



MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE

Public Safety Report – 12 / 2007

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ISSUES AT MONTHLY SAFETY MEETING

ATTENDANCE

21 people attended the December public safety meeting including:

- **Peggy Denby** – MNA Safety Chair / MPSA President (moderator)
- **Lt. Trivelpiece** – Atlanta Police Narcotics Division
- **Lt. McGee** – Commander, APD Midtown Mini-Precinct
- **Lt. Foster** – MARTA Police
- **Sharla Jackson** – Community Prosecutor for the Fulton County DA's Office

OPENING NOTES

WETbar shooter - The alleged shooter at WETbar has been apprehended and charged with aggravated assault. This was a drive-by shooting that started with the alleged assailant making anti-gay slurs to some customers at a nearby convenience store. The situation escalated to a drive-by shooting in front of WETbar. Southern Voice reported that the Atlanta Police are pursuing this as a hate crime.

Shooting at Boulevard and North Avenue – A shooting occurred at Boulevard and North Avenue. The subject was shot in the back as he drove off, and thereby crashed into a retaining wall. Unofficial sources tell us that this may be drug-related.

Vision, the mega-nightclub on Peachtree that closed due to redevelopment, wants to reopen across the street from its former location. According to media reports Dewberry Capital, which owns the property along Peachtree between 10th and 11th, signed a lease with the owners. They plan on a 10,000 square foot nightclub and a 5,000 square foot restaurant on the property. We would rather see Dewberry Capital develop this prime property into an enhancement of the Midtown experience rather than host and capitalize on a major detrimental influence to the quality-of-life here.

NEIGHBORHOOD ROBBERIES

Robberies remain an alarming ongoing issue. The victim whose story we shared in our December 2nd Eye on Midtown shared his experience with attendees at the safety meeting.

The victim was robbed as he arrived home around 9pm. He got out of his car and was robbed at gunpoint as he checked his mail on his way inside his home. He was robbed of his wallet, cell phone, and PDA device.

The culprit was described as a black male with short dreadlocks - a description we keep hearing of robbery suspects. At the time of this robbery he was wearing jeans and a tan camouflage sweatshirt with a hood.

About 30 minutes later the victim's credit card was used at a BP station in East Point for two transactions of \$20 each. Five minutes later the card was used again at a McDonald's for two transactions totaling \$20 - enough for four combos.

The culprit obviously had convenient access to a vehicle, and possibly an accomplice waiting in that vehicle, because the stolen credit cards were used in East Point just 30 minutes later. It is believed that the culprit then sold gas to other customers at the convenience store, and 5 minutes later made \$20 in transactions at a McDonald's. Later that night the card was used at an Amoco in a similar way.

Credit card thieves will sometimes loiter at gas stations to sell people gas at discounted price (i.e. \$20 in gas for \$10 or \$15). ***Those who accept such offers from strangers at gas stations render themselves liable to serious criminal charges if the gas or goods are purchased with stolen credit cards!*** Under §16-8-7a of the Georgia Criminal Code, anyone who receives goods that he knows or should know to be stolen may be charged with *theft by receiving*.

The victim's wallet was found somewhere in the neighborhood and turned in at a local homeless service agency. The Atlanta Police has a detective working on this case.

Other robbery news:

On the morning of December 12th, Channel 2 reported about Midtown robberies. We did not see the report, but fellow Midtowners tell us that they cited 14 incidents.

During the month of November the Atlanta Police Department took reports on at least 8 robberies within the MPSA service area. Even more robberies occurred in the rest of Midtown proper. We itemized the robberies in the MPSA service area in the supplement to this report. We will pull the police reports for further assessment.

We just received an unconfirmed report that someone on Charles Allen Drive was robbed during broad daylight while retrieving mail at his/her home.

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We received the story behind the robbery report previously reported in Eye on Midtown. A patron of the Eagle was returning to his car when the assailant approached with the gun. The suspect was described as follows (similar to above description):

- Black male, medium to dark complexion
- Chin-length thin dreadlocks
- Early to mid 20's in age
- Approximately 5'9" in height
- Thin, baby-face – appears to have never needed to shave
- Carrying a silver handgun.

We seem to have at least two serial robbers:

- A guy in dreadlocks, sometimes described as having a “baby face.”
- A group in cars – In our last safety report we previously reported a group of black males who robbed several people at gunpoint at a neighborhood restaurant.

MIDTOWN MINI-PRECINCT

Once again we have a new Lieutenant in the Midtown Mini-Precinct. Lt. McGee replaced Lt. Ewing in the Midtown Mini-Precinct. Lt. McGee joined Atlanta's finest in 1989. He is a fan of *roadside safety checks*, colloquially known as roadblocks. The MPSA appreciates these for a number of reasons. Among them:

- They enhance police visibility
- They discourage illegitimate cruising and prostitution traffic
- They discourage cut-through traffic

When you go through one of these in our neighborhood, please thank the officers for doing this! We need all the police coverage we can get! Likewise, be sure to have you license, registration, and insurance cards handy – they will make this a more pleasant experience for you.

