Tuesday, December 22, 2020

Stolen Car Recovered in DC
DC Police found the car abandoned

Shortly after 7:00 a.m. on Friday December 18, residents of a home in the 5600 block of Kirkside Drive discovered that their 2015 Audi Q5 SUV had been taken overnight. They last saw the car at about 8:30 p.m. on Thursday evening. When they reviewed their security camera recordings, they learned that the thief took the car at about 3:15 a.m. Village Police entered the stolen vehicle into the nationwide law enforcement database right away.

At 1:40 a.m. today (Tuesday, December 22), DC Police found the Audi abandoned in the 200 block of Allison Street, NW. When DC officials queried the stolen auto database, they learned that the car had been taken from Chevy Chase Village. DC Police towed the car to a storage lot.

Village Officer Davor Hrnjak responded to the storage lot, processed the car for latent evidence and took photos for the owners. Officer Hrnjak discovered a number of items of suspected stolen property inside the car that appeared to belong to several different persons. The thieves were very busy.

The investigation is continuing.

Saturday, December 19, 2020

Burglary on Oliver Street Today
Basement door forcibly entered; nothing taken

Residents of a home in the 3900 block (between Western and Cedar) of Oliver Street left their home at around 3:00 p.m. this afternoon. They returned at about 6:00 p.m. and discovered that someone had forcibly entered the basement level of the home through the basement door. The homeowners called the Village Police right away.

The residents told officers that the door at the top of the stairs from the basement into the main level of the home had been locked, and it had not been tampered with in any way. The person who broke into the house remained in the basement and did not attempt to force the door leading from the basement into the main part of the home. Nothing was stolen and the burglar apparently left the same way they came in.

Village officers processed the scene for latent evidence and canvassed the neighborhood looking for eyewitnesses and nearby home security cameras.

If you saw anything/anyone suspicious or if you have any information or video that may be helpful in the investigation of this crime, please call the Village Police at 301-654-7300.

also...
Car Reported Stolen Yesterday Morning
Home security video shows the thief took the car at 3:15 a.m.

Shortly after 7:00 a.m. on Friday December 18, Village Officer Drew Fones responded to a call for a stolen auto in the 5600 block of Kirkside Drive. The owners of the car reported that their grey 2015 Audi Q5 SUV had been taken overnight. They last saw the car at about 8:30 p.m. on Thursday evening.

While Officer Fones was on the scene, the residents/car owners checked their home security camera recordings, and the camera showed the car being stolen at 3:15 a.m. Unfortunately, the video was not clear enough to capture any useful images of the thief.

Officer Fones entered the stolen vehicle into the nationwide law enforcement database, and he canvassed the neighborhood. Thus far, no eyewitnesses have been located and no other cars in the area appeared to have been tampered with.

Although the owners are in possession of both of their key fobs, it is possible that there was a valet key in the car that the owners were unaware of. County Police detectives from the Auto Theft Unit caution that, in many luxury vehicles, the manufacturer provides a valet key within the owner's manual or elsewhere in the cabin—often unbeknownst to the car owner. The car can be started and driven if a valet key is inside the car.

Residents are urged to check their owner's manuals, glove compartments and consoles for the presence of a valet key.

Thursday, October 29, 2020

Attempted Looting of Saks Fifth Avenue Foiled by County Police
Covert team of officers arrest 7 in the Village for stealing from cars

Members of the Montgomery County Police were monitoring protests in DC and learned that a group of protesters was planning to move toward Friendship Heights. Anticipating the potential for problems, the night commander for the County Police pulled officers from around the county to provide a highly-visible police presence along Western Avenue near Wisconsin Avenue. Just before 11:00 p.m. while the officers were in place along the DC line, 20 young people jumped out of several cars in front of the Saks Fifth Avenue store just north of the officers on Wisconsin Avenue. The group of would-be looters broke a window at the Saks, but they were surprised by the quick response of arriving county officers, and most of the group immediately fled—in cars and on foot—at the sight of the arriving police.

One suspect who ran away was quickly detained and arrested. During the foot chase, a county officer lost his personal cell phone. After the arrest, the officer returned to the area where he thought the phone might be, and he stumbled upon several of the would-be looters who had fled moments prior. Other officers arrived and dialed the number for the officer's missing phone, and it lit up and rang inside one of the detained person's pockets. That individual was arrested.

