

THE GUARDIAN



Volume 12, Number 5

September/October 2005

www.parkpolice.net

Officer Heather McLaughlin Rescues Missing Person

by Officer William Newman

Responding to a report of a woman sitting in the creek at Great Seneca Stream Valley Park, Officer Heather McLaughlin located an elderly woman whose clothing was entangled in a tree laying across the creek.

Officer McLaughlin struggled through thigh-deep water, held the woman's head above water and untangled her clothing from the tree branches and debris. With the help of a witness, Officer McLaughlin broke off the branch that had the woman trapped and pulled her to the shoreline.

At the shoreline, the woman was conscious but unrespon-

sive to questions. Montgomery County Fire and Rescue responded to the scene and transported the woman to Shady Grove Hospital. Once at the hospital, Emergency Room staff indicated that the woman was suffering from severe hypothermia and they were shocked at how low her body temperature had fallen. They were not sure that she would survive the incident.

Fortunately, the hospital staff was able to raise her body temperature after several hours and the elderly woman made a full recovery. A follow-up investigation showed that the woman had been reported missing from her group home the previous day. Thanks to Officer McLaughlin's quick actions, the woman was returned home safely. **G**



Officer Heather McLaughlin

Photo by Francine Bethea





Park Police Get Drugs Off the Street

by Detective Levon Ellian

The Maryland-National Capital Park Police, Montgomery County Division, is a participating agency in the Maryland Marijuana Eradication Task Force along with the Maryland State Police, Montgomery County Police, University of Maryland Police Department, and other county and local law enforcement agencies. Officers assigned to the task force are either trained aerial observers (spotters) and/or ground team members. Spotters fly in Maryland National Guard helicopters and direct the ground team to marijuana crops. Once the crops are found, they are seized and destroyed.

Captain Jake Bise and Officer Greg Worsey flew several missions this season and a number of marijuana fields were located. In late July, Captain Bise located a significant field in Matthew Henson Greenway. That discovery led to an extensive investigation using covert ground teams, manual and electronic surveillance, and the seizure of 121 marijuana plants having a street value of approximately \$181,500. During that investigation, which is still ongoing, a suspect was captured on surveillance video tending to the crop. This was one of the first successful video surveillance attempts to date.

In another significant discovery, Officer Worsey located approximately 60 marijuana plants in the Largo area. The mature plants, some of which reached eight feet in height, were seized and destroyed by the task force keeping \$90,000 in illegal drugs from hitting our streets. A separate case in Olney resulted in at least one suspect facing felony drug manufacturing charges.

During the course of the 2005 marijuana eradication season, the Park Police was directly involved in the location and seizure of approximately 257 marijuana plants with a street value of approximately \$385,500. Marijuana plants were found on both park and private properties.

Many thanks go to Captain Jake Bise, Officers Ed Rivera and Greg Worsey, and Detectives Mau Ly and Levon Ellian for providing their experience and assistance during this season.

Special thanks go to Lieutenant Harvey Baker, Sergeant George Coleman, and Sergeant Jim Richards for providing support personnel during task force operations. We look forward to continuing this successful program in the future. **G**



Detectives Mau Ly (left) and Levon Ellian (right) in marijuana patch.

Photo by Ofc. Greg Worsey



In Memorium

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Officer Lamont Eric Dent, Prince George's County Division. Lamont died unexpectedly on September 14, 2005. Leaving behind his wife, Officer Anika Elise Dent (also of Prince George's County Division), mother, stepfather, and many other friends and family, Lamont will be sorely missed.

Born in Washington, D.C., Lamont attended District of Columbia and Prince George's County public schools. He loved people and his desire to make a difference influenced him to pursue a career in law enforcement. He joined the Prince George's County Police Department in 1987. After serving there for more than two years, he joined the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department where he served from 1990 until 1998.

In 1998, Officer Dent joined the Maryland-National Capital Park Police, Montgomery County Division. Lamont served for two years with Montgomery County until his transfer to the Prince George's County Division in 2000. Officer Dent received numerous commendations and awards throughout his law enforcement career.

Lamont was a devoted member of The Believers Worship Center in District Heights and served as the Director of Security. Lamont will be remembered as a loving, kindhearted, compassionate, and gentle man. No one was ever a stranger to Lamont and he had a way of bringing a smile to everyone he encountered. Our thoughts and prayers are with Lamont's immediate and Park Police family during this time of sorrow. **G**



Photo by Steve Abramowitz

Officer Lamont Eric Dent
September 25, 1968 - September 14, 2005



Fun at the Track

by Lt. Lisa Vasco

Empty your trunk, fill up your gas tank, and buckle up for the latest round of emergency vehicle operations training at the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions Facility tucked away in the rolling foothills of Sykesville, Maryland. Sergeants Mike Meixsell, Chris Tippery, and George Coleman first reviewed the principles of vehicle dynamics in the classroom. We learned about weight distribution, tire inflation, automatic braking systems (ABS), and how they all effect the safe operation of our police vehicles.

Out on the track, we practiced braking first. Large sprinklers watered down the asphalt course and off we went. Stopping a speeding police car is generally considered a very important task for a police officer. We headed through the starting gate on the wet roadway at a reasonable speed, the instructor yelled, "stop," and we did so by enacting the ABS system. The task was gradually made more difficult by increasing speeds and adding cones to the course. No allowances are made for striking cones; you have to be perfect.

