



- Home
- Local News
- World & National
- Sports
- Weather Tracker
- Traffic Report
- Newscast Highlights
- CrimeStoppers
- Specials & Features
- Hokule'a - The Voyage
- Hawaii Superferry

# LOCAL NEWS

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PRINT STORY

## Theft Won't Ruin Boy Scouts' Trip

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The motto of the Boy Scouts is "Be Prepared." But for members of troop 611 from San Jose, CA, they were caught off-guard.



Despite their run of bad luck, the Scouts pitched in to help clean up an East Oahu beach.

The troop is in town for an 18-day visit to the islands. Every four years, the troop takes a special excursion and this time around, the boys decided on Hawaii.

"We were real excited because it happens every four years and I was just real excited I was able to go on this," said 16-year-old Boy Scout Tyler Nii.

However, things took an unexpected turn last Friday. After making stops at Hanauma Bay and the Blowhole, the group decided to stop for lunch. The three-van convoy decided to swing by a McDonalds in Waimanalo.

"We couldn't park on the side of the building because there were only three spots and they were taken," said Assistant Scout Leader Brian Butler. "So we just pulled in the back, went in, half-hour, came out, gone."

One of the vans had been broken into. An undisclosed amount of cash and travelers checks were stolen. Also gone were three backpacks of three Boy Scouts. Inside those backpacks included cell phones and cameras.

"It's like they say you just got to be careful," said Steven Doi, a parent of one of the scouts. "But they were as careful as anything, locked everything up in their van and everything. The police said it was jimmed pretty fast and pretty quickly, so you do what you can, but still, things can happen."

"That was the first stop in the whole trip where everybody didn't take their backpacks. We left them in the van," said Butler.

"Car break-ins are the number one crime against visitors and it's very common," said Jessica Rich, executive director of the Visitor Aloha Society of Hawaii. "Every week we experience in our office reports from visitors or from police, visitors who come here and before they even check into their hotel with all of their belongings, they put them in the truck of their car and they're ripped off "



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and they ripped off.

"The timing was bad, timing was bad. But at least we're all fine and nobody was hurt. That's the good thing. The memories are what's lost," Butler said.

The memories Butler referred to are the photos taken by the cameras that were stolen. It is not a matter of the money or equipment. Butler said it is the photos and what they represent.

"That's all we want back... is the memories because I was taking pictures for my son and he doesn't have the pictures now," said Butler.

"Hopefully, if the perpetrators have any conscience at all, they'll return the photos," said Rich.

"Because we went through all that stuff and we just want to remember our good times and stuff," added Nii.

After filing a police report, the troop decided to continue with their plans, which included some boogie boarding at Bellows Beach. There, they spotted a community clean-up project in progress. And despite their run of bad luck, the Scouts did what they always do, they pitched in and helped.

"They had just had a terrible thing, their bags were stolen and then about a half-hour later, they offer to clean up the beach. That's the Boy Scouts for you," said Suzanne Frazer of the East Oahu Lifeguard Association.

Frazer said the scouts said they plan to return to Bellows to continue with the clean-up project before returning to California.

Their good deeds will not go unrewarded. After hearing the news, several businesses are stepping up. Rich said Rainbow Drive-In has offered to pay for their dinner. Bishop Museum, Dole Plantation and the Polynesian Cultural Center have also anted up with complimentary admission offers and free tours.

"We just want them to leave the islands with a feeling of aloha and not with a bad taste in their mouths," said Rich.

Not to worry, said Nii. "I'm still glad that I came. It's just some things that just ruin the trip. We can move on."

In a postscript to the story, Rich made an offer to the people who stole the cameras. She said if they elect to return the photos or camera memory stick, they can mail it to the Visitor Aloha Society and it will pay for the postage. The address is: Waikiki Shopping Plaza, 2250 Kalakaua Avenue, Suite 403-3, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96815.



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