At about 12:30 a.m., a team of plain-clothed county surveillance officers spotted a group of seven young men who were believed to be a part of the group of would-be looters from Saks. The officers watched the group walk into the Village. The surveillance officers—in covert vehicles—notified on-duty Village officers and asked our uniformed officers to stay away from the streets on the west side of the Village so that the suspects wouldn't be spooked by the sight of a police car.

As the surveillance officers watched the group, they witnessed the individuals systematically pulling on car door handles and entering unlocked cars as they walked. The team of officers arrested all seven individuals. Five of those arrested were adults, and two were juveniles, all from DC.

Village Officers Drew Fones and Alex Jenkins were called in to assist the surveillance team once the arrests were made.

The night commander for the County Police Department made an excellent decision early on to pull officers from around the county to increase staffing along the DC line when he learned of the potential for protests in the area. That decision—combined with the great work by the responding county officers—undoubtedly prevented a significant amount of crime, property damage and chaos. We are grateful for our relationship with the County Police and for the excellent work they did in and around our community last night.

Friday, October 16, 2020

Intimidation Robbery on Brookville Road
Teenager's cash stolen by group of 4 young men;
County Police investigating

Last Thursday (October 8) evening after 10:00 p.m., two teenaged boys (not Village residents) were walking on the Brookville Road sidewalk near East Irving Street when they were confronted by four unknown young males. The four suspects approached the pair menacingly and demanded money. Although no weapon was displayed, the four suspects intentionally intimidated the teenagers.

One of the teens ran from the scene, but the one who remained relinquished cash to the robbers. No one was injured. The victim returned to his home outside the Village and reported the crime to the Montgomery County Police. County police are investigating.

Village residents are urged to remain vigilant when walking at nighttime.

Friday, October 9, 2020

Woman Found Dead on Park Bench on the DC Side
of Chevy Chase Circle
Cause is unknown at this time; DC and US Park Police are investigating

Shortly before 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 8, 2020, a resident was taking a walk in the Village when a young man who was unknown to the resident informed her that he had seen a woman slumped over on a bench within Chevy Chase Circle. The young man told the resident that he thought the woman on the bench was either sick or dead, and the man requested that the resident call the authorities.

The resident walked to the Village Hall and relayed the information to the dispatcher in the Communications Center. Village officers and Fire/Rescue units responded right away, and once on the scene, they quickly determined that the woman on the bench was dead. There was no obvious sign of trauma on the woman's body. The woman appeared to be of middle age, and there were indications that she was homeless.

Village officers determined that the woman's body was in the District of Columbia, so they requested that the Metropolitan Police (DC) and the U.S. Park Police respond to the scene (the interior of the Circle belongs to the Department of the Interior, National Park Service). Those agencies will be conducting the investigation.

Friday, September 18, 2020

Stolen Construction Equipment Wasn't Stolen After All
A subcontractor took the equipment by mistake

On Tuesday (9/15) morning, a contractor reported to Village officers that his $60,000 Kubota skid loader had been stolen overnight from a large project at Brookville Road and Oxford Street. This morning (9/18), the contractor called the police to report that his skid loader had been returned to him by a subcontractor who took the machine by mistake (oops!). Case closed, thank goodness.

Thursday, September 17, 2020

Several Daytime Thefts from Unlocked Trucks
Contractors' Vehicles Targeted

During the day on Thursday, September 17, Village officers responded to several calls for thefts from unlocked vehicles:

Three backpacks—loaded with wallets, cell phones and other property—were taken from a work truck in the unit block of Grafton Street.

- o A backpack was taken from a truck in the 3900 block of Oliver Street.
- o A purse was taken from a nanny's car in the 100 block of E. Lenox Street.
- o A truck was rifled through in the 5600 block of Montgomery Street; nothing was taken.

As officers were trying to sort out what occurred, an alert resident saw a suspicious vehicle stop and discard two backpacks in the middle block of Grafton Street; she called the police right away. Village officers responded there, recovered the backpacks, and determined that they belonged to two of the three victims from the unit block of Grafton.

Anticipating that the thieves might cross the line and victimize DC residents, officers alerted DC police of our thefts. Soon thereafter, a DC officer contacted the Village Communications Center after he discovered two discarded backpacks on Legation Street, NW. Sgt. Tiedemann met with the DC officer and was able to identify one of the recovered backpacks as the property of the third Grafton Street victim. The other backpack belonged to the victim of the Oliver Street theft.

