



# BREMERTON POLICE DEPARTMENT



## Chief Strachan's Weekly Update

On the 1st of the month, Officers Josh Stottlemeyer and Todd Byers responded to Haddon Park for the recovery of a stolen bicycle. The bicycle owner, who had reported the theft to us, located the bike chained to a fence near a location where we found a criminal vagrant had been living in the woods. Officer Stottlemeyer dutifully made note of the unique features of the bike as described by the owner, interviewed several witnesses, and located and arrested the suspect. The suspect claimed to have "found the bike and felt there would be a reward when he returned it". When pressed a little bit as to why he didn't just return the bike in the first place, he replied, "The life of a homeless man is a busy one and I don't have time to get the reward." This man appears to have arrived in our area recently, with 12 contacts since just the middle of 2014, and one (now two) arrests.

One of our City Prosecutors, Gina Buskirk, sent along this note about Det. Aaron Elton:

*I got the opportunity to watch a KSCO exhibition on dog tracking at the county fair. Our very own Aaron Elton played the role of the "bad guy" taunting Deputy Hedstrom and K-9 Titan. Here are some snapshots I managed to get. Aaron did a great job educating and entertaining the audience while showing that officers are approachable and human-a fact that is often forgotten in the media these days.*



Officers were called last week to a one-car collision at an apartment complex on Magnuson. When Officer Bryan Hall arrived, he observed this green Honda Civic hanging over an embankment at the edge of the parking lot. It was eventually determined that the 20 year-old driver had hit the accelerator instead of the brake, then traveled through the parking lot, where he struck an elevated foot bridge that leads to the upper apartments. The vehicle had moved the bridge approximately 3 feet, leaving the bridge barely bolted to the apartment building. The Fire Department responded and evacuated four units for safety reasons. The driver advised he shouldn't have been driving his sister-in-law's vehicle without a license, and that the crash was caused because he doesn't know how to drive. Officers suggested he learn to drive somewhere flatter with fewer people around. Property maintenance arrived and began the task of repairing the bridge. The vehicle was a total loss. Lest you think he was too unlucky, there was a stump behind the driver's side rear tire that prevented it from rolling completely into the apartments below.

September 14, 2015

### Contact



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### Headquarters

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### BPD Staff Directory



Late last Sunday night, Officer David Hughes spotted a vehicle traveling at a very high rate of speed on Auto Center Way. Dave followed the vehicle and watched as it swerved all over the roadway. The car was ultimately stopped by Officer Hughes near the State Patrol headquarters on Werner Road. When contacted about his atrocious driving, the driver stated simply, "I'm drunk." Brief, but truthful. State Patrol responded to the very short distance and assisted in the arrest of the suspect for DUI.

Late Tuesday night, Bremerton Fire and Bremerton Police were dispatched to a structure fire in the 1300 block of Callow Ave. Upon arrival, officers located a mobile home that was fully engulfed in flames. The primary tenant was not home, but a female acquaintance was there. Officers did a good job evacuating neighbors, and moving them a safe distance away. Officer Meador bravely assisted one of the neighbors by quickly entering the home to retrieve the resident's cat, in the unlikely event the fire spread to his residence. The cat was said to be ungrateful.



Last weekend, our bike officers patrolled this year's successful Blackberry Festival. As always, organizer Carol Atkinson did a phenomenal job putting on the event. Officers spent time meeting with organizers and vendors, passing out stickers and in one instance hugging a Bernie Sanders supporter in front of the life size Bernie Sanders cutout at the Democratic booth. I received this from Sgt. Heffernan: Note - For future reference, if a Bernie Sanders supporter tells you that "police lives matter" and then asks you to hug them, there is probably another Bernie Sanders supporter directly behind them with a camera waiting to post the photo on the internet.

Overall, the festival provided an awesome opportunity for bike officers to meet with community members, and represent the department in a positive light.

On Wednesday night last week, Det. Steven Forbragd located a suspect on a felony drug case, driving on the highway. After other officers arrived to assist, the car fled and officers terminated the pursuit due to the hazard to the public. Det. Mike Nelson later found the suspect vehicle driving onto Illahee Road toward the water. When Det. Nelson got to where he had last seen the car turn off, he observed that the car had run off the road and collided with a grove of trees, and the suspect was running toward the beach. A perimeter was set up and one of our K-9 officers responded. The team quickly located the suspect cowering in the crawlspace under a house. Still not giving up, the suspect attempted to run away, but he found himself unable to outrun the canine and was quickly taken into custody. As he was being handcuffed, the suspect wanted us to know that he was "just about" to turn himself in. This 21 year old suspect had 132 previous contacts with police.

