

WHEELS OF JUSTICE

Police raids net three more caches in stolen bike crackdown

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For the past three months, Qaisar Mahmood has been trying to get Igor Kenk to clear the bicycles out of his garage, an old back-alley building Mr. Kenk had leased from the home's previous owner.

Yesterday, Mr. Mahmood stood by and smiled as Toronto police did the job for him. His was among three more west-end garages raided by officers in the ongoing saga of Mr. Kenk, a used-bicycle dealer who has been in jail since July 18 waiting to face a growing list of theft and drug charges.

In addition to dozens of bikes, officers found an estimated three kilograms of marijuana in a box stashed in the garage behind the Dufferin Street house, which Mr. Mahmood bought three months ago. In the process, he inherited Mr. Kenk as a tenant, but wanted to buy out the remaining six months of the \$1,700 one-year lease he had signed with the previous owner.

"We were trying to contact him so we could use the garage," Mr. Mahmood said as he watched officers fill yet another rented truck with an assortment of bicycles.

"We are happy now, and we are even more happy that these guys are here to take the stuff out."

After finishing in a mere 30 minutes, the officers climbed into vehicles and headed to a home on Lansdowne Avenue, just north of College Street, and after that, to a Brock Avenue address, where more two-wheelers were recovered. Last evening's raids brought to 12 the number of properties, including Mr. Kenk's Queen Street West shop and his rented Yorkville house, that police have searched since his arrest, and pushed the number of seized bicycles well past 2,500.

On Lansdowne Avenue, homeowner Bin Xue Jia said Mr. Kenk started renting his garage for \$90 a month about three years ago. Mr. Jia knew there were bicycles inside, but "he told me he repaired, so I didn't mind." It was only when Mr. Jia watched the television news last week, and heard that Mr. Kenk had been accused of stealing bikes, that he became suspicious and called police.

As he looked on last night, police raised the garage door to yet another jumble of spokes and frames poking from a pile of assorted scrap, including a vintage Coca-Cola duffel bag and a stack of vinyl records in sleeves slightly charred by fire.

As a city-licensed dealer of secondhand goods, Mr. Kenk, 49, was allowed to buy and resell used bicycles, as long as he met several requirements. He was to keep records of the make and model of the bicycle, its serial number and the identity of the seller, and produce those records on demand to police and city licensing officials; he was to store each bike in his shop, unaltered and separate from other stock, for 15 days, to allow police to inspect them.

Police have said Mr. Kenk was typically co-operative when asked to share his records, and routinely handed over bicycles when police determined them to be stolen.

However, investigators allege that most of the bicycles seized so far were not properly accounted for in Mr. Kenk's record books.

"When the initial search warrants were done, there was also an investigation into his pawn sheets," Detective Chris Chilvers said. "There may be some that are in his pawn sheets, but ... we're up to 2,700, 2,800 bikes, and we don't have pawn sheets representing that amount of bikes."

After last night's raids, police hoped to sort and catalogue the bicycles in time for a public display that continues at noon today, in a pair of warehouses.

Last night, another find added to the stash of narcotics, including marijuana, crack and powdered cocaine. The drugs were found during a search of Mr. Kenk's rented house on Berryman Street in the tony Yorkville area, where he lives with his wife, Jeanie Chung, 37.

Ms. Chung faces possession charges related to the drugs and a computer, allegedly stolen during a break-in, that police found in the home.

Mr. Kenk is scheduled to appear in an Old City Hall court for a bail hearing tomorrow morning.