Also today, Officer Timmerman located an abandoned backpack in the 4000 block of Oliver Street and a credit card on the pavement near the intersection of Cedar Parkway and Hesketh Street. His investigation revealed that the items had been stolen from different locations in DC. Officer Timmerman was able to make contact with the owners and return both items to them.

Residents are reminded to lock their cars every time they park—both day and night—and to remove valuable from their cars.

Tuesday, September 15, 2020

Construction Equipment Stolen Overnight

Today around 7:32 am, Village police responded for an overnight theft of a Kubota Skid front loader. The front loader was left in a front yard in the 20 block of Oxford Street. The front loader could also be seen by anyone traveling on Broad Branch Road.

Tuesday, September 8, 2020

Bicycle Stolen from Driveway Last Night Around 9:30 p.m.
Home security video captured the thief in action

At about 9:30 p.m. Monday night (September 7), a homeowner in the 5500 block of Grove Street received a motion alert from the security camera in his driveway. When he checked the recording, he was surprised to see that a thief had brazenly walked deep into his driveway—past two cars parked there—grabbed a bicycle that was left very close to the front of the home, got on the bike and casually rode away with it.

The resident called the police and Village officer Drew Fones responded right away, but the thief had already made good his escape. The theft was over in a few short seconds.

Residents are urged to lock their homes and cars, and to secure bicycles and other valuable items inside whenever possible.

Sunday, August 9, 2020

Yard Signs Burned and Damaged on Two Consecutive Nights
Residents are urged to call the police if they
hear or see anything suspicious

On Friday night (August 7), a homemade Black Lives Matter sign was set on fire and destroyed in the 6400 block of Western Avenue (just outside of the Village). County Police responded to the call when the burning was discovered on Saturday, August 8.

Also on Friday night, someone removed a plastic Black Lives Matter sign from the front yard of a home in the 200 block of Primrose Street, bent its metal frame and left it in the roadway. On Saturday morning, residents found their crumpled sign on the street, straightened the frame and returned the sign to the front yard.

The next night (Saturday, 8/8-Sunday, 8/9), the Primrose residents awoke to find that their yard sign (the sign that had been tossed into the street the night before) had been set on fire and destroyed leaving melted plastic and a telltale scorch mark on the grass. A neighbor's security camera captured the sign in flames at 2:19 a.m. Sunday. Village Officer Davor Hrnjak responded to the scene on Sunday.

Also on Saturday night:

- Unknown person(s) attempted to burn a wooden Black Lives Matter sign on Western Avenue near Pinehurst Circle.

- A Biden campaign sign was burned on Western Avenue
- Graffiti was sprayed on a fence near the intersection of Western Avenue and Primrose Street, and a utility pole was spray painted on the DC side of the 6300 block of Western.

DC Police and Montgomery County Police responded to the incidents in their jurisdictions (the burned yard sign on Primrose Street is the only incident that occurred within the Village).   Village Police have been in contact with officers from DC and Montgomery County, and Village officers will be working to prevent or catch the culprit(s).

Residents are urged to call the Village Police Department (301-654-7300) if they see or hear anything that alerts them late at night. Village officers will respond and investigate.

Wednesday, July 15, 2020

Village Officer Interrupts Nighttime Thieves
Alert patrol officer surprises two thieves; they flee into DC

At about 4:20 a.m. today (Wednesday, July 15, 2020), Officer Alex Jenkins was on patrol in the unit block of Grafton Street (between the Circle and Cedar) when he saw two people—a man and a woman—near a parked car, and one of the car's doors was ajar. As Officer Jenkins approached, the pair fled on foot through Chevy Chase Circle and into the District of Columbia where our officers have no jurisdiction. Officer Drew Fones responded to assist.

Officers Jenkins and Fones returned to Grafton Street and walked through the neighborhood looking for evidence of theft. The officers found a total of three cars that had been entered. Our officers alerted Montgomery County and DC police so that they could be on the lookout for the thieves.

At about 11:00 a.m. today, a resident from the middle block (between Cedar and Kirkside) of Grafton noticed that her unlocked car had also been entered overnight. Investigation later revealed that all four cars were left unlocked overnight. Nothing was taken from any of the cars.

Officer Jenkins undoubtedly interrupted these thieves and stopped them before they entered more cars.

Residents are urged to lock their cars every time they park, and to remove all valuables. By denying thieves of easy opportunities, they are less likely to return.