During the month of November the Midtown Mini-Precinct received 649 calls for service. They also made 574 drop-in visits to Midtown businesses. They made 27 city ordinance arrests, 4 misdemeanor arrests, and 1 warrant arrest. They also made 50 traffic cases. These numbers do not include the Zone 5 Mobile division, which handles most 911 calls and patrol when time permits.

NARCOTICS

Lt. Trivelpiece was our special guest at the monthly safety meeting. The Narcotics Division is of special interest to us because of the drug market along Ponce and Boulevard (coinciding with a corporate-owned Section 8 housing project) driving much of the street crime and compounding the vagrant activity in surrounding areas.

The Narcotics Division targets mid-level drug dealers. In police terminology there are several levels of drug dealers:

- **High-level**, who deal high volumes of drugs. State and federal authorities target these.

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- **Mid-level** – buy from high-level and control certain parts of the city including the Boulevard corridor. These are the ones who recruit children to serve as lookouts, drive the crackhead traffic we see on Ponce, and terrorize residents in housing projects into submission.
- **Low-level** – are the small quantity street dealers we see on the streets, especially around Ponce and Boulevard. Prostitutes often supplement their criminal activity by working with these types. The Red Dog Unit and the regular police operations target these.

After the Neil Street tragedy last year the Narcotics Division was overhauled, and completely re-staffed. All remaining officers and investigators in the narcotics were transferred to other positions within APD.

Narcotics work requires extensive training, so drug dealers have enjoyed free reign while the Narcotics Unit undergoes special training by federal and state agencies. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation serves as the primary partner and provides field training for the Narcotics Unit. The officers also undergo special training from federal agencies, such as the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration).

In Midtown crystal meth is becoming more of an issue. Surprisingly much of it is coming from Mexico now, according to Lt. Trivelpiece. Lt. Trivelpiece also told us that heroin is coming back into Midtown, and we are starting to find needles again in vagrant encampments. In nightclubs ecstasy and GHB remain a serious problem.

The narcotics division also has a tip line: 404-853-3444. Callers can remain anonymous but every detail matters. They need to know descriptions (or even names) of suspects, where they stash it, when they sell it, vehicle descriptions and tag numbers, and any other detail available. The more the Narcotics Unit and other police agencies know about a suspect, the more effectively they can make a case. This tip line should be used to report ongoing patterns. If you see a drug dealer in action it is best to call 911 for police to check out.

In other notes Creative Loafing ran a cover story about how drug gangs are taking over Atlanta. Hopefully the new Narcotics Team will be able to prevent Atlanta from becoming another Medellin (a major city in Colombia run by drug lords).

- <http://atlanta.creativeloafing.com/gyrobase/Content?oid=350116>.

COURT WATCH

Sharla Jackson gave us an update during the safety meeting on several court cases. Those able to attend any of these hearings should let us know so we can keep you posted.

Ricky Love – contrary to the judge's order, no psychological evaluation has taken place so far. His next hearing is currently scheduled for December 28th. Ricky Love has spontaneously attacked many people in the community, and was arrested on aggravated assault in July of 2006. He has been in custody since his arrest shortly after the last attack.

Tywong McCoy – he is expected to have a court date in January. This is the subject that allegedly exposes himself to women in the neighborhood. The Fulton County DA's Office served a recidivist notice, which is a document that the prosecutor files to notify the defendant that they are pursuing enhanced sentencing. It includes the notice, plus certified copies of all prior felony convictions. ***It would be extremely helpful if we had people who experienced his behavior to come forward even if they did not report it to the police. That evidence could be used in court against him.***

On December 10th he was arrested once again, this time on a violation of a restraining order, meaning that he now has a new felony charge of aggravated stalking.

Office creeper - An office creeper working buildings in Midtown was recently arrested. Office creepers pose a serious problem in the Midtown business district. They often pose as janitors or delivery personnel. They snatch valuables from workspaces including laptops and stash them into cleaning carts as they make their way out of the building. When at work be sure to secure your laptop with a cable lock, and lock purses and other valuables in desk drawers.

Burglaries - Another serial burglar has been arrested. This one hit numerous homes from Midtown to Buckhead.

