating a theft ring, and there may be more to come.

Igor Kenk, 49, the owner of the Bicycle Clinic at 927 Queen St. W., is facing 60 charges in connection with the raids.

Police said they've busted one of the biggest stolen bike rings in city history and are asking for the public's help to provide any information about other places Kenk may have rented for storage space.

But Supt. Ruth White said the raids have been almost too successful. Police now need to find a bigger space where they can display the bikes so people can come to identify their property.

"We'll have to catalogue them, give them property tags. We will try to identify them. We are trying to locate a spot so we can have the public come and view them, but as you can see there are 1,000 bikes, and to get [a bigger] space ... is one of our strategies right now," said White.

Kenk was arrested on Wednesday night after police said they saw him directing a man with bolt-cutters to steal a bike.

Plainclothes officers made the arrest after observing another man, Jean Laveau, who they allege cut the locks off two bicycles near Trinity-Bellwoods Park. Laveau also faces charges in connection with the case.

So far, only about 70 people have been reunited with their bikes, including Cody Wood, who had his bike stolen two weeks ago.

He thought it was locked up safely but woke up one morning to find it gone. That's when he launched a campaign on his own to find it, handing out flyers at local bike shops. Having a picture of the bike helped, but so did the few minor alterations he'd made to the bike.

"I have a green bike with a blue stem and a pink brake cable," he said.

Right away, police were able to identify the bike and hand it back to the rightful owner.

But other people may not be as lucky as Wood if they're looking for their stolen bicycles.

With almost 2,000 bicycles, the cataloguing by police could take weeks.

Toronto police figures show that more than 50,000 bikes have been reported stolen in the city since 1997. Last year alone, 4,585 bicycles were reported stolen in Toronto. But police said the numbers don't even come close to the real figures because most people don't register their bikes — and victims seldom report the crime.

Kenk will be in court on Friday where he is expected to enter a plea.