



MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE

Eye on Midtown - 2/25/ 2008

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**AND OF COURSE THE MANY
RESIDENT AND BUSINESS
MEMBERS!!!**

UPDATE ON 292 9TH TREET

On the evening of February 20th the MPSA Patrol conducted a routine inspection of the burned-out building at 292 9th Street. This building burned during the week of July 4th, 2007 and has become a serious nuisance property for the neighborhood. Because of its condition the property has been condemned - this automatically enables police to conduct these inspections, and arrest any trespasser regardless of the owner's input on the matter.

Vagrants have removed some of the boards sealing off the doors and windows. The patrol removed bedding and discarded it. Anyone - including neighborhood children - can easily walk right into this hazardous building. Graffiti decorates some of the rooms in the house, and the fireplaces have been used this winter.

The good news is that there seems to have been little such activity in recent weeks, as reflected by the fact that the newspapers found in the house have dates no later than November. This suggests that the police have gained some measure of the house for the time being. But spring is coming soon, and the shelters will soon reduce their intake. When that happens vagrants scout for places like this vacant building.

The broken windows theory comes into play here - it starts with one vagrant, than two, then several. Then drug dealing and prostitution proliferate around such a property. Sometimes they set fires to these places, as was the case in the latest fire in Poncey Highland. The sooner this "broken window" is fixed, the less problems we will have in the neighborhood.

Residents in the 9th and Myrtle area have been in contact with Code Enforcement and the bank with the mortgage on this property. Since the owners have thumbed their nose at the city and the neighborhood by not appearing in court to answer several violations, a bench warrant was taken out. So far the bank has been cooperative with both the neighborhood and Code Enforcement, but before they intervene they must exhaust certain legal procedures first.

Hopefully corrective measures will address this house before vagrants take over the streets in full force, and hopefully before another fire endangering surrounding residents and property owners.

The latest pictures are at www.midtownponce.org/292

BLOCK WATCH UPDATE

So far several people have come forth to volunteer as block captain, and we still need many more. Of the 28 block units currently designated we still need 20 more.

After the last burglary on Vedado Way, Sgt. Cooper stressed that the situation would have been easier if neighbors knew how to contact the owners. Part of the block watch program is to exchange emergency contact information with your neighbors in case of an emergency like this.

COURT UPDATE

Carjacking update - several Midtowners attended a court hearing for Leron J. on Monday, February 18th. This subject was booked into the Fulton County jail on February 2nd after a police chase in the car stolen from the recent carjacking on Myrtle Street. During the chase he injured several people. Judge Hicks found probable cause to try the case, and bond was denied. Furthermore, Judge Hicks declared him to be a "public menace" due to his extensive criminal

history. According to the Fulton Sheriff Department website, he remains in the Fulton County Jail on multiple charges, and with an outstanding warrant in DeKalb County. So far he has not been charged with the carjacking itself.

Burglary Conviction! - Larry Brewer, the subject caught burglarizing a home in Ansley Park, is now serving a 3-year sentence for burglary. The inmate locator on the Georgia Department of Corrections website shows a release date of late June 2010. He has been in and out of the prison system since 1981 in Georgia alone, mostly on Fulton County convictions.

One day last June while Sgt. Cooper patrolled the street of Midtown for us, street construction forced him to detour up Monroe and back down Piedmont. During that loop back to the service area, he responded to a burglar alarm call in Ansley Park and caught Brewer red-handed. Brewer was known to frequent our area too. We find it amazing that the three-strikes law did not kick in on this case ("Three Strikes You're Out" – mandatory life sentence)

Court Watch Training – The Fulton County DA's Office will conduct court watch training on March 8th, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. Sharla wrote further, *The purpose of this program is to encourage citizens to take an active role in our criminal justice system by educating citizens about the criminal justice process; and to get citizens involved when necessary in criminal cases. By involving citizens in the court process, we can send the message to criminals that crime will not be tolerated in our communities.*

To date, with the support of your fellow community members, a number of repeat criminals, have been convicted, sentenced to significant prison time and banished from our community. With your help, we can be even more successful in making our community safer in 2008.

I look forward to seeing you on March 8th; please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. If you would like to pre register, please contact Pierre Russell at 404-624-0612 or by email at Navarro.Russell@fultoncountyga.gov.

MPSA MAILBAG

Suspicious person - On Saturday, February 17 my partner and I were walking to the Midtown Art Theatres. When we were passing Grady High School on the 8th street side, we were approached by an African-American man, about 5'9 - 5'10, dressed nicely in jeans and a sweatshirt. He first asked us if we knew where Blake's was located. We gave him directions, and then he asked if we were 'family' -- meaning gay. We chatted for a few seconds, and then he asked if we had jumper cables. We said "no" and turned and went on our way. The reason I am reporting this is that this same individual had approached me several months ago near our home on Penn Avenue, asking me if I was 'family' and if I had jumper cables. I remember asking him where his car was, and he gave a vague answer. In neither instance has he asked for money or anything else, but I do find it strange that the incidents mirror each other. **MPSA Note: There are many directions this sort of thing can take, anywhere from looking for someone to use, or even looking to set someone up for a robbery or carjacking.**

NEIGHBORHOOD SECURITY ROBOT PATROLLING STREETS NEAR YOU

Rufus Terrill, a restaurant owner just south of our area, has come up with an innovative way to deal with street criminals plaguing his block. he constructed a home-made robot - complete with loud speakers, a water cannon, and spotlight - operated with a remote control. We are very interested in this idea - more in the AJC article and video at

http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/atlanta/stories/2008/02/20/robot_0221.html

BE SAFE! Please encourage your fellow Midtowners to join the MPSA!

- Your Neighbors at the Midtown Ponce Security Alliance