



## MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE

MIDTOWN PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT 9 / 2006

### IN ATTENDANCE AT SAFETY MEETING: 37 in total, including:

- Moderator Peggy Denby,
- Officer S. Hale of Atlanta Police Department
- Sharla Jackson – Community Prosecutor with the Fulton County District Attorney's office
- Special guest Vince Smith of the Atlanta Gateway Center and Atlanta Union Mission

### SUMMARY OF THE SAFETY MEETING:

- Peggy Denby opened the meeting reading excerpts of several E-mails from around the neighborhood, which we are publishing in the mailbag section of this report.
- Vince Smith discussed homeless issues in Atlanta.
- Sharla Jackson led our discussion of court watch issues and other matters related to the Fulton County District Attorney's office.
- Officer Hale of both Atlanta Police and MPSA Patrol gave us an update and discussed MPSA Patrol activities (supplement 1 of this report).

### COMMUNITY PROSECTOR

Sharla Jackson briefed us on four cases actively monitored by the MPSA (all suspects legally deemed innocent until convicted in a court of law). Those four are:

- **Jermaine Moss** - the guy in the striped car charged with breaking into cars around the neighborhood. He was the subject of an alert sent out.
- **Ricky Love** - charged with an unprovoked brutal beating of a woman on Peachtree recently. For years this man has terrorized the Ponce de Leon area, among other places. He has assaulted many people including police officers. Each time he gets off lightly, but this time we are hoping he will no longer be a fixture in our neighborhood.
- **Cecil Washington** - charged with committing a home invasion at the Dakota. This subject is frequently in and out of jail.
- **Damon Foson** - charged with brutally beating another woman near West Peachtree and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets (location corrected from last E-blast). The attack was unprovoked, and the assailant has several entries in his criminal history of assaulting people. He was the subject of a recent request for court attendance.

Ms. Jackson explained to us prioritization in handing down prison sentences. Violent crimes are certainly among the highest priority for incarceration, which normally result in a prison sentence the first time around. Property crimes are normally medium-level priority, which only sometimes result in prison terms upon the first offense. Drug offenses are among the lower of priorities, and those convicted of felony drug offenses are usually not given prison terms until about the third time around.

Ms. Jackson stressed the value of court watch participation. Officer Hale related to the group about the "Preacher Man," - several area hotels have chronic problems with this man usually for trespassing. Normally judges (especially municipal court) will simply let these types go for "time served" (the one or two nights spent in jail). As this man was a chronic problem for hotels, many representatives of the various hotels sent someone to attend one of his court appearances. The judge sentenced this man to 160 days in jail. If it weren't for community participation, the judge would likely have turned this man loose back into the community for "time served."

*The Community Prosecutor's office is sponsoring a free community service seminar on October 7<sup>th</sup>*

***Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)***

***Saturday October 7th, 9:30 to 11:30am***

***Held in the A. Hamblin Letton Auditorium at Atlanta Medical Center (320 Parkway Drive)  
Learn about the CPTED principles that are effective in the reduction of opportunities for  
crime in neighborhoods***

- ***Natural Access Controls***
- ***Natural Surveillance***
- ***Territorial Reinforcement***

***Call 404-265-3450 for additional information on how to attend this free seminar. This event  
is sponsored by the Zone 5 Fulton County Community Prosecutor and Atlanta Police  
Department Community Services staff.***

The Fulton County District Attorney's office maintains a website at [www.atlantada.org](http://www.atlantada.org). As an aside they regularly post press releases about noteworthy trial dates and convictions – including major drug dealers, murderers, and very disturbing animal cruelty cases throughout the county.

## **HOMELESS ISSUES**

Vince Smith spoke to the group about homeless issues in Atlanta. Vince Smith has been with the Atlanta Union Mission for 16 years, and is currently director of community relations there. He has worked on many community and neighborhood challenges. Additionally, he is also director the Gateway Center, which recently marked a year of operation.

