

Who stole from the sheriff?

Bateman's hunting gear snatched from Gambrills woods

By **HEATHER RAWLYK**
Staff Writer

County Sheriff Ron Bateman is determined to nab the crook who stole \$535 worth of hunting equipment from a patch of woods in Gambrills last weekend.

It's not the biggest crime to happen in the county, or the most interesting, the sheriff said yesterday.

But, it's personal.

The pilfered equipment, which was stored in tree stands on Del. James King's, R-Gambrills, 12.5 acre private property, belonged to Sheriff Bateman and his 13-year-old son, Zachary.

The sheriff said he has kept the equipment in two tree stands behind Kaufmann's Restaurant on the 300 block of Gambrills Road since September.

"It's been out there untouched and not bothered," he said.

Sheriff Bateman last saw the equipment Saturday morning. He returned the following morning to pull a stand from the woods to take with him on an eight-day hunting trip he planned in Garrett County.

When he got to the first stand, he immediately noticed the ladder was missing. The sheriff checked on another stand, and discovered that not only was that ladder gone, but the portable tree stand also was missing.

"I was on fire," he said.

Sheriff Bateman grabbed a ladder and straddled it below his remaining tree stand. He climbed up the trunk and searched, only to find the bolted-in tree stand was the only thing left behind.

(See **SHERIFF**, Page A7)

SHERIFF

(Continued from Page A1)

"They just took everything," he said.

Among the items snatched from the sheriff's two tree stands were two pairs of binoculars, three sections of a ladder, a pair of rattling antlers, two bow hooks, two seat pads, five screw-in hooks, a portable tree stand, and five tree stand steps, according to the police report.

"They took my binoculars and my son's binoculars, which were actually a Christmas gift to him," Sheriff Bateman said. "They took the hooks we'd hang our bow from. They even took the seat pads."

He said the theft is not only a low blow of a crime, but goes against hunting etiquette.

"You don't hunt in another man's stand, and you don't take another hunter's stuff," he said.

Sgt. Rick Tabor, of county police, likened the crime to someone taking another person's crab pot.

"You just don't do that," Sheriff Bateman said.

Especially to the county sheriff.

Sheriff Bateman is seeking justice, and knows just what he'll do if and when police nab whoever is responsible.

"If we lock these dudes up, I will be talking about it on the show (Anne Arundel's Most Wanted)," he said. "And it'll say 'apprehended' right across their little faces."