MPSA PATROL LOGS

- **11/17** – A shoplifter arrested at a member convenience store
- **11/17** – Patrol assisted with a robbery call behind the Eagle.
- **11/19** – Vagrant arrested for pedestrian in roadway violation
- **11/19** – two abandoned cars towed
- **11/22** – three vagrants arrested – pedestrian in roadway violation
- **12/2** – MPSA Patrol was first on scene of an accident on Juniper Street. Driver crashed into a utility pole and was subsequently charged with DUI.
- **12/04** – Sgt. Cooper and MPSA board member Steve Gower conducted a neighborhood street light assessment. During this time an MPSA member business called about a shoplifter.
- **12/07** – burglary call in Old Midtown.
- **12/10** – numerous residents called MPSA Patrol, Midtown Blue, and 911 about an obnoxious vagrant smoking crack, harassing patrons of nearby businesses and residents, and drinking in public. When MPSA Patrol arrived the subject was searched, checked for warrants, and told not to return to the neighborhood.
- **Various times** – three additional abandoned and junked vehicles removed from neighborhood. Numerous criminal trespass warnings served for area businesses.

VAGRANT ACTIVITY

The Patrol continues to combat urban camping but has made progress. We came up with a concept that seems to work on a problem spot near the Ponce entrance of Burger King – the vagrants have not returned to that spot since this strategy was launched. They have also quit coming to other spots currently monitored by the MPSA and its patrol. Cold weather helps to reduce the volume of urban camping and other vagrant activity especially at night.

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The eradication of “Camp Burger King” this past summer – located on the Burger King property – continues to hold up well. We still find some evidence of vagrant activity but removing the fence concealing this camp eradicated 95% of the problems caused by this spot. Other nearby properties removed fences and thereby eradicated vagrant activity in those places too.

Urban campsites must be addressed early in the development process. Once they camp there a few nights in a row they developed an ownership mentality about that spot. The longer they claim a spot, the harder it is to eradicate them.

Very special thanks to the Sembler Company for trimming up the bushes along Lakeview. This reduces the number of places to camp along Lakeview Avenue. As you drive along Lakeview Avenue (below St. Charles Avenue) you will see immediately if street people are camping or doing drugs back there.

The vagrants seem to have quit coming back to other spots currently monitored by the MPSA and its patrol. Next week we plan to walk the entire stretch of the Beltline along our service area. It will be interesting to see how well a major clean-up has held up. The eradication of “Camp Northwoods” (in the North Woods of Piedmont Park) in early 2004 has held up well too.

The MPSA Patrol also confiscates shopping carts and returns them to their owners. Vagrants, especially those who burglarize our homes, use stolen shopping carts to haul off their loot. If the patrol finds an abandoned shopping cart it will be returned to the business that it came from. If vagrants are found pushing carts belonging to area businesses they will be told to unload the contents on the spot so the cart can be immediately returned to the owner. If the business that owns the cart is willing to prosecute the vagrant will be located again and arrested.

“Skunking” – We are testing a strategy known as “skunking.” This involves the use of skunk oil and skunk scent. Police in other jurisdictions have deployed skunk scent in places where street people camp and congregate. Skunk scent, both natural and synthetic, serves as a very effective but safe agent in fumigating vagrants and crackheads out of abandoned buildings and urban campsites. This obviously cannot be deployed in close proximity to homes, businesses, and legitimate foot traffic.

The Seattle Times published an interesting article on this strategy at http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/nationworld/2001809740_skunk07.html

GENERAL PUBLIC SECURITY ISSUES

STREET LIGHTS

Last week we surveyed the area for street light needs. As it has been a while since we systematically checked neighborhood lighting, a number of burned-out street lights were discovered and reported to Georgia Power. Most have been fixed, and we will follow up on the remaining dark lights.

The MNA has approved funding for 20 new lights in the neighborhood. We submitted a list of recommendations, all on existing poles, and an order was sent to Georgia Power. We do not know at this time how long it will take for installation.

PROSTITUTION WATCH

Recent Court Watch case - On December 12th several Midtowners went to court with an MPSA board member to testify against a prostitute. On the morning of 12/11 a noted transvestite prostitute afflicting the Midtown community assaulted an MPSA Board member with rocks while he was conducting MPSA business in the patrol truck. While the police were on the way this prostitute spit on the MPSA Patrol truck, which was captured on camcorder and made available to police and the court.

The defendant Anthony P., a.k.a "Shay," appeared before Judge Mills and pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct once it was clear that the MPSA witness and neighborhood observers affected by the criminal activity perpetrated by "Shay" and the group that he runs with would testify and make their positions put on public record. The judge handed a sentence of \$100 or 5 days in jail. Shay only got a slap in the hand. We wish to make it clear to "Shay" and his fellow transvestites that we resent their presence in our neighborhood, and will ambitiously pursue criminal charges every chance we get. We hope that "Shay" might face state-level aggravated assault charge for separate assaults captured on camcorder.

