



## MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE

*Eye on Midtown – 4/29/2008*

### WITH MUCH GRATITUDE FOR OUR COMMUNITY PATROL SPONSORS

*Midtown Neighbors' Association*

*The Sembler Company*

*Post Parkside*

*Midtown Tire, Inc.*

*Ackerman & Company*

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

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

This is crunch time for us because the bulk of our membership renewals come in May. We critically need renewals in a timely fashion. Since we started in 2003, the neighborhood has become much more orderly, serious crime incidents have decreased, and we have gotten a better handle on the myriad of public security challenges facing the neighborhood.

But we still have many problematic individuals – many of them dangerous – roaming and prowling the streets of Midtown. Much of this can be attributed to the abundance of street drugs (especially crack) in the area and poorly and recklessly-managed “homeless” services. The shortages in police coverage and jail space will not be resolved in the foreseeable future, and redevelopment along Ponce is a slow process.

This leaves our diverse and dynamic neighborhood with the permanent necessity for a neighborhood patrol. We depend on ongoing financial support from the residents, businesses, and community sponsors to maximize public safety and security in our neighborhood. Renewal notices for May have been sent out. Please also encourage your neighbors to join!

### SPECIAL ADVISORY FROM SGT. COOPER

Residents should regularly check outbuildings, alleyways, and similar areas for:

- stolen items dumped
- materials possibly used for drug or criminal activity
- signs of urban camping and vagrant activity

These things should be reported to MPSA so we can more effectively monitor street people activity.

The presence of suspicious and criminal activity and individuals should be reported to 911 immediately.

Cold weather is largely behind us for a good while, shelters are reducing intake, and criminal and nuisance activity will increase as the spring and summer progress.

### NEW CASES TO MONITOR

**Car break-in suspect** - On Tuesday (April 22) a subject was reported to police for breaking into cars at Home Depot. When the police appeared, the subject fled on foot but was apprehended on Greenwood Avenue. The subject, Derrick R., has an extensive criminal history, and remains in the Fulton County jail on 29 charges (most unrelated to the incident at hand).

**Car break-in suspect** - On Friday (April 25) Police apprehended a suspect after a car break-in near Piedmont and 6<sup>th</sup> Street. The subject, James Barry R., remains in jail.

**Robbery suspect** - Thursday night into Friday (April 25) – MPSA Patrol apprehended 17-year old Keon A. in a stolen car. The car was stolen in the Virginia Highland or Poncey Highland area, and police have linked the subject to robberies in various locations around the city. The subject has a serious criminal history. The subject remains in jail.

**Prowler** - MPSA Patrol fielded a call about someone prowling into cars. The officer arrested the subject for prowling and obstruction of law enforcement officer. The subject has a warrant in Newton County.

**Burglary suspect** – William R. remains in the DeKalb County jail after a burglar arrest there. At arrest he had jewelry belonging to the burglary victim on Greenwood. Atlanta Police have linked him to several burglaries in Midtown and Virginia Highland.

The subject has a long criminal history and served time for burglary. Area residents and workers have seen him loitering among the Ponce & BVD street people.

### **KENNETH LAMB**

Kenneth Lamb has been observed in the area and is now listed on the sex offender registry as living at 1985 Lois Place in NW Atlanta. This is several miles from Midtown where he roams and camps most of the time. Kenneth Lamb was convicted of several counts of rape, and spent 20 years in prison. In recent months he has been noted for nuisance and menacing behavior in the MPSA service area.

- Profile sheet at [www.midtownponce.org/news/profile040.pdf](http://www.midtownponce.org/news/profile040.pdf)

### **RECENT RELEASES FROM PRISON**

**Mark Husbands** – was convicted for 21 counts of car theft, mostly in the neighborhood. He was sentenced to 10 years incarceration in 2004, and served 3 and a half years before making parole this past week. He lives on Monroe Circle in the same house as before. He remains on parole until 2014.

**Jackie Sue Hunter** – Many recall the aggressive red-headed prostitute at Charles Allen Drive and Ponce, with the street name “Joyce.” She has been in prison since 2006 for a drug offense and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Her long criminal history includes armed robbery, drug offenses, shoplifting, assault, prostitution, and escape. Before going to prison, she lived in the Ponce de Leon Hotel. Profile sheet:

- <http://www.midtownponce.org/news/profile007.pdf>

**Car burglars and car thieves** – According to APD sources, eight major perpetrators of car break-ins and car thefts in Midtown and Virginia Highland have completed sentences in the last two weeks, and could very well return to the area for further criminal activity.

