



MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE

Public Safety Report June 2007

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RECENT SHOOTING AT MONROE AND AMSTERDAM

According to Major Propes of Atlanta Police Zone 6, the investigation into the Monroe & Amsterdam case has revealed it to be a "domestic situation", and not a random act of violence as originally feared. This information was contributed by our contacts in Virginia Highlands.

ACERT

This is a reminder that we will begin the MPSA/MNA ACERT Training provided by the Atlanta Fire Department this Saturday, June 23. We will begin at 8:30am with the training, and we will have coffee and doughnuts available for everyone at 8:00 am. The training will be at St. Mark United Methodist Church at 781 Peachtree Street, corner of 5th

street. Signs at the church will direct you to the correct building.

If we still haven't received your application and waiver form please fill them out and either email them back to me or fax them to 678-717-6787. Please get these forms back to me as soon as possible so that I will have a final head count for Saturday morning. Training will be June 23, June 30 and July 14 (skipping a weekend due to major vacation time).

JUNE PUBLIC SAFETY MEETING

31 people attended this month's meeting moderated by Peggy Denby. Attendees included Sgt. Cooper (MPSA Patrol) and Lt. Ewing (New commander for the APD Midtown Mini-Precinct).

Stephen Barnes with Brinks Home Security was our special guest. He presented home security tips to help ensure your home and family's safety. Most of these tips do not cost any money and are relatively simple things that you can do to make your home and family a tougher target against crime. He handed out Security Tips brochures as well as a simple quiz entitled "How Safe Are You?" that is designed to raise your overall security awareness.

These tips can also be found at <http://www.brinkshomesecurity.com/home-security-resources/safety-tips.htm> - this is highly recommended.

For more information on your specific needs Mr. Barnes can be contacted directly at brinks_sbarnes@yahoo.com

AREA VAGRANT CAMPS

"Camp Burger King"

On the early morning of 5/30 the MPSA Patrol officer on duty discovered a major vagrant camp on the Burger King property. This is one of the most serious encampments we have discovered to date. Upon arrival 5 individuals were found in this camp hidden behind a wooden fence.

There was an incredible amount of litter and human excrement. Much of the riffraff we see in the neighborhood have been observed going in and out of that site since we discovered it. Workers at a nearby business observed a chronic prostitute take a john back there, who had also brought along his 5-year-old child.

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We contacted Burger King, and they worked quickly to clean this up. The wooden fence concealing this camp was removed, and they rented a large dumpster for all the trash, furniture, mattresses, etc (and filled it!). We are especially grateful for their fast response, which will help reduce the attractions for vagrants in our area.

On a nearby property a junk vehicle, which has apparently been there for a while, is being used by street people as a place to smoke crack, and other illicit purposes. The land was recently sold by Fulton County Government. We are working to have the van moved.

We have posted pictures at www.midtownponce.org/campbk.

"Camp Tabernacle"

We reported to you in our last safety report that a small camp on Monroe, and backing up to members on Vedado Way, has been active lately. We obtained permission from the Victory Tabernacle church to arrange for volunteers who have already cleaned it up. The church also had the light turned back on in the area, which is a good deterrent. We are grateful for their cooperation and for the volunteer work in getting this cleaned up.

Beltline Camps

We recently surveyed the defunct rail corridor found several spots where vagrants are camping. The largest ones were under the Park Drive bridge ("Camp Park Bridge") near Piedmont Park and the Virginia Avenue bridge ("Camp Virginia Bridge") near 10th and Monroe. We are working with several city agencies to get these problem spots cleaned up and the vagrants removed from the area.

We have posted pictures at www.midtownponce.org/beltline2007.

PEACHTREE PINE ISSUES

According to an article in Creative Loafing, the Peachtree Pine shelter lost \$300,000 in federal funding. This shelter contributes to much of the street people problems in our area. Read the full article at <http://atlanta.creativeloafing.com/gyrobase/Content?oid=oid%3A255205>

DAY LABORER PROBLEM

The day laborers who gather at the Midtown Place Shopping Center are a continuing nuisance for the folks living in that area. Lakeview Avenue has become their restroom, and they are routinely observed doing drugs in the bushes. Also, they attract vagrants who come over to visit with them which causes even more problems. They also swarm vehicles in the area, which can be a very menacing situation.

We are attempting to set up a meeting with the manager of the Home Depot as the reason these people congregate is in hopes of finding day jobs with Home Depot customers. However, we have not heard back from our multiple attempts to reach the manager, but will continue our efforts.

GUNFIRE IN THE NEIGHORHOOD

We heard from several residents about what sounded like gunfire on the morning of June 5th. Among them:

(St. Charles Avenue) We heard gun shots at 3:00 am on Tuesday morning, which woke us up. It sounded like it came from behind and towards Monroe. Two of the neighbors up the street also heard it. What in the world is going on? This is the first time that I have heard gunshots in the 11 years I have lived here.