Monday, June 29, 2020

Four Unlocked Cars Entered Saturday Night; Nothing Taken
We MUST lock our cars to deny thieves of opportunities

Overnight Saturday-Sunday (June 27-28), unknown persons entered a total of four unlocked cars on E. Irving (between Connecticut and Brookville), W. Irving (between Magnolia and Cedar) and Grove (between Kirkside and the Buffer Zone). Nothing was taken from any of the cars.

Nighttime vehicle theft is the predominant property crime in the Village, and this event (unlocked cars entered by thieves) is the story that we tell repeatedly. Village Police—and your neighbors—need your help to make our community safer: lock your car and remove all valuables whenever you park. Failing to do so provides easy opportunities for thieves, and it encourages them to return.

Preventing crime is a civic duty shared by all of us. Please lock your car.

Thursday, June 11, 2020

Village Officers Arrest Hit & Run Drunk Driver
Driver crashed into 4 cars on Hesketh, left the scene with lights off

At 12:01 this morning (Thursday, June 11, 2020), a resident of the unit block of Hesketh Street (between Magnolia and Cedar) was awakened by the sound of a car crash and immediately called the Village Police. The caller told dispatcher Allison Shumake that he looked out his window in time to see a large SUV leave the scene with its lights turned off and head west toward Cedar Parkway.

At 12:02 a.m., while the caller was still on the phone with our dispatcher, Officer Drew Fones spotted a large SUV headed west in the 100 block of Hesketh (between Kirkside Drive and the dead end at Wisconsin Avenue) with its light off. Officer Fones was unaware of the hit-and-run crash two blocks away. Officer Fones followed the SUV, a Chevy Suburban, and noted that it was swerving left and right as it drove down Hesketh. The Suburban made a U-turn at the dead end of Hesketh and Officer Fones stopped the car right there while our dispatcher was still on the phone with the original caller.

Officer Fones instantly noticed what appeared to be fresh damage on the front and side of the Suburban. As soon as Officer Fones radioed that he had stopped a large SUV on Hesketh with fresh damage, Dispatcher Shumake informed him of the hit-and-run that had just occurred in the unit block of Hesketh, and it was obvious that the Suburban was the striking vehicle. Officer Alex Jenkins and Lieutenant Tino Dasilva responded to assist.

The subsequent investigation revealed that the driver of the Suburban crashed into cars in front of 12, 14 and 15 Hesketh Street and immediately drove off headed toward Cedar Parkway. A total of four parked cars were damaged. The driver of the Suburban was arrested and transported to the State Police barrack in Rockville for a breath test. The breath test revealed that the driver's blood alcohol content was 0.18--more than twice the threshold (0.08) for driving under the influence. The adult Kensington resident was charged with driving under the influence of alcohol, hit-and-run, and several related traffic offenses.

Wednesday, June 10, 2020

Nighttime Burglary of Occupied House on Oliver Street
Cash stolen from wallet in living room; suspect fled before police arrived

At 3:25 this morning, residents of a home on Oliver Street between Kirkside Drive and Wisconsin Avenue were awakened in their upstairs bedroom by the sound of their creaking staircase; someone was on the stairs. They called 9-1-1 immediately and locked themselves in their bedroom as Village and County officers responded.

Village officer Ryan Patterson arrived in less than three minutes, followed quickly by Village officer Willie Hearn and then several Montgomery County officers to include a K9 unit. Officer Patterson noticed that some of the screening on the rear screened porch had been cut and torn away, and the inner door entering the house was open. After establishing a perimeter around the house, Officer Patterson, a county officer, and the K9 team searched the house; the suspect was already gone. K9 attempted to track the suspect's escape route without success.

The residents determined that the suspect stole cash from a wallet that was in the living room, but the suspect left the wallet. Nothing else was reported stolen at this writing.

Officers conducted a neighborhood canvass and located a nearby house with security cameras. That resident was awake and she retrieved recordings from her security camera system and provided them to our officers. The cameras captured a slender, dark-skinned male wearing a white t-shirt, tan ¾ length shorts, carrying a dark-colored backpack walking south through the alley (from Grafton toward Oliver) at 3:12 a.m. The man then walked a short distance on Oliver Street before entering the side yard of the victim's house.

This type of event—a nighttime residential break-in—is extremely rare, and our officers will be on high alert. Village Police will be making certain that the County Police and DC police are aware of this burglary, and the investigation will continue.

