

MAYOR'S COLUMN

At our May Board meeting, the Trustees and I welcomed our three new police officers, all veterans of the Mount Vernon police force. Not only do they bring a wealth of on the job experience, but they are fully trained and ready for patrol quite expeditiously.

You may have already met Officer Paul Cavallo. Paul is a graduate of Westchester Community College with a degree in business management and lives right around the corner from the police station in Fleetwood. He is an avid athlete enjoying golf, long distance running and working out. In addition, he is an excellent cook having worked for many years in his family's catering business.

Joining Officer Cavallo is Officer Jason Cooper. Jason grew up in Mount Vernon, attending Mount Vernon schools and has a brother on the Mount Vernon police force. He is married with one daughter and lives in Pelham. Jason is extremely handy and enjoys tinkering with cars in his spare time.

Our newest officer is Joseph Stancarone, a resident of Pomona and a graduate of Rockland County Community College with a degree in Criminal Justice. Joseph is 25, single and enjoys outdoor activities including baseball, football, water sports and four wheeling.

Despite these very tight economic times, the Board believed it essential to add officers to our department to move us toward a full complement of 23 officers.

Not only is it wise in tough economic times to make police protection a priority, but the additional officers enhance all areas of department coverage. Increased personnel allows us to assign an extra officer in the business district and school field area on Friday and Saturday nights. Since increasing patrols, we have had no incidents in the Village though children from many communities continue to come to Bronxville on weekend evenings.

Extra officers have also been assigned to the business district to enforce the prohibition against crossing double yellow lines to park and our youth officers can now be involved in many more programs at the Bronxville School.

We are also able to add a third marked police car to increase neighborhood patrols which is a proven deterrent to crime.

Unfortunately, in spite of these measures, we had our first burglary of the year last week. It happened in broad daylight on a warm weekend afternoon on Oriole Avenue with many residents out and about.

This recent incident serves as a reminder to be extra vigilant in safeguarding your home. Also this is the time of year when bicycles tend to be stolen often from unlocked or open garages. Most importantly, please report any persons or events that seem out of the norm to our Police Department and let them make the determination. For example, the spate of burglaries last fall was preceded by unidentified folks ringing doorbells throughout that neighborhood. Call 337-0500 or 911, depending on the exigency of the situation. Now is an opportune time to reacquaint yourself with your neighbors, get to know their schedules and perhaps offer to keep a key for emergency situations and collect stray newspapers. Accumulation of PennySavers or free newspapers is a giveaway no one is home. You can also leave a house key on file with our Police Department to be used for emergency entry.

Even with a well alarmed home as was the case in the recent burglary, an intruder has 3 to 5 minutes to get in and out of a home. As a result, it is important to make valuables difficult to find and not stored in easily accessible or obvious locations.

Most burglaries are committed when the homeowner is away because intruders desire the valuables, not confrontation. So, if you are traveling, alert a neighbor to your schedule and activate staggered timers throughout the house. A porch light left on 24/7 is an obvious sign no one is home. Prior to departure, contact our Police Department to place your home on the vacant house list. An officer will then check your home daily.

If your home ever appears to be vandalized, do not enter the home, leave the property and call the police from a neighbor's or a cell phone.

None of the above information is meant to alarm, rather to pause, in light of the recent bad experience of one of our neighbors, to reevaluate our home safety procedures. Their experience serves as a reminder to take precautions, be vigilant and look out for your neighbors.

There is no downside to using this incident as a catalyst to reconnect with your neighbors, offer them any help and assistance and review your own home safety procedures with family members.