Det. Marty Garland is completing a good cold-case investigation where a suspect robbed a Walgreens store in our city - twice. [Click here](#) for the story.

#### **OFFICERS**

Beau Ayers  
 Spencer Berntsen  
 John Bogen  
 Todd Byers  
 Dana Clevenger  
 Joeseeph Corey  
 Kenny Davis  
 Cory Ditmer  
 Trevor Donnelly  
 Jordan Ejde  
 Aaron Elton  
 Christopher Faidley  
 Steven Forbragd  
 Martin Garland  
 Timothy Garrity  
 Crystal Gray  
 Brandon Greenhill  
 Michelle Griesheimer  
 Bryan Hall  
 Rodney Harker  
 Russell Holt  
 David Hughes  
 Jeffrey Inklebarger  
 Kent Mayfield  
 Jonathan Meador  
 James Miller  
 Michael Nelson  
 Steven Polonsky  
 William Prouse  
 Rodney Rauback  
 Johnny Rivera  
 Dahle Roessel  
 Keith Sargent  
 Jeff Schaefer  
 Frank Shaw  
 Josh Stottlemeyer  
 Matthew Strombach  
 Jacob Switzer  
 Matthew Thuring  
 John VanSantford  
 Jason Vertefeuille  
 Harold Whatley

#### **PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

David Boynton  
 Rena Brown  
 Barbara Forbes  
 Donna Goodwin  
 Marie Hansen  
 Dennis Hughes  
 Elizabeth Lumsden  
 Cathy Mattson  
 Elena Rinonos  
 Marixa Scott  
 Joseph Sexton  
 Debra Williams

#### **SERGEANTS**

Kevin Crane  
 Richard Cronk  
 Michael Davis  
 Ryan Heffernan  
 Kelly Meade  
 Randy Plumb  
 Randy Olson  
 Billy Renfro  
 Mark Thompson

#### **LIEUTENANTS**

Luis Olan  
 Pete Fisher

#### **CAPTAINS**

James Burchett  
 Tom Wolfe

#### **CHIEF**

Steven Strachan

Finally, this last week Officers Spencer Berntsen and Dana Clevenger handled a call that is all too common in law enforcement these days - a person with apparent mental illness. The man was disrupting traffic by going into the middle of the roadway. He is someone with whom we are familiar. The officers handled it, and went on with their shift. Later that day, I received this email from a local resident, and wanted to share it with you. It will provide some perspective on the current environment in law enforcement. I really appreciate him taking the time to write to us:

Chief,

*I don't know which person to send this to, so I hope that you would be so kind as to pass this along to the right officers. This morning, around 8:00 am, my family witnessed a man rolling in the street on Warren Avenue. I got out of my vehicle as a concerned citizen. A few seconds later, your officers were on the scene. They first used their loudspeaker to tell the person to get out of the road, saying his first name, suggesting that this was a frequent interaction.*

*Let me pause and say that in similar situations, in other cities, I have witnessed less than professional conduct from police officers. Past experience with other departments prompted a trained response on my part to begin recording the ordeal on my phone. I noticed that the officers were very friendly and professional, showing a helpful demeanor to witnesses and to the man rolling in the street. As one of the officers looked toward me, I saw his expression change, and his heart sink. A frustrated witness asked me why I was recording, defending the officers. I felt bad myself and stopped recording. Seeing that the officers were only there to assist the man and to keep the public safe, I deleted my recording and left the scene. It ate at me all day. The surprised look on the officer's face when he saw a citizen treating him like a criminal was heartbreaking.*

*I realized immediately that, while some of the cities I have lived in have had overly aggressive departments, that this is not one of them. I would like to apologize to those officers. They have earned our city's trust and respect and continue to do so. In the two years I have lived here, I have only seen them being polite and respectful and I have only heard good things about them from my fellow citizens. The reputation they have earned in this city warrants the shaming comment from my fellow witness: "why are you recording them?" It was a good question. Bremerton trusts their police officers. Who would record them? I guess it was habit and I hope that this email can help to lift any dark cloud I may have cast on any of those officers' day. I trust you guys and I am sorry I treated you like criminals. Keep up the good work.*

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