Residents are urged to lock all doors and windows, to activate their alarm systems, to leave outdoor lights on all night long, and to call the police as soon as they see or hear anything that raises their concern. Residents are also encouraged to consider installing exterior cameras if they have not done so already.

Joint Statement from Countywide Law Enforcement Leadership on the Death of George Floyd

In the wake of the shocking death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers on May 25, people across our nation have been demanding equal justice for everyone and an end to excessive force and disparate treatment by police. All of Montgomery County's law enforcement leaders—seven of us—were stunned and anguished at the actions of the Minneapolis officers, and we collaborated to write the below letter to all residents of Montgomery County to express our outrage with the actions leading to Mr. Floyd's death, to denounce all types of police misconduct, and to state our commitment to serving our communities with fairness, respect and justice for all.

*****

We, the leaders of the law enforcement community of Montgomery County, are angry and outraged over the killing of George Floyd by police officers in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Their actions in Mr. Floyd's tragic, senseless death is an abject failure of policing. While each of us has issued a statement to our respective communities, we felt compelled to speak to the people of Montgomery County at large with one, unified voice.

We unequivocally condemn the actions of the Minneapolis police officers. Here in Montgomery county, we are aware of the historical relationship and distrust that has existed between the police and many minority residents—especially within the black community. This must change. Each of us has shared our disgust and outrage over Mr. Floyd's death within our organizations and have communicated that disparate treatment in any form is unacceptable, it will not be tolerated, and actions based on bias of any kind will receive swift disciplinary action. There is no place for racism in our profession. This is not a high standard; this is the right standard.

When police work is performed correctly—fairly, respectfully, with kindness, empathy, restraint and discretion—it demonstrates the selfless commitment to the service of others that is our shared philosophy and the fundamental purpose of policing. Collectively, we engage in tens of thousands of contacts every year with members of our communities. Our officers do an outstanding job in the vast majority of those contacts as evidenced by our resident satisfaction surveys, however, whenever we fail to perform as we should, it reflects poorly on our agencies and our profession, and it risks damaging the trust of our communities which is essential to our ability to function and to be viewed as legitimate.

We are constantly challenged each day to serve the residents of a growing and diverse county. Building and maintaining the public trust is an ongoing task that we work on daily. Every negative interaction hampers our ability to earn that trust. We are aware that law enforcement everywhere is under great scrutiny and calls for transparency and greater accountability are voiced by many residents in our community. We realize that we must work toward greater transparency and accountability in order to hold the public trust.

To that end, we hereby commit to the following:

1. We will work to continually improve training in cultural competency for our officers to enable them to more effectively and positively engage an everchanging diverse community.
2. We will remind every member of our teams of their individual and collective responsibility to treat all persons fairly, respectfully, with kindness, empathy, restraint and discretion. This is what we expect of our officers, and this is what our communities expect and deserve.
3. We will increase our efforts to recruit and hire women and men that reflect the communities we serve and to hire the right people for this critically important work.
4. We will hold officers and employees accountable for misconduct so that the public trust built from the good work of the vast majority of our dedicated workforce will not be diminished by the misdeeds of the few.

We are listening to you and stand with you in this extremely difficult time. We are all in this together.

Signed,

Marcus Jones, Chief   *Victor Brito, Chief*

Montgomery County Police Department   *Rockville City Police Department*

Mark Sroka, Chief   *Antonio DeVaul, Chief*

Gaithersburg Police Department   *Takoma Park Police Department*

Darrel McSwain, Chief   *John Fitzgerald, Chief*

Montgomery County Park Police Department   *Chevy Chase Village Police Department*

Darren Popkin, Montgomery County Sheriff

***
Transparency on an Important Topic:

Chevy Chase Village Police Department's *Use of Force* Policy

The Village Police Department regularly reviews and revises its written policies. Following the death of George Floyd, Chief Fitzgerald once again reviewed the Department's use of force policy. For several years now, our policy has included several best practices to include:

- An overarching respect for the sanctity of life;

- The duty to de-escalate;
- The duty to intervene when other officers are engaging in misconduct/excessive force;
- The duty to immediately render first aid; and
- The duty to report the misconduct of others.