In the next exercise, we increased the level of difficulty by adding other cars. We drove in tight circles in clockwise and counter-clockwise directions until the rear end of the car skid or the front end bucked against the forces. After a lunch break, it was back out on the track for skills practice. There was the serpentine, the *(Continued on page 5.)*



Sgt. George Coleman teaches classroom portion.



Officers practice braking on wet pavement.

Photos by Tricia McCourt



Fun at the Track (Continued from Page 4)

T-box turn around, and the star turn. Each station was a timed test of various skills. Proficiency in turning, stopping, braking (not to be confused with breaking), and collision-avoidance skills were all demonstrated under the pressure of time limits. A little bit of friendly competition made for an exciting day.

Before today, the farthest I had ever traveled in reverse was down the length of a driveway. We followed the instructor BACKWARDS through the neighboring Sykesville streets for ten minutes through intersections, stop lights, train tracks, driveways, along a guardrail, and around corners ñ all while looking out the rear window. At the end, we simply had to work the crick out of our necks and we were done.

The training was realistic and an excellent opportunity to test our driving limits and abilities in a controlled environment. The instructors were knowledgeable and helpful in assessing and correcting our mistakes. Last year in the United States, 154 officers died in the line of duty; about half of those were killed in vehicle accidents. Given the amount of time officers spend in their cruisers, accidents are going to happen. Training officers how to react in these situations and how to drive defensively could ultimately save a life - that is effective and important training. **G**



Officer Greg Worsley places cones for avoidance exercise.



Officers drive backwards through the streets.



Park Police Provide Demonstration

by Officer Rosemary Whelan

Recently, children at Cabin John Ice Skating Camp got a special treat. Park Police horses, Tally and Mac, and their riders, Officers Megan Lau and Lakeisha Hudson-Robinson, surprised the campers with a visit. Officer Lau explained the role of the Special Operations Section and answered several questions from the children. Fascinated with the horses, it was tough getting the kids back to camp, but promises of goodies supplied by Officer Cheri Winter did the trick.

In the afternoon, Officer Neita White gave an all-terrain vehicle demonstration. "Ooohs" and "aahhs" echoed under the breezeway as the children watched Officer White maneuver an obstacle course. The promise of goodies was again used to lure the campers back inside.

Thanks go to everyone involved for making the day such a great success! It's never too early to recruit some good police candidates. 🇺🇸

Photos by Ofc. Rosemary Whelan



Officers Megan Lau (left) and Lakeisha Hudson-Robinson (right) explain what it's like to patrol the parks on horseback.



Officer Neita White demonstrates an all-terrain vehicle.



Park Police Assign an Adjunct Instructor to the Montgomery County Public Safety Training Academy

by Sergeant Patrick Lau

For the majority of entry-level officers in the Maryland-National Capital Park Police, Montgomery County Division, the first step in a law enforcement career begins with six months of intensive training at the Montgomery County Public Safety Training Academy. Beginning with Session 47, this Division has assigned an adjunct instructor to assist with training entry-level candidates.

Sergeant Patrick Lau will be instructing a wide range of subjects from close order drill and physical training to community policing and officer safety and survival. His assignment will benefit our recruits in the academy who will now have an onsite point of contact and should help increase interagency cooperation and rapport, which are vital when facing the challenges of modern law enforcement. **G**



Sergeant Pat Lau

Photo by Margaret Kingsley





The Latest Scoop

Sgt. Jim Richards Appointed to Retirement Board

by Deidra Fields, *Employees' Retirement System*

At the September 22 Commission meeting, Sgt. James Richards was appointed to the Employee Retirement System Board as the Fraternal Order of Police represented trustee. Sgt. Richards will finish the term vacated by Sgt. Mary McAuley. The term will end June 30, 2007.

Sgt. Richards began his police career as a summer officer in Ocean City, Maryland, in 1976, moving quickly into a full-time police position in Snow Hill, Maryland until 1978. In 1998, Sgt. Richards left the Snow Hill Police Department to accept a position with the City of Takoma Park Police Department, where he served as a patrol officer and then a detective.

He remained with the Takoma Park Police Department until March 1993 when he accepted a position with the Maryland-National Capital Park Police in the Prince George's County Division. Sgt. Richards served in several different sections including patrol and special operations horse-mounted section.

In May 2000, he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in the Montgomery County Division where he was assigned as a patrol Sergeant. He again began working in the special operations section for Montgomery County in 2003. Currently, Sgt. Richards works as a day work supervisor in the patrol section. **G**

Birth Announcements

Congratulations go to Dana Brassell on the birth of her grandson, Joseph Michael, who was born on August 25, 2005. Joey weighed in at 7 pounds, 12 ounces. Dana's son, Tim, and his wife, Kelly, are proud parents. **G**

Congratulations go to Detective Mau Ly and his wife, Angie, on the birth of their twin girls, Lana Marie and Jade Ann. Born eight weeks early on October 8, 2005, both babies are small but doing well. Mom and Dad were surprised but also are doing well. **G**