Recent trends in Midtown street prostitution - Some disturbing incidents involving transvestite prostitutes have come to the attention of the MPSA, and we need the victims to contact us as soon as possible:

- A woman was knocked to the ground by a gang of transvestite prostitutes, who then unleashed her dog and chased it into traffic in hopes of killing it.
- Windows were smashed out at someone's home after they called 911 about the prostitutes.
- Prostitutes vandalized a car by smashing out all windows including the windshield.
- As always, the noise, menacing conduct, and drawing other street criminals into the neighborhood, with utter lack of any consideration for neighborhood residents, especially the elderly residents at the Lutheran Towers.

The arrest and conviction of prostitutes like "Shay" vindicate the resentments of the Midtown community for incidents like these.

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Ideas for future solutions - Lobbying the state legislature to make prostitution a felony, at least where neighborhood quality-of-life is concerned, might catalyze an eventual final solution to the prostitution scourge. The ability to rally behind a felony court case would provide the Midtown community a more powerful tool to eradicate this ongoing criminal gang-like activity. We seek as many opportunities as possible to express our resentment for what these street criminals do to our community.

STAY SAFE! Please encourage your neighbors to join the MPSA!

- Your Neighbors at the Midtown Ponce Security Alliance

WITH MUCH GRATITUDE FOR OUR COMMUNITY PATROL SPONSORS

The Sembler Company

Post Parkside | Midtown Neighbors' Association

Midtown Tire, Inc. | Ackerman & Company

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

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SUPPLEMENT: CRIME INCIDENTS FOR OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

ROBBERY

Report Date:	Crime Location:	Crime Type:	Incident #:
10/21/2007	650 PONCE DE LEON AVE NE	ROB-STREET-GUN	072940649
10/29/2007	3RD ST NE && JUNIPER ST NE	ROB-STREET-GUN	073021861
11/5/2007	MYRTLE ST NE && 8TH ST NE	ROB-STREET-GUN	073092281
11/8/2007	717 ARGONNE AVE NE	ROB-STREET-GUN	073122147
11/11/2007	674 MYRTLE ST NE	ROB-STREET-GUN	073151622
11/11/2007	360 PONCE DE LEON AVE NE	ROB-STREET-GUN	073150131
11/11/2007	MYRTLE ST NE && 9TH ST NE	ROB-STREET-GUN	073151460
11/15/2007	968 MYRTLE ST NE	ROB-STREET-GUN	073192310
11/16/2007	306 PONCE DE LEON AVE NE	ROB-STREET-GUN	073202364
11/28/2007	870 GLENDALE TER NE	ROB-STREET-GUN	073322075

BURGLARY

Report Date:	Crime Location:	Crime Type:	Incident #:
10/6/2007	930 CHARLES ALLEN DR NE	BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC	072791247
10/24/2007	873 VEDADO WAY NE	BURG-NO FORCD ENTRY-RESID	072971401
10/30/2007	759 MYRTLE ST NE	BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC	073031530
11/1/2007	369 9TH ST NE	BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC	073051588
11/4/2007	393 7TH ST NE	BURG-NO FORCD ENTRY-RESID	073081363
11/10/2007	855 PIEDMONT AVE NE	BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC	073140560
11/10/2007	751 PIEDMONT AVE NE	BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC	073140680
11/25/2007	631 MYRTLE ST NE	BURG-NO FORCD ENTRY-RESID	073291629

AUTO THEFT

Report Date:	Crime Location:	Crime Type:	Incident #:
10/1/2007	164 4TH ST NE	ATTEMPTED AUTO THEFT	072741623
10/8/2007	180 PONCE DE LEON AVE NE	AUTOTHEFT	072810306
10/18/2007	807 PENN AVE NE	ATTEMPTED AUTO THEFT	072911487
10/21/2007	184 6TH ST NE	THEFT OF TRUCK/VAN/BUS	072940260
10/25/2007	335 6TH ST NE	ATTEMPTED AUTO THEFT	072980687
10/26/2007	660 GLEN IRIS DR NE	THEFT OF OTHER VEHICLE	072990707
11/1/2007	180 PONCE DE LEON AVE NE	AUTOTHEFT	073050329
11/4/2007	551 PONCE DE LEON AVE NE	AUTOTHEFT	073080246
11/11/2007	JUNIPER ST NE && 7TH ST NE	AUTOTHEFT	073150734
11/14/2007	CHARLES ALLEN DR NE && 10TH ST NE	THEFT OF TRUCK/VAN/BUS	073180719
11/18/2007	855 CHARLES ALLEN DR NE	AUTOTHEFT	073221585

Source: Crime mapping feature at the Atlanta Police website. These are not considered official stats but give a good feel for actual trends. Incidents subject to reclassification. This report covers only the MPSA service area, not all of Midtown proper.