

KEY WEST POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Protecting Paradise

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Anti-burglary initiative thwarts crime

KEY WEST — In late September, the Key West Police Department started closely tracking several reports of burglaries in one residential area of the island.

Based on several reports over a two-month period of time in the Casa Marina Mid-Town area, the department launched a multi-disciplinary approach to both catch the current suspects in these cases and prevent future crimes.

Part of that initiative included disseminating information directly to residents in target neighborhoods.

This unprecedented effort involved deploying officers on foot throughout the target neighborhoods, going door to door to alert residents to the recent burglaries and offer tips on how they can keep from becoming the next victim.

In addition to this outreach effort, the department increased patrol in several areas to flood the neighborhoods with a police presence, and activated its Special Operations Tactical Unit and bicycle patrol units in special burglary details to thwart future crime.

As a direct result of this anti-burglary initiative, Key West Police officers, in conjunction with detectives and members of the Special Operations Tactical Unit, arrested a serial burglar after a citizen caught him in the act of trying to break into a car on Caroline Street.

Eric Emmeluth, 31, was charged with burglary after a citizen riding his bike in the 700 block of Caroline Street told officers that he saw Emmeluth

standing on the passenger side of a parked pickup truck.

As he rode closer, he saw Emmeluth was trying to open the truck door by jiggling the door handle.

The citizen said he knew the truck did not belong to Emmeluth, and he told him to stop, then threatened to call police. Emmeluth continued to jiggle the door handle, so the citizen called police.

Upon arrest, Emmeluth was additionally charged with failing to register as a convicted felon.

Emmeluth has a history of burglary in the county dating back to 2004.

Additionally, Key West Police Officer Dan Jones arrested a man on a parole violation warrant on burglary charges after he found the man loitering in the neighborhood that had been experiencing the high rate of burglaries.

Ofc. Jones was on patrol in the area of Washington and Tropical Streets around 12:30 one morning when he saw a black male riding his bike without a light. Before he was able to make a traffic stop on the subject, he was flagged down by a citizen inquiring about the recent burglaries in the area.

After he spoke to the resident, Ofc. Jones continued his patrol. Around 1:45 a.m., he saw the same subject, now with another man, riding in the area of Tropical and Seminary Streets.

Ofc. Jones stopped the men for not having lights on their bikes and then ran their infor-

Special Alert

The Key West Police Department would like to notify you that there have recently been several burglaries in your neighborhood.

Due to these occurrences, the department is conducting an outreach effort to alert residents and property owners to this increase in crime. Please take a moment to review the safety and security of your home and property, taking the extra effort to lock all your doors and windows when you are out or asleep at night. Also, make sure the exterior of your home is well-lit to deter would-be burglars.

The department is working several leads in these burglary cases, but we need your help in both preventing further crime and catching these criminals. Please report any suspicious activity to the Key West Police Department at 305-809-1000.

To make sure you are doing everything possible to keep you and your family safe, contact the Key West Police Department for a free property security assessment. To schedule an appointment for an officer to come to your house and assess your security, please contact Charnette Valdez at 305-809-1013.

The Key West Police Department appreciates your help in this matter. We want to assure residents and property owners that we are closely tracking these cases and have increased patrols in your area to deter further crime. Thank you for your cooperation.

A copy of the flyer officers took door to door in an unprecedented outreach effort to alert residents to recent burglaries in their neighborhood.

mation through dispatch, which advised that the one subject, identified as Vernon Orville Brown, had an active warrant out of New Jersey for burglary.

Brown was arrested on that warrant. The other man was interviewed and issued a verbal warning for not having a bike light before being released.

As the department continues to investigate several of the reported burglaries, we ask that residents be vigilant in keeping their homes and families safe.

Residents are asked to lock their doors and windows when

they aren't home or are asleep, and to keep their properties well-lit to deter would-be burglars.

The department is also offering free property security assessments. To schedule an appointment to have an officer come by your house and assess your security, please contact Charnette Valdez at 305-809-1013.

Residents are asked to immediately report any suspicious activity in their neighborhood to the Key West Police Department at 305-809-1000. □

Officers earn top honor: Medal of Valor

KEY WEST — Five Key West Police Department officers this month received the highest honor awarded by the department, the Medal of Valor.

“The Medal of Valor is given to those officers who put other people’s lives before theirs in the performance of their job,” explained Ofc. Steve Torrence, who heads the department’s awards division and was also one of the honored Medal of Valor recipients. “It’s basically for situations where you know the dangers but you still do what you need to do.”