Mr. Smith spoke on a number of issues and field questions from attendees:

- History of homeless services in the community
- The vision of the Regional Commission on Homelessness
- The connection to United Way
- Future plans
- How neighborhoods can speak to issues resulting from homeless services providers

In the 1980's Congress stripped funding for mental health services, thereby undermining quality of life in urban centers. Many were let out of mental institutions and dumped onto the streets. Many homeless have mental health and substance abuse issues. Mr. Smith also pointed out that homelessness not just drugs and mental health issues though these are significant.

There are now significantly less public assistance services than before. Prisons provide more mental health services than any other government agency.

While the City of Atlanta provided the former jail space, The Gateway Center's operation is funded by the United Way of Atlanta as a special project. Their mission, according to their website: To end homelessness through a collaborative effort, providing basic therapeutic services that stabilize individual conditions and promote self-sufficiency.

The Gateway Center works with HOPE Task force (Homeless Outreach and Panhandling Enforcement) of the Atlanta Police Department. There are criminal elements on the streets that

prey on homeless and homeless services, which seriously undermine the effectiveness of a homeless service's operation and reputation in the surrounding community. The challenge is always to provide help to people who genuinely need it, and to ward off predatory vagrants.

The Gateway Center is housed in the former Atlanta City Jail. It exists primarily to make referrals to social and medical services, job placement, temporary shelter, and housing. The center provides showers, coin laundry, locker services and other services on a walk-in basis. Gateway also has a psychiatrist one day per week. 7,000 were served by the center during its first year of operation.

The Gateway Center is built to house 270 men and 30 women. Earlier this year there was discussion in the Midtown Safety Meeting about the Gateway Center operating under capacity. 47 beds are designated for homeless veterans, which went unused pending approval from the Veteran's Administration. This issue has been resolved, and the Gateway Center is now operating at full capacity.

The Gateway Center gives women and children special handling. The center usually refers women and children to special housing because of special needs, usually operated by area churches. A new center for women and children will open at Trinity Methodist Church (across from City Hall). More of these are certainly needed around the city.

There remains a serious problem of other cities "dumping" homeless in Atlanta. One agency in South Carolina was seeking a place to send homeless – they were urgently asked not to send them here because Atlanta has a severe backlog services.

While the Gateway Center has a zero-tolerance policy on drugs and other illegal activity in and around their premises, they do not conduct background checks. They do not want to discourage people from seeking help – they operate with low barriers to get the homeless inside and off streets.

In other notes Mr. Smith was asked about New Yorker article we promoted earlier this year – he feels that the article is right on track. Also, they try to get area churches to work with the Gateway Center and pool resources and volunteer power for a more effective program, rather than scatter services. Generally churches insist on running their own programs.

#### **Weblinks for more information**

- United Way Regional Commission on Homelessness - <http://www.unitedwayatlanta.org/e0-homeless.asp>
- Gateway Center - <http://www.gatewayctr.org/>
- Atlanta Union Mission - <http://www.aumcares.org/>
- New Yorker article "Million Dollar Murray" - [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/060213fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/060213fa_fact)
- Metro Atlanta Tri-Jurisdictional Collaborative - <http://www.tri-j.net/site/trij/>

**MPSA MAILBAG** – not necessarily views of the MPSA, facts not confirmed by APD though sources are highly reliable. Some messages were edited for better flow.

*(9/11) This morning at 7:30, the motion detector for our backyard announced. We found two young black males running out of our yard and into shrubs next door on south. They hid for a few minutes, apparently thinking they were out of view. Then they spent time at the corner garage at 5<sup>th</sup> and Myrtle. Then they came back, slowly casing the alley, and finally exited the alley at the south end.*

*Their white gang colors were highly visible through the plants. They were wearing white dew rags, white T-shirts, khaki shorts and white sneakers.*

*[In another incident] on Thursday night, around 2:15am, we ran off couple people. We told them they were on camera. The next day we found a suitcase and duffle bag were in our yard. Somebody had rummage through them before abandoning them.*

*(9/10) My neighbor called me at 3:00 in the morning last week to tell me someone had entered into my tenant's apartment. She woke up to find him in her bedroom. He was busy looking through her jewelry box. She laid there till he went into the living room and then she started to cough. At that point he ran out the door. The perpetrator only took her cell and an MP3 player. She was lucky not to have been hurt. **MPSA Note: This happened around 9/03***

