



MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE

Public Safety Report 06 / 2008

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

IN ATTENDANCE AT SAFETY MEETING:

- **Peggy Denby (Moderator)** - MPSA President and MNA Safety Chairperson
- **Lt. McGee** - APD (Midtown Mini-precinct)
- **Major Lindahl & Lt. Holland** - MARTA Police
- **Sgt. Cooper** - MPSA Patrol
- 20 or so additional Midtown residents and business owners

MIDTOWN MINI PRECINCT

In the month leading up to the June safety meeting, the Midtown Mini-Precinct answered 781 calls for service, made 97 arrests, issued 28 traffic citations, and conducted numerous day and evening road blocks. These all occurred in Midtown, Home Park, and Atlantic Station - the coverage area of the Midtown Mini-Precinct. These figures are in addition to the regular mobile unit, which does the bulk of the APD work in our area.

Joint operations with the Vice Unit continue. A recent vice operation in Midtown netted several arrests for prostitution and idling/loitering for the purpose of prostitution. The MPSA is highly appreciative of APD's efforts to rid our neighborhood of undesirables.

REPEAT OFFENDERS

Police frequently deal with individuals with extensive arrest histories. According to Lt. McGee, one individual recently arrested in Midtown has been

arrested and convicted 61 times. Those with 30 or 40 arrest entries on their criminal records are not exactly rare.

Our own research on the street criminals frequently roaming our area show that the bulk of them are criminally incorrigible, with a generous number of entries extending well beyond prostitution and disorderly conduct. Atlanta and Fulton County have established the reputation of being a welcoming environment for the dregs of our society.

This tendency can be attributed to two major factors:

1. The serious shortage of staffing and resources for the Atlanta Police Department. The Atlanta Police Department does a great job for the limited resources given their limited resources, but public safety will have to be the next major city-wide issue now that the sewer crisis is well underway.

2. Lax Criminal Justice System - When APD officers make arrests, they are often up against a very lax justice system. Fulton County often throws out cases for drug pushers, criminal trespass, and other street criminals, citing “overcrowding.” Police officers working hard for a safer and more orderly community often experience the frustration of seeing the criminals they lock up right back where they arrested them (often the very same day!). Vagrants often find that going to jail is a chance to get a quick meal and shower before being turned loose onto our streets again a few hours later.

In our estimation, the County Commission has failed the law enforcement agencies throughout the county in their refusal to expand the jail and other components of the criminal justice system. Nancy Boxill, our County Commissioner, makes it clear that she opposes any expansion to the criminal justice system. Fulton County sends the message that criminals can get away with much around here, a contrast to places serious about law and order (like Maricopa County, Arizona, which is known for its innovative approaches like tent cities to eliminate overcrowding

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Hnq_hK4yDQ&NR=1

PONCE AND BOULEVARD

We are making a tad of progress with the Ponce & Boulevard mess, but the preparation is much slower than we would like.

The good news is that the owner of the property containing Domino’s Pizza, Chico & Chang’s, and Best Wings have joined the MPSA and signed a letter of agency. They conducted a big clean-up of the property, which in turn will help monitor vagrant activity there. They attended the safety meeting, and were applauded for their efforts.

As an aside, it turns out that tenants in Bedford Pine have been tossing garbage onto their property rather than walk it to the dumpster - another indication that Bedford Pine attracts highly undesirable tenants lacking in good social

skills. The vagrants camping in the back of that property - among the rats they attracted - created horrible conditions for the property owner and surrounding community

Wachovia has signed a letter of agency to cover their property. They are also sending in a crew to clean up litter daily and to monitor the property for nuisance activity. So far their efforts have reversed the rapid deterioration that set in once that branch closed. The owners of the former Central Electric building and the Thrift Store have both joined the MPSA, and we have letters of agency for those too.

That leaves us with one more strategically-critical property to bring on board: the big check cashing place at the southwest corner of Ponce & Boulevard. This seems to be the last major hangout for the street druggies on Ponce. This property is the last major holdup in establishing a new order on Ponce.

We are working to get all of the businesses on Ponce to become members of the MPSA. A combination of high membership saturation and the letters of agency for strategically-critical property will help us establish a whole new order on Ponce de Leon Avenue. Funds generated from memberships go toward patrol hours, and the letter of agency enables the patrol to effectively and efficiently address a range of nuisance activity on a given property. Letters of agency reduce the number of street people exploiting private property as a launch pad to wreak havoc on the whole community.

MARTA POLICE

Marta Police are looking for “Soulja Girl,” who attacks people on MARTA. One YouTube video shows her viciously berating an elderly woman.

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=645SAXBFxUo>

MARTA Police also urge patrons to secure bikes, avoid leaving valuables in plain sight (especially electronic devices like GPS systems), and to beware of pickpockets. MARTA does have security cameras in and around their facilities.

One attendee related an incident in which some kook groped her while riding to work. She also noted that she has been riding MARTA for years and had never had an incident. These kinds of individuals should be reported immediately to MARTA Police.

ELECTRONIC TOILETS AT PIEDMONT PARK

In addition to being a community eyesore, these automatic toilets also pose a public safety hazard. When using these, take care that nobody follows you inside these devices.