(Kennesaw Avenue) Last night, we heard three gun shots at 11:30 and were awoken at 3:00AM to four gun shots. They were so loud that the first one woke me and had me moving my wife

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away from the window in our bedroom. Gun shots have been much more prevalent in the last few months.

Upon our inquiry we received this from the Atlanta Police Department:

Thank you for your email concerning gunfire in the area on Ponce DeLeon and Boulevard on Tuesday Morning. I researched the calls for service and found that we received two calls about what was believed to be multiple gunshots. One call stated that the shots came from 657 Boulevard across from the Wendy's and the other call put them at Monroe Drive and Monroe Cir. The sound of gunshots or any other loud event echoes in the downtown area and makes locating the source difficult at times. Several Units were dispatched on the call, after checking the area and surrounding neighborhoods the units were unable to locate the source of the gunfire. There were no injuries or property damage reported.

Residents on Kennesaw Avenue have told the MPSA that they have been hearing gunfire regularly in the last few months. With all the street people loitering near Ponce and Boulevard, it is no wonder that this escalated to hearing gunfire regularly. We are working to identify strategies to eliminate the high-concentration of street criminals loitering in this area.

SPECIAL EVENT TRAFFIC ISSUES

The Special Events Coordinator, representatives from the APD, Piedmont Park, and Dept of Transportation, along with Turner Classic Movies personnel, met with Steve Brodie (MNA) and Peggy Denby (MPSA) to review the Traffic and Security Plan for Screen on the Green. Adjustments were made to the plan to better use the off duty police. Festival Monitors and Parking Enforcement Officers were added. These changes, along with an MPSA Officer during Screen on the Green, made the next Screen on the Green movie much more enjoyable for the movie goers as well as neighborhood residents. This plan will be tweaked as necessary for the remainder of the season.

The Traffic and Security Plan for Pride has been reviewed by Sgt Cooper, MPSA, and approved with minor changes. We are not anticipating serious traffic problems during Pride week end.

Various people in the neighborhood – the Midtown Traffic Committee and the MPSA included, are working on short- and long-term event planning issues. It is becoming more evident that a parking permit system in the neighborhood is critical to getting event-driven problems under control. A parking permit system is nearing implementation from 8th Street northward.

An E-mail we received sums this up nicely:

I think it is time for a parking permit system in the neighborhood. I sat on the fence on this issue for all these years but now I could go for that... The basic problem is all these people driving their cars into the neighborhood. That is what MARTA is for... Why not let them park at North Springs and other end stations and ride in... or those who absolutely must drive into town - there's an opportunity for all these empty parking decks to make some money... Why do we have to be Atlanta's parking lot during these events???

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

This year's National Night Out in Midtown will be August 7th. Target, TLC Rents and the Midtown Neighbors Association will once again sponsor the event. The location will be confirmed in the near future.

PROBLEM EMPLOYEE WITH LANDSCAPING COMPANY

A prostitute was filmed on video tape getting into a vehicle. The driver and passenger were in their landscaping company vehicle apparently on their way to their work assignment. When they saw that they were being filmed they had second thoughts, and discharged the prostitute. This happened also in full view of the Third and Piedmont residents.

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The MPSA sent the video clip and still shots to their employer.

If you see someone in a company vehicle picking up a prostitute please capture as much information as possible. With good documentation or information we will contact the company in question.

GAY PRIDE

This will be a very busy week in Midtown. Many people will be in the park over the course of the coming weekend. The Pride Committee has shown us their public safety plan, and we were impressed – it was the best we have seen yet. There will be street closures due to the parade on Sunday, and there will be extra police in the neighborhood conducting parking enforcement and watching for street criminals. If you have friends coming to the neighborhood for Pride please advise them not to leave valuables in their vehicles – street criminals prey on major events in our area. Also, we are anticipating Christian extremists to make a showing – please call police if you observe them harassing people in the neighborhood.

Overall, we expect this to be a fun event for all...

SUMMER VACATION

Since the summer is a major vacation time we urge people to be vigilant. Criminals know many are on vacation. Please make arrangements to have your house watched by a friend or neighbor. Also, MPSA members can notify us of their absence - the patrol officers and trusted volunteers will drive by your home several times a day.

If you are travelling abroad we urge you to familiarize yourself with conditions in the countries you plan to visit. The U.S. State Department has consular information sheets for each country. These include personal security information, both for travelling abroad generally and issues in specific countries. More at <http://travel.state.gov/>

Given that this is also a patriotic holiday, there is a heightened possibility that terrorists will strike somewhere. Please report any suspicious observations to nearest law enforcement.

IN SHORT, BE SAFE AND HAVE FUN!!!!

- Your neighbors at the Midtown Ponce Security Alliance

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