Although our policy was already sound, Chief Fitzgerald made some changes and re-issued it to the officers and to the training team. In the days following tragedies such as the death of George Floyd, many police departments have fielded inquiries about their use of force policies. You may read our use of force policy here:

https://www.chevychasevillagemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1169/5-05-Use-of-Force-PDF

You can find all of the Chevy Chase Village Police Department's general orders posted on the 'Police' page of the Village website at the below link:

https://www.chevychasevillagemd.gov/330/Department-General-Orders

Monday, June 1, 2020

Fliers Posted Throughout the Village on Sunday, May 31

Yesterday (Sunday May 31, 2020), Village officers received complaints about fliers posted on trees and poles throughout the Village; the fliers related to the death of George Floyd at the hands of police in Minneapolis. The fliers included a 'text to' number that apparently leads to a request for financial support of some kind.

Our officers were able to locate the individual who was posting the fliers—a Village resident—and Chief Fitzgerald spoke with that person by phone on Sunday afternoon to explain the Village Code's prohibition against posting signs in such a manner. The individual was unaware of our local law and he immediately set out to remove the fliers that he had posted. The man said that he was not the original maker of the fliers, but that he was copying and posting them believing that the organization behind the fliers was legitimate. He did not intend to cause alarm.

Residents are urged to be very cautious before sending their money to any organization until they have done their due diligence to make certain that the organization is legitimate and that the vast majority of their donation will actually be spent to support their chosen cause

Monday, June 1, 2020

A Message from Chief John Fitzgerald
A message to the residents of Chevy Chase Village from
Chief John Fitzgerald:

The tragic death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers has left us—and the nation—angry and shaken. While peaceful protests and demonstrations are expected and welcome, the violent riots in cities across the nation are destructive and frightening, and they diminish the important message embraced by peaceful activists seeking change. Over the weekend, looting events occurred very close to our neighborhood streets.

On Saturday night, a small group of people broke into the Saks Fifth Avenue store on Wisconsin Avenue and stole some merchandise. The alarm monitoring company alerted the County Police, and as patrol officers arrived, they saw three or four people running across Wisconsin Avenue, get into three cars, and race across the line into DC. A store representative was uncertain what was taken. At no time was there a direct threat to Village residents and there were no reports of the suspects entering the Village.

Last night (Sunday, May 31, 2020) at around 9:30 p.m., a large group (estimated by a police commander to be more than 100 people) broke windows and looted the CVS store at 5335 Wisconsin Avenue in DC across from the Mazza Gallarie. DC police responded to the CVS while Montgomery County police officers established a significant and visible presence along Western Avenue to prevent the rioters from entering Maryland. While no rioters entered the Village last night, the proximity of the looting has understandably left many of our residents unnerved.

Today, I have been in contact with key officials of the Montgomery County Police Department and the Metropolitan Police (DC) to gather intelligence about what we can expect in the coming days and to formulate a plan to work together effectively. We will continue to exchange information in the coming hours and days. As you must know, the Chevy Chase Village Police Department relies heavily on the resources of our larger partners in circumstances such as these.

Rest assured that Chevy Chase Village officers will be actively on patrol and monitoring the streets along the DC line, and the County Police will be sending multiple officers into the area as evening approaches to deter and respond to any criminal activity that might arise.

Residents are urged to stay abreast of local news coverage and to sign up to receive alerts directly to their mobile devices through Alert DC and Alert Montgomery (see the links below) to get prompt notification of events as they occur. Although the Village email blast system strives to provide timely information to our community, it is not to be used as a source for spontaneous events that unfold rapidly.

Alert DC
https://member.everbridge.net/index/1332612387832012/#/signup
Alert Montgomery
https://member.everbridge.net/index/1332612387832009/#/signup
Residents are reminded to call 9-1-1 for all emergencies—to include crimes in progress—and they should call the Village Police at 301-654-7300 for non-emergency police service such as suspicious persons or situations.

Stay safe and well.

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

Crime Activity on Primrose Street Overnight
Two distinct events; alert resident witnessed both

Incident #1

At about 2:40 this morning (Tuesday, April 7, 2020), a resident in the 200 block of Primrose Street was working at her computer when movement outside caught her eye. When she looked out her window, she saw three young men walking along Primrose Street looking into cars. She called the Village Police right away.

Officers Drew Fones and Alex Jenkins responded immediately and were in the area within a minute or two, and they requested additional units to respond from the county police. One of the county officers spotted two cars driving on local streets, and when the officer pulled behind the cars, they both raced off into the District of Columbia. A check of the license plates on one of the suspect vehicles indicated that the car had been stolen—possibly from Prince George's County.

