

MAYOR'S COLUMN

The past few days have been some of the busiest in recent memory for our police department.

Last Sunday there was a burglary on Sturgis Road followed by another on Sherman Avenue on Wednesday. They were identical in method of entry and operation to several in Tuckahoe, Eastchester and Mount Vernon, as well as the ones on the Hilltop this summer. The perpetrators ring door bells, wait for no response, then try doors or look for unlocked windows. In the Sherman Avenue case, lawn furniture was propped under a window and a screen cut to gain entry. If a homeowner answers, they flee or feign sale of a fundraising item.

Thanks to excellent police work, I am pleased to report that as in the Hilltop case, the criminals were apprehended and arrested. To recap, the Hilltop burglars ranged in age from 13 to 16 with the 16 year old referred to the grand jury and charged with two counts of burglary. The three minors are currently under the supervision of the County Department of Probation.

The arrests in the Sherman area were immediate thanks to two calls from residents reporting suspicious activity in their neighborhood.

One suspect was caught exiting the Sherman Avenue home, two others captured within 10 minutes in neighboring yards after shedding coats and backpacks. The fourth was captured one half hour later hiding in the bushes of a Sunnybrae yard by a K-9 unit.

Bronxville police were joined by officers from Eastchester, Tuckahoe, Mount Vernon and the County in setting up a perimeter which effectuated the speedy capture. The capture/arrests were the direct result of the collaboration and effective mutual aid offered by neighboring departments.

We were also fortunate that Wednesday was a Bronxville in-house firearms training day so our department was able to dedicate eight officers including the Chief and the Lieutenant to aid in the apprehensions.

Three of the suspects ages 19, 18 and 17, were charged with burglary in the second degree and the fourth, a 14 year old, was referred to the County Probation Department for a hearing. They reside in Mount Vernon and the Bronx and had no connection to the four youth apprehended in the Hilltop break ins. However, they have admitted to a burglary in Tuckahoe and we have identified the pawn shop they used to offload stolen property.

After the large display of police presence in the neighborhood, the police received six telephone calls from residents reporting that they had indeed observed the suspects earlier in the day or that the suspects rang their doorbells only to leave when they answered.

On behalf of our police department, I urge you to call them, anonymously if you prefer, at 337-0500 or 911 as soon as you observe any person(s) or activity that seem suspicious. Let the police professionals filter the information and make the appropriate judgment calls. Quick phone calls result in a speedy response. The response to the first call received in the recent case was under one minute which directly led to the immediate apprehension. Also, please remember to lock and alarm your home in daytime hours. The most recent burglary occurred at 9AM.

The morning after the burglary, our officers were called into action at 2AM. Several police departments pursued an emotionally disturbed man through many village streets after he injured two County police officers and stole a Westchester County police car in Mount Vernon. Our offices were in the role of monitoring, not participating in the chase or method of pursuit. The man was eventually arrested on the Hutchinson River Parkway entrance near New Rochelle Road.

I thank our police department for their diligent patrols, both marked and unmarked. Please help them by being their eyes and ears in your neighborhood. By working together, we can continue to live and work in one of the safest communities in Westchester County.