Sergeant Frank Blasberg and Officers Carter Sims, Areaka Jewell, Derek Wallis and Torrence all received the medal for their lifesaving efforts at the Doubletree Grand Key Resort last December.

Ofc.s Jewell and Sims and Sgt. Blasberg were the first police responders to arrive at the Grand Key Resort on December 27, 2006 on a call that two males were lying in a room unconscious, and one male was possibly not breathing.

Acting as trained, the officers rushed into the room and immediately began conducting CPR. As Key West Rescue arrived on scene, the officers were told to leave the room because there were noxious fumes in the air.

Ofc.s Jewell and Sims and Sgt. Blasberg continued performing lifesaving CPR until rescue personnel could take over, doing everything they could to save the victims’ lives.

Responding to the same scene, Ofc.s Wallis and Torrence knew the dangers of being exposed to carbon monoxide gas and yet they still ventured up to the fourth floor of the hotel where the gas was strongest, clearing it to make



Photos by Christie Phillips

Above, from left, Ofc. Carter Sims, Sgt. Frank Blasberg, Ofc. Areaka Jewell, Captain Donie Lee, Assistant City Manager John Jones and Chief Bill Mauldin. Below, from left, Ofc. Derek Wallis, Ofc. Steve Torrence, Capt. Donie Lee, Asst. City Manager John Jones and Chief Bill Mauldin.



sure everyone was safely out of the building before exiting themselves.

All five of these officers knew they were in life-threatening danger and yet they put their jobs and the safety of others

ahead of their personal well-being.

“The Medal of Valor is not given out often,” said Chief Bill Mauldin. “And quite honestly, it’s humbling to know these officers risked their lives in this

incident.

“In this job, our officers risk their lives every day for this entire community, and I couldn’t be more proud of the work they continue to do for the City of Key West.” □

Capt. Frank Sauer: 25 years with KWPD

KEY WEST — Support Operations Bureau Captain Frank Sauer marked his 25th year with the Key West Police Department last month.

In that time, Capt. Sauer has worked in every facet of the department.

“I think the department we have today is better educated than it’s ever been in my time here, and that the department is more responsive to the needs of this community,” he said this week when asked how things have changed over the past 25 years.

Capt. Sauer was hired on September 29, 1982 as a road patrol officer, and



Photo by Christie Phillips
 Chief Bill Mauldin, right, presents Captain Frank Sauer with his 25 years of service plaque.

was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in 1987. Two years later he was assigned to the Detective

Division, and promoted to Lieutenant in charge of detectives in 1990.

In 1993, Capt. Sauer

was selected to serve on the Florida Department of Law Enforcement

Regional Coordinating

Team, where he worked on the Habitual Violent Felony Offenders sub-committee.

In the subsequent years, Capt. Sauer served as Administrative Lieutenant, Road Patrol Night Shift Watch Commander, Day Shift Watch Commander, Community Affairs Lieutenant and finally Captain of the Support Operations Bureau, where he serves today.

“I believe the strength of today’s department lies in its leadership,” he said. “I’m very proud to be part of this organization, and hope to keep making a contribution to this community.” □

KWPD prepares for Fantasy Fest

KEY WEST — As Fantasy Fest 2007 quickly approaches, revelers are reminded that some rules and commonsense safeguards do apply during the week-long party.

The KWPD will have extra officers on-duty to heighten its security efforts throughout the week, especially in the party zone on Friday and Saturday nights. Officers from the Florida Highway Patrol, the Florida Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office will also be on-hand to ensure public safety.

A special command post will be set up on the ground floor in the rear of Old City Hall on Anne Street, and the department’s new Mobile Command Center will also be stationed at Angela and Duval.

During the street fair Friday and the parade Saturday consumption of alcoholic beverages is allowed in the party zone only from the paper and plastic cups supplied by vendors. No glass containers or cans will be permitted.

Exposure of genitalia will not be allowed. Material covering genitalia and unpainted breasts must be opaque. □



Property and Evidence Supervisor Megan Wilcox celebrated the upcoming arrival of her son with a Baby Shower last month. Friends from the department and the city were in attendance to wish Megan well. At left, Megan and her sister Amy Alexander. Megan is due to be induced on November 7, 2007, and the baby is still unnamed at this time. Congratulations Megan!