Officers Fones and Jenkins returned to Primrose Street to look for evidence of theft, and they located two cars in the 100 block of Primrose that had been entered. The officers spoke with the owners of the cars; nothing was stolen from either car. Later in the morning, Village Police received complaints from two additional Primrose residents whose cars were entered. Thus far, a wallet was the only item reported stolen. All of the cars were unlocked.

Incident #2

At about 4:30 a.m.—less than 2 hours after the above event—the same resident who had called the police witnessed a second crime. This time, she heard the sound of a car's engine idling, so she peered out the window to see an unfamiliar car parked in the 200 block of Primrose with its engine running. While she was looking at the unfamiliar car, she watched as someone backed out of her neighbor's driveway in her neighbor's 2018 Mercedes SUV; she was witnessing a car theft in progress. As the hapless thief backed out of her neighbor's driveway, the culprit crashed backwards into a parked car across the street from the driveway. The witness watched as the stolen car and the other car (the one that had been idling) quickly headed south onto Western Avenue.

All of this was happening with police officers from the Village and the County just blocks away; two county cars were on Primrose Street near Connecticut Avenue when the car theft occurred. The witness called the Village police and provided a blow-by-blow description of what she was seeing as several officers headed back to her block. Again, we were on the scene very quickly, but the thieves had already made good their escape—presumably into DC.

Unfortunately, it appears that the key fob for the stolen Mercedes was in the car.

The Village Police Department is grateful to our alert, night-owl witness for her keen observations and her calls to the police. She was a big help to us last night.

The investigation is continuing.

Residents are urged to lock their cars every time they park, to take their keys/fobs into the house, and to remove all valuables. When we deny thieves of easy opportunities, they are less likely to return.

Tuesday, March 31, 2020

Village Officer Interrupts Nighttime Thieves
Alert patrol officer surprises two carloads of thieves; they flee

On Monday (March 30, 2020) at about 4:00 a.m., Officer Drew Fones was on patrol in the Village when he turned from Cedar Parkway onto westbound Grafton Street (toward Kirkside Drive). As soon as he made the turn, he saw two cars stopped on Grafton near Kirkside with their headlights on; one car was facing west, and the other was facing east.

As soon as Officer Fones saw the two cars, the drivers of the cars apparently saw him, because both cars sped off toward Kirkside then headed south toward Western Avenue. By the time Officer Fones reached Kirkside Drive, he saw the cars running the stop signs on Kirkside, then turn right onto Western Avenue in DC. The cars were obviously in a big hurry to get away.

Officer Fones returned to the middle block of Grafton to look for evidence of theft. Officer Fones spotted an unoccupied parked car with its interior light on. Investigation revealed that the thieves had entered the unlocked car, but had not taken anything.

On Tuesday, March 31, 2020, a second resident of the middle block of Grafton reported that someone entered his unlocked pickup truck; the only item missing was a small multi-tool. This resident has a video security system which captured the thieves entering his truck early on Monday morning; these were apparently the same thieves that fled from Officer Fones.

Officer Fones did a good job proactively patrolling to prevent theft. He undoubtedly interrupted a group of thieves and stopped them before they entered more cars.

Residents are urged to **lock their cars every time they park,** and to **remove all valuables.** By denying thieves of easy opportunities, they are less likely to return.

Videos:

The links below are videos from incidents in nearby Bethesda from November, 2019. Although not related to the events of last Friday in the Village, these videos will illustrate how these thieves operate, and they will make it clear how important it is to lock your car.

https://youtu.be/fBBHBh01osM

https://youtu.be/Ke2dc1KY0lM

Friday, March 13, 2020

Stolen Car Located—Parked and Unoccupied—in DC
Car was recovered, but had been damaged by thieves

At about 7:30 a.m. on Saturday (March 7, 2020) morning, Village police officers responded to a call for a stolen car in the 3900 block of Oliver Street. Investigation revealed that the owner parked the car in the driveway with a second car directly behind it. The owner inadvertently left the key fob inside one of the cars, and both cars were unlocked. Officer Davor Hrnjak entered the stolen car's information into a national database right away.

On Wednesday evening (March 11), a DC police officer saw the unoccupied car parked on the street in northeast Washington. The officer ran the tag and discovered that it had been stolen from the Village. He had the car towed to a storage lot and notified the owner of the car's location.

On Thursday (March 12), the owner notified Village Police of the recovery. Officer Hrnjak responded to the storage lot, photographed the car, processed it for the presence of latent evidence and evaluated the damage. The owner engaged the services of a tow truck to take possession of the car.