**Excerpt from article read at safety meeting (Source: The Story 9/07)**

*Two weeks ago at 5:40 pm, a Hispanic man confronted a woman leaving Publix on Ponce de Leon Avenue and asked her for change. When the woman said no to the man, he grabbed her purse and jumped into her tan Honda Civic. The perpetrator is still at large. At the same location in the previous month, a woman left her car running to quickly purchase a bag of ice. While in the store, a man entered her car and drove off. However, he then discovered the woman's five-year old son in the back seat and abandoned the car at North Avenue.*

**E-mail about the assault perpetrated by Ricky Love**

*I was walking south on Peachtree St. on the west side of the street and noticed a black male on the sidewalk in front of Gordon Biersch yelling at himself (as no one else was present) and waving his arms around as if he were fighting someone. I continued to walk ahead and decided to just ignore this person, so not to make eye contact or to give him a reason to ask for money or show any aggression towards me.*

*I was between Spire and Gordon Biersch as the gentlemen walked past me and once he was out of my vision and well to my side and to the back of me started punching me in the head, the neck and the back until I loss my balance and fell over a wire or rope that was used to secure perhaps a newly planted tree. I was fortunate that I didn't fall in to the street at rush hour.*

*He walked off as I lay on the ground and no one attempted to go after him, and I watched as he turned west on 7th St. He did not steal anything from me nor did he ask me for anything. I reported it to Midtown Blue by phone and then physically walked over there. Officer Kilgore of the APD took my report.*

*I went back to Midtown Blue the following day to ride around Midtown late afternoon with one of the officer's to try and identify the attacker. They also took pictures of my bruises at that time. I did identify a black male that was yelling at himself and throwing his arms which happened to be sitting on the sidewalk up against my condo building (Metropolis) and I understand that he was arrested that night.*

*The next day I received a call from a detective that needed me to try and pick out the attacker from a picture line up, which I did. It was the same person that identified in front of Metropolis the previous day.*

*The attacker, Rick Love, has been charged with aggravated stalking and aggravated battery. **MPSA Note: Ricky Love is now a high-priority court watch case for us. Several Midtowners appeared in court on September 14<sup>th</sup> and voiced their concerns about this man. The judge revoked all bonds, ordered a psychiatric evaluation, and assured that neighborhood representatives will receive adequate notice before considering any further action.***

*(9/15) For about a month we have been having disturbances especially on Thursday nights from the house at the corner of 7th and Piedmont. The persons there are renters and belong to some fraternity. Their outdoor parties are loud and obnoxious and often last until three in the morning, with the police being called in to intervene. No permanent stopping of the nuisance has taken*

place. Do you have any knowledge of this problem, or any suggestions as to what further action could be taken? **MPSA response: the owner of the house has been notified, but we are not yet sure what will be done. These parties generate many complaints around the neighborhood.**

**(8/28)** My younger sister was mugged several weeks ago. She was beaten up pretty badly and is much traumatized. After a head injury (she was stabbed in the forehead by her attacker) she has a persistent infection and no progress on healing. Her doctor discovered she has a piece of metal lodged in her forehead from the attack. She is young and does not have health insurance so she has been very worried about running up medical bills. She is a waitress and works long hours just to make ends meet, so money is an issue. However, the doctor has told her that she needs to see a surgeon to have the wound attended to. The doctor has also warned her that a plastic surgeon may be required because of the location of the wound.

Does anyone know of reduced cost medical programs for young people in her situation (i.e. lacking health insurance)? Can anyone recommend a surgeon or plastic surgeon who would consider treating her knowing about her lack of health insurance? Any other advice for how to help?

**Response from Sharla Jackson:** If the victim reported the crime, she may be eligible for Crime Victim's compensation to allay her medical bills. There is now a \$15,000 cap for medical bills. A direct referral to CJCC (Criminal Justice Coordinating Council) Crime Victim Compensation Program can be made at 404-559-4949. They also have a website at [www.ganet.org/cjcc/](http://www.ganet.org/cjcc/)

Eligibility requirements include (full details are available from CJCC)

- Victim must be an innocent party of a violent crime (must have a physical injury)
- Must be reported to proper governmental authority within 72 hours.