### **PROBLEM PROPERTY: 292 9TH STREET**

Several residents attended the hearing for the owners of 292 9th Street on Friday April 25th. This is the house that burned in July 2007, and the house remains a serious hazard to the immediate vicinity. The wall along Argonne remains unstable and could collapse at any time. It is not safe to park or walk along the west sidewalk and curb of Argonne Avenue. Architects told us that the masonry is

severely compromised in several places, and therefore the house needs to be demolished.

Midtown Development Corporation LLC, listed in public records as the owner of the house, were cited for several code violations. Specifically, they were cited for the following ordinance (relevant excerpts):

*It shall be unlawful for any owner or operator to allow, or for any occupant to cause the following highly hazardous property conditions, any of which may constitute a nuisance as defined in Section 6 and 12.*  
(e) *Vacant Dwellings which are open and unsecured against unforced entry;*  
(f) *Conditions which, in the determination of the Director, are dilapidated, decayed, unsafe, unsanitary or that unreasonably expose occupants or the general public to illness, disease or physical injury;*

During the previous court hearing, they were found to be not in compliance, and were fined \$3100, and were ordered to bring the property into compliance before Friday's hearing. The judge again found the defendants not in compliance, since little work had been done since then, and then only in the 11th hour. One of the owners was led away in handcuffs to serve one day (was actually released at 7:45pm that day). Furthermore, the judge gave them until a new hearing on April 28th to completely finish boarding up the house, and secure the Argonne wall. The judge further said that each day that the house remains not in compliance constitutes a separate violation.

On Monday April 28th, the case went back to court. Several Midtowners attended this hearing also. The defendant showed up late to court (Judge Jackson called the case at 8:40am, and the defendant showed up at 9:30am).

Midtown Development Corporation was given an extension to comply due to the weather over the weekend. They must address outstanding issues prior to next court hearing this Thursday (May 1st) at 8am.

Afterwards, the three Midtowners at the court hearing were briefed by Officer Benjamin of Atlanta Code Enforcement. He explained that there would have to be a 51% loss in order for the City to condemn the property. He did not feel that the building fit that criteria.

Court watch volunteers will be needed this Thursday (May 1<sup>st</sup>). The case will be heard at the Atlanta

Municipal Court, 8am, in court room 6D. Please contact us if you are interested in helping out.

#### **MPSA MAILBAG**

*Do you guys have the ability to run background checks on people, even if it is informal word-of-mouth queries? For example, two different handy-men / beggars have approached me and knocked on my door since I moved in ~5 years ago. They both appear to have substance abuse problems but otherwise have not been threatening in any way. One of them still comes around and claims to do odd-jobs for several residents of the neighborhood. I feel ok paying him to mow my grass or weed my flower bed but if you guys tell me he has multiple convictions for burglary or worse I'd want to shoo him off. For awhile he got in the bad habit of knocking on my door after 10:00 pm "asking for work" but of course was really looking for water, money, etc.*

MPSA Reply: We do not conduct background checks for this kind of purpose – our “intel” comes primarily from public records. Employing informal labor is always a risk, but bringing someone into your surroundings who is both living on the streets **and** has substance abuse issues puts you and your neighbors at serious risk of crime. We therefore advise very strongly against this. Even if you trust someone only for cutting the grass, street people of this profile usually run with dangerous criminal elements who could come into the picture down the road.

***Burglar climbs to second floor window*** - Just want to let you know about a break in on Myrtle between 4th and 5th on Tuesday 4 am. The guy climbed the wall of our house and came in through the door to our 2nd story deck. Having the house next door for sale and vacant probably empowered him. The door

*was not locked but is a difficult door to get open. He came in passed by our bedroom and went downstairs to look around. The dog who was in her cage for the night started barking which woke up my wife. She went down to see what the dog was barking at and encountered the thief in the kitchen. Her loud "Get Out of my House" made the guy run out the back door. The dog was released at this point and chased him out of the yard then turned ran back through the house and out the front to pursue the guy. But he was gone. He did make off with my wallet, my cell phone and a power drill. The police we called and showed up within minutes. Twenty minutes later I called my cellphone which was answered by some woman at Grady Hospital. She said she just bought the phone for \$50. I asked her if she wanted to sell it back to me since it was just stolen and I was about to cut it off. She hung up. One of the credit cards was used to buy gas and that was about it. The guy was smallish, black man with a gray colored shirt, maybe mid-30s. My wife said he looked sorry and scared not very threatening when she saw him. The dog, a Great Pyrenees, saved the day along with my wife's blood-curdling yell but will no longer will the dog be sleeping in a cage at night. The bottom line is beware these guys will find any way to get in including scaling the wall of your home. I just glad he was next to the door to the backyard and was not trapped by my wife. I worry what a trapped intruder would do and/or what my dog might have done.*

**STAY SAFE AND KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN!  
Please encourage your fellow Midtowners to join the MPSA!**

**- Your Neighbors at the Midtown Ponce Security Alliance**