Residents are urged to **lock their cars every time they park,** and to **remove all valuables.** By denying thieves of easy opportunities, they are less likely to return.

Videos:
The links below are videos from incidents in nearby Bethesda from November, 2019. Although not related to the events of last Friday in the Village, these videos will illustrate how these thieves operate, and they will make it clear how important it is to lock your car.

https://youtu.be/fBBHBh01osM

https://youtu.be/Ke2dc1KY0lM

Monday, March 9, 2020

Car Stolen, Several Cars Entered Friday (3/6-3/7) Night
Key left inside stolen car; all cars were unlocked

At about 7:30 a.m. on Saturday (March 7, 2020) morning, Village police officers responded to a call for the report of a stolen car in the 3900 block of Oliver Street. Investigation revealed that the owner parked the car in the driveway with a second car directly behind it. The owner inadvertently left the key fob inside one of the cars, and both cars were unlocked.

The thieves entered the cars and found the key fob. In order to drive the car away, they first had to move the second car that was parked behind it. The thieves put the second car in neutral, rolled it out of the driveway and drove off in the other car.

Over the course of next several hours, officers responded to calls from several residents who discovered that their unlocked cars had been entered and rifled through. In total, 13 cars were entered. Nothing was taken from 9 of the cars. Of the 4 cars from which items were stolen, only one car contained items of significant value: the owner lost a phone, a laptop, wireless ear buds and some identification/access cards.

The locations of the entered cars are as follows:

3900 block of Oliver: 1 car stolen, 1 car entered, nothing taken

- **5500 block of Montgomery**: 4 cars entered; nothing taken
- **5500 Cedar**: $35 cash/coin
- **5600 Cedar**: Laptop, phone, wireless earbuds
- **Unit block W. Melrose**: nothing taken
- **Unit block E. Melrose (2 cars)**: nothing taken from 1 car; medication and headphones from the other
- **Hesketh west of Kirkside (2 cars)**: handicapped parking placard from 1; nothing from the other
- **5600 block Kirkside**: nothing taken

The Village Police Department requests that residents check their security camera recordings from Friday night to see if they recorded the thieves working the neighborhood.

Additionally, residents are urged to lock their cars every time they park, and to remove all valuables. By denying thieves of easy opportunities, they are less likely to return. And when the thieves are successful (as they were last Friday), they will return.

Videos: The links below are videos from incidents in nearby Bethesda from November, 2019. Although not related to the events of last Friday in the Village, these videos will illustrate how these thieves operate, and they will make it clear how important it is to lock your car.

https://youtu.be/fBBHBh01osM

Monday, March 9, 2020

Thief Responsible for Several Daytime Thefts Arrested
8 daytime crimes linked to suspect

Between January 15, 2020 and February 21, 2020, Village residents and contractors reported 11 daytime thefts from cars and work trucks, some involving smashed vehicle windows. Witnesses reported seeing a black BMW leaving the scene of some of the crimes. DC police were simultaneously experiencing an enormous number of daytime window-smash thefts from vehicles also involving a black BMW.

Village officers were on the lookout for this car and were conducting thorough investigations of each new event in an effort to identify and stop the thief or thieves. Following an event on W. Lenox Street in January, Officers Joseph Chung conducted a house-to-house canvass to determine if there were any eyewitnesses. The inquiry paid off when a woman provided Officer Chung with a tag number that she had seen on a black BMW speeding away from the scene of a theft. The tag number belonged to a man with a criminal history who was under the supervision of a federal probation officer. When Officer Timmerman contacted the federal probation officer, he learned that the suspect was wearing a GPS bracelet as a condition of his probation.

Village officers shared the information about the tag, the suspect, his history and the GPS bracelet with DC and Montgomery County detectives. Montgomery County detectives Britta Thomas and Jeff Brown immediately got to work with the solid leads that we provided to them, and they quickly obtained the GPS data from the suspect's bracelet. The data placed the suspect directly on the scene at the time of 8 of the 11 events that occurred in the Village. Detective Thomas obtained an arrest warrant for the subject, and he was taken into custody in Washington, DC; he is currently awaiting extradition to Maryland on felony charges.

Once the man is returned to Maryland and served with the warrant, we will identify him.

DC police are continuing their investigation, and more charges are likely to be placed against the suspect.

This was a fantastic multi-jurisdictional effort that was set in motion by observant eyewitnesses and the diligent work of Village police officers.