### **MPSA PATROL VEHICLE**

*It's out there!* The MPSA has "raised the bar" on making the Midtown neighborhood a safer place by raising funds and purchasing a patrol vehicle. Effective immediately the patrol officers will be driving the new patrol truck with a flashing amber light on top, attracting the attention of MPSA members, non-members and criminals.

People have recently asked us about the meaning of the logo – here's the story:

- The green blocks stand for the Midtown area with its magnificent trees, beautiful homes, and a true neighborhood lifestyle, the things we cherish most about living here.
- The white grid stands for the safe pedestrian-oriented streets of Midtown, and the thicker white part at the bottom represents a Ponce de Leon transformed from a major public nuisance to a neighborhood-friendly environment well-integrated with the rest of Midtown.
- The surrounding blue reminds us that law abiding citizens in their diversity are entitled to a safe haven in which to live, work, play, shop, dine, and pursue entertainment and recreation...

### **CONCLUSION**

When reading our reports please remember that the MPSA focuses solely on safety and security issues, which are threats and therefore inherently negative. We are proud to call this vibrant and diverse neighborhood home, with its wonderful amenities, historic character, interesting events, and most importantly its fantastic neighbors. This drives our dedication to a safer and more secure Midtown...

Have fun and enjoy the neighborhood, but be safe...

**- YOUR NEIGHBORS AT THE MPSA**

**SUPPLEMENT 1: MPSA PATROL ACTIVITY FOR AUGUST 1<sup>ST</sup> TO SEPTEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>**

<p><b>ARRESTS</b>  <b>Urinating in public</b> (1)  <b>Drinking in public</b> (3)  <b>Violation of knife ordinance</b> (2)  <b>Poss. of crack cocaine</b> (1)  <b>Obstruction</b> (2)  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Includes a prostitute who assaulted MPSA officer conducting field interview. Had razor blade stashed in bra.</i></li> </ul> <b>Tamper with evidence</b> (1)  <b>Wanted on warrant</b> (1)  <b>Violation of pedestrian duties</b> (3)  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ includes a transvestite just arrived from Columbus Ohio</li> </ul> <b>Disorderly conduct</b> (2)  <b>Illegally posting signs</b> (1)  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Handled by citation because APD had no paddy wagon available - same subject was previously arrested for posting street spam on Ponce de Leon Avenue. Arrested at Kennesaw and Ponce.</i></li> </ul> <b>Use of park after hours</b> (1)  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>subject was spotted walking out of Piedmont Park at 3am as patrol drove down 10th Street. Subject lives in Chicago.</i></li> </ul> <b>Note:</b> some suspects arrested on multiple charges.</p>	<p><b>TRAFFIC DETAIL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stop sign (7)</li> <li>▪ No insurance (3)</li> <li>▪ Expired/invalid tag (3)</li> <li>▪ No Driver license (2)</li> <li>▪ Red light (1)</li> <li>▪ Speeding (2)</li> <li>▪ Brake lights (1)</li> <li>▪ Lane change (1)</li> <li>▪ Helmet law (1)</li> <li>▪ Reckless Driving (1)</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Of these 1 was arrested.</li> <li>▪ Some received multiple citations.</li> <li>▪ 13 of these occurred on 9/07/2006</li> </ul>
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**PATROL BOOK HIGHLIGHTS FROM AUGUST**

9/07	MPSA Patrol field interview with prostitute at Ponce and piedmont. This subject attacked an area resident last year, and is very hostile to police. Lives in Atlanta Housing Authority building on Centennial Park Drive
9/07	MPSA Patrol assisted APD in capturing suspect breaking into car
9/06	911 calls about man driving around pointing a gun at prostitutes (maybe this is another good reason prostitutes should not be doing that). Car described as a black car, with Missouri tag number 481 ZBB
8/29	Person screaming at 8 <sup>th</sup> and Charles Allen. Someone obviously under the influence claims that a "friend" he did not know well stole his car. They had previously been in an area bar.
8/29	Police chase originating in Dekalb County came through the area. This chase began in the Ashford Dunwoody Road area, made its way to Ponce, then Boulevard, then over to Spring Street. Chase ended in the Brookwood area.
8/23	APD received call about man stabbed in entrance of Border's Bookstore.
8/19	MPSA call about urban campers at 750 Monroe. MPSA Patrol did not find anything there.
8/10	MPSA Patrol assisted with vagrant detail. Some found in vacant house on Kennesaw Avenue.
8/06	MPSA Patrol assisted APD apprehend criminal at 8 <sup>th</sup> and Durant. Something to do with stolen goods.