FROM THE MPSA PATROL LOGS

5/12 - a subject well-known to the MPSA Patrol was arrested for violation of pedestrian duties, and knife ordinance.

5/14 - a noted prostitute on Ponce was arrested near Boulevard for violation of pedestrian duties. This individual is frequently seen soliciting for rides and loitering. Our investigation into this individual shows that she has been arrested many times often giving the name of another specific individual.

5/19 - Patrol dealt with several small vagrant campsites around the area, mostly on the Beltline affecting local businesses. For the third time the same kind of banquet linen was used as bedding. Upon closer investigation it turns out that a nearby establishment hosting special events was leaving soiled banquet linen at the loading dock for the linen service. They were grateful to get these back, as they have to pay for missing cloths and napkins. They were also advised not to leave them at the loading dock, as vagrants are very resourceful in finding things to use for bedding and campsites.

5/21 - Maurice Barnes was locked up once again. This individual frequently prowls, solicits rides, and plies his prostitution trade in the neighborhood.

5/29 - Subject arrested for drug possession on Ponce.

6/04 - Two culprits in the robbery of a taxi driver apprehended by Sgt. Cooper and a Midtown Blue officer.

6/06 - Kenneth Lamb arrested once again by the MPSA Patrol after a foot chase in Old Fourth Ward. He threatened to return to Midtown with a gun. A later search of his known camping spots yielded no discovery of a gun. As of this writing he remains in jail on numerous charges in addition to the initial probation violation (giving fraudulent information as a sex offender).

EYE ON MIDTOWN JUNE 2008

The following are excerpts from Eye on Midtown sent earlier in the month.

Vagrant Activity - We have received reports that vagrants may be camping in the alley behind Blake's. Specifically, some Midtowners watched several vagrants come out of the alley with bedrolls as they brunched at Jason's on Saturday morning. A thorough inspection of this alley turned up no signs of vagrant infestation directly along the alley itself, but vagrants may be camping next to the house, under stairways, or behind fences somewhere. Residents along the west curb of Myrtle and the east curb of Piedmont above 8th Street should keep an eye out and alert us if any camping spots are found.

We are recruiting business memberships and letters of agency on Ponce to address the vagrant activity there. The letters of agency give the MPSA Patrol permission to go onto private property to remove vagrants and undesirable activity. Once our action plan is in place, we will proactively work toward a substantial reduction of street people loitering and camping along Ponce de Leon Avenue.

During this blitz, vagrant activity could crop up in alleys behind your home. Please watch the area around your home carefully in the coming weeks, and alert us to any signs of vagrant activity. A reduction in vagrant activity will cut down on petty crime and public disorder in our neighborhood in the longer run.

We have researched many of the street people hanging around our area and have come to understand that a great many of them have serious criminal records extending well beyond prostitution and drug possession. We still have many street criminals with backgrounds ranging from shoplifting to burglary and aggravated assault. Many have been convicted multiple times, and the fact that they continue to go back and forth to the drug areas demonstrates their lack of rehabilitation. This is also true of nearly all the "homeless" folks who appear to be harmless.

Please remember this when you see someone giving money to panhandlers (college students, suburbanites, and tourists are especially bad about that) or sympathizing for the transvestitutes and vagrants in our area. People who give to panhandlers perpetuate illegal drug use among street people, and contribute to the significant level of crime and public disorder driving the need for the MPSA and its patrol. The overwhelming majority of street people in our area are here because of their involvement with the street drug culture revolving around Bedford Pine and Peachtree Pine messes.

Kenneth Lamb update - Sgt. Cooper locked up Kenneth Lamb again on Friday afternoon. Kenneth Lamb is the barefooted panhandler with a protracted history of raping women, assaulting people, and drug offenses. He was wanted on a probation violation warrant. A foot chase ensued, but Sgt. Cooper lost him. Some other APD officers picked up the chase at Boulevard Place and Arnold Street in Old Fourth Ward.

Lamb was recently sentenced for failing to register as a sex offender. While he was liable to a 10-year prison sentence, the judge only gave him 10 years probation. Within short order Kenneth Lamb was arrested for possession of cocaine. We also researched his information on the sex offender registry - he claimed an address in Northwest Atlanta. A trip out to that address - in a neighborhood where most houses were boarded (mostly brand new houses!) - revealed that nobody has lived in that house for a very long time. The residents next door and across the street - who spend much time playing cards at a makeshift table in the driveway - looked at pictures we showed them and did not recognize him.

Sgt. Cooper met with the Department of Corrections the day before the arrest. They discussed the warrant, and where to find the subject. The warrant was not even in the system, but they left Sgt. Cooper a copy of it. Once Lamb was arrested, Sgt. Cooper had to call the Department of Corrections to get them to

fax a copy to the jail. Fulton County often considerably delays entering warrants into the system, so criminals on the run often get a good head start when fleeing authorities.

According to the Fulton County Sheriff's Department, he remains in jail on the following charges:

- Failing to register as a sex offender (probation hearing)
- Escape
- Simple battery on a police officer
- Obstruction
- Terroristic Threats

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

- Your Neighbors at the Midtown Ponce Security Alliance

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