



BREMERTON POLICE DEPARTMENT



Chief Strachan's Weekly Update

Our bike officers have been out more often, and late Wednesday night and into Thursday morning, Officer Jason Vertefeulle patrolled the downtown area until 1:30 AM. He issued infractions for open containers of alcohol, one trespassing, and one minor possessing alcohol. He also had a lot of positive contacts with appreciative residents and took a noise complaint in a city park. Bikes really allow us to do a different kind of patrol work and are a great complement to our focus on "frequent flyers".

I am frequently asked about how the recent decriminalization of marijuana has affected us. My answer is generally that it has not made a significant change in our work or the calls to which we respond, but there have been a few problems. Last week, a resident called 911 after unsuccessfully trying to reason with a neighbor that the strong smell of marijuana coming from the neighbor's back yard was not appreciated. The caller felt that the smell was a violation of the prohibition of "public view" under the current Washington State law. The neighbors have spoken about it, but the problem persists. When Officer Cory Ditmer arrived to speak to the offending neighbor, she was immediately angry and said she would be speaking with her lawyer. She demanded to speak with the supervisor. Officer Ditmer did note that the smell was very strong and there was a baby present. Everything will be sent to the Prosecutor to review. I have noticed there is an element of "how dare you!" when some people are asked to be good neighbor and use good sense related to the issue of marijuana.

Lt. Luis Olan and Warrant Officer Dennis Hughes have made several trips to Olympia in the past few months to testify on changes to legal requirements for warrants officers in this state. Officer Hughes specializes in arrest warrants, protection orders, and court orders and has been doing this work for many years here at BPD. Our departmental audit last year showed that there was ambiguity about the legal authority for that position, so we asked the legislature to amend the law. Sen. Jan Angel has done tremendous work, shepherding the bill and working with our officers and the statewide Sheriffs and Police Chiefs Association. The bill was finally passed and signed by the Governor last week. Many thanks to Sen. Angel as well as Luis and Dennis!

Finally this week, I am attaching a photo taken by Josh Farley at the Kitsap Sun of our BPD bike officers with our new Kona mountain bikes at Bicycle Works in Manette. Our old police bikes were over ten years old, and this year we were able to replace them through this local business. This photo was taken the morning of the Armed Forces Parade.



Speaking of the parade, I have been privileged to drive a BPD squad car with our department Honor Guard near the front of the Armed Forces Parade for the last three years. I have also been at the front of parades as Chief in Kent and in Minnesota, and I have always noticed that people are respectful and clap for our officers and our Honor

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Guard as it goes by, which we always appreciate. However, this year, in the midst of all the negative news and protests about law enforcement, it was different. As soon as the parade started, and all through the route, the applause, and people shouting out their support for us as law enforcement officers was much, much more enthusiastic and loud than I have ever seen before-by a huge margin. It was amazing and it really shows the connection our community has with our department. I know I speak for all of our officers when I say it is a privilege to serve!

I would like to share with you a quick Memorial Day story from a few years ago. When I was with the King County Sheriff's Office, some of the Deputies were being honored for their past service in the military at a ceremony in Federal Way. I was there in my uniform and saw two elderly gentlemen wearing blazers and VFW hats with a few ribbons and medals on them. I went over and introduced myself, and the first thing out of their mouths to me was "thank you for your service." I said thanks and we talked a little bit. A few minutes later, one of the organizers mentioned to me that both men had been in D-Day in 1944. And the first thing they do is thank me for my service? I immediately went over and profusely thanked them for THEIR service. They were, not surprisingly, humble and just said "they did what anyone else would do." Truly the Greatest Generation.

Many thanks to all of our Active members of our Armed forces and our Veterans - thank you for your service!

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