Other notes: Numerous cars towed, including an abandoned car with tags expired in 2004. This car literally had weeds growing on it.

**SEPTEMBER 2006 MIDTOWN PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT**

**SUPPLEMENT 2: AUGUST CRIME STATS FOR SELECTED INCIDENT TYPES**

**ROBBERY**

Incident #	Street	Offense	Report Date	Intersection
62142084	PONCE DE LEON AVE	ROBBERY-BUSINESS-GUN	20060802	near PDL Ct
62220254	PIEDMONT AVE	ROB-STREET-GUN	20060810	4th
62260606	PONCE DE LEON AVE	ROBBERY-BUSINESS-GUN	20060814	near PDL Ct
62410057	8TH ST	ROB-STREET-STRONGARM	20060829	Chas Allen

**BURGLARY**

Incident #	Street	Offense	Report Date	Intersection
62221531	ARGONNE AVE	BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC	20060810	5th
62390737	10TH ST	BURG-NO FORCD ENTRY-RESID	20060827	near Taft

**AUTO THEFT**

Incident #	Street	Offense	Report Date	Intersection
62150726	9TH ST	AUTOTHEFT	20060803	Taft
62171681	PONCE DE LEON AVE	AUTOTHEFT	20060805	BVD
62292216	PONCE DE LEON AVE	THEFT OF TRUCK/VAN/BUS	20060817	Sembler
62290406	PIEDMONT AVE	AUTOTHEFT	20060817	7th
62311908	CHARLES ALLEN DR	AUTOTHEFT	20060819	5th
62330073	10TH ST	THEFT OF TRUCK/VAN/BUS	20060821	Myrtle
62390699	PIEDMONT AVE	AUTOTHEFT	20060827	8th
62381446	PIEDMONT AVE	AUTOTHEFT	20060827	3rd
62401643	PONCE DE LEON AVE	THEFT OF TRUCK/VAN/BUS	20060828	Sembler
62430968	PIEDMONT AVE	AUTOTHEFT	20060831	8th

**SELECTED CRIME TALLIES FOR MPSA AREA – 2004 to 2006**

ROBBERY			BURGLARY			AUTO THEFT					
	2006	2005	2004		2006	2005	2004		2006	2005	2004
JAN	3	3	4	JAN	0	3	6	JAN	9	3	11
FEB	1	5	4	FEB	6	6	1	FEB	2	4	5
MAR	4	3	4	MAR	3	3	2	MAR	6	3	3
APR	11	4	7	APR	2	2	1	APR	7	5	4
MAY	5	5	6	MAY	1	5	1	MAY	6	12	4
JUN	7	8	7	JUN	7	2	9	JUN	14	4	7
JUL	6	4	7	JUL	9	1	6	JUL	16	10	15
AUG	4	5	2	AUG	2	4	11	AUG	10	6	9
SEP		4	3	SEP		10	6	SEP		3	6
OCT		2	10	OCT		4	10	OCT		3	6
NOV		5	5	NOV		3	10	NOV		5	3
DEC		8	1	DEC		11	6	DEC		2	10
TOTAL	41	56	60	TOTAL	30	54	69	TOTAL	60	60	83
→ YTD				→ YTD				→ YTD			
Month AVE →	5.12	4.66	5.00	Month AVE →	3.75	4.50	5.75	Month AVE →	8.75	5.00	6.91

Source: Atlanta Police website (crime mapping feature). This chart covers only MPSA service area, and only if the patrol could, at least theoretically, have some influence. This is not a performance review of the MPSA Patrol.