# Problem Solving Quarterly

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Reporting on Innovative Approaches to Policing

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# Tailored Target • Hardening Addresses Robberies in St. Petersburg

**Bv Al White** 

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As the supervisor of the robbery squad of the St.
Petersburg (FL) Police Departmeat, I noticed that the No-Fault Insurance Company had been robbed twice within a 30-day period last winter. We had apprehended no suspects in either robbery. I also learned that the business had been robbed three times in 1992, and that no suspects had been arrested.

<u>Utilizing</u> the problem-spiv-; ing model, I decided to initiate a problem-oriented policing pro-)ect that targeted the robbery problem at this particular address.

#### **Analysis**

I had the detectives assigned to the area obtain from crime analysis a listing of all calls for service from the No-FaultInsurance Company and five nearby businesses for the previous six months.

Interestingly enough, lion of the other companies-asicluding another insurance agency and a check cashing outlet= had experienced an armed robbery. One business in the two-block area had experienced a strong-armed robbery that began as a shoplifting incident. The burglar alarm had been set off on two occasions at the other insurance agency, part of a national chain, but no robberies had been reported at that address. A total of 40 calls for service had been logged for that entire two-block area over the six-month timeframe.

After gathering the above data, my detectives and I made contact with personnel at the six businesses. We advised

(cont. on next page)

# Graffiti Wall Reduces Complaints, Promotes the Arts

By Chuck Krieble

"Tuggers," as persons who perpetrate graffiti are often known, can strike with great speed and are often exceedingly difficult to apprebend. Each year they deface large expanses of public and private property, causing untold damage at the expense of businesses, local government entities and individuals.

(cont. on p. 7)

(Robberies, cont. from p. I)

them of the two No-Fault robberies and elicited information about their approaches to security. We learned that

- the No-Fault establishment was reasonably well-lit;
- the traffic at the business was moderate;
- No-Fault employees and managers were on the premises of the business during both robberies;
- a burglar alarm was the only security measure that No-Fault employed;
- several other businesses in the area had safes and security systems that included video cameras;
- the insurance company that had not been robbed had posted a sign stating that they only accepted checks;
- No-Fault had a large cash flow, and employees stored the cash in a cash box, rather than in a safe;

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- No-Fault took in most of its cash around the 20th of the month;
- both robberies took place in the afternoon on the 20th of the month;
- a large amount of cash was taken from the cash box during the first robbery, but not during the second, because No-Fault personnel

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- had just taken the cash to the bank;
- No-Fault did not change any procedures after the first robbery;
- two males wearing hoods over their faces committed one of the robberies:
- one male who was not wearing a hood committed the other robbery;
- after one robbery, the suspects left through the back door of the building; after the other robbery, the suspect left through the front door.

#### Response

In the past, the police department had responded to the robbery calls for service at this address by interviewing the victims, witnesses and others, and then forwarding information obtained from them to robbery unit detectives for follow-up attention.

However, as mentioned earlier, this approach had not resulted in the arrest of any robbery suspects.

Based on our analysis of this particular robbery problem, I met with representatives of the No-Fault Insurance Company and suggested that they consider trying to reduce the incidence of robberies using new approaches. I recommended that they only accept checks for premium payments. The managers said that although they were unable to conduct a checks-only business because most of their clientele did not have checking accounts, they would be able to vary the dates premium payments were due, reducing the amount of cash on the

premises on certain days. The managers would also be able to make several bank deposits each day, as well as arrange for a daily armored truck cash pickup.

# Both robberies took place in the afternoon on the 20th of the month.

I also suggested they consider installing a video camera, safe and plexiglass service window, but to date, they have only installed the service window. I also recommended that they keep entry and exit doors locked at all times and buzz customers into the establishment, which they now do. I also advised the business's employees and managers to be alert to customers who behave suspiciously or ask about the agency 's operations.

#### **Assessment**

Three-and -a-half months have passed since the No-l'autt Insurance Company made the changes outlined above. During that time, the department has only received two calls for service from the insurance company. In both cases, employees had inadvertently set off the company's burglar alarm when trying to open the business a few minutes before 9:00 a.m.

I check in with the company's owners every few weeks, and thus far, they have no problems to report.

Al White is a sergeant with the St. Petersburg (FL) Police Department

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#### The Sergeant's Role as a Change Agent.

#### By Ron Glensor

For problem-oriented policing (POP) to succeed, first-line supervisors must **play** a key role in modifying their agencies' culture. However, convincing sergeants of the need for change is no easy task. It is widely held that the most challenging aspect of changing a police agency's culture lies in changing the attitudes of first-line supervisors.

There is just cause for the above-mentioned reluctance of first-line supervisors to change. In his book, Problem-Oriented Policing, Herman Goldstein states, that "Changing the operating philosophy of rank-and-file officers is easier than altering a first line supervisor's perspective of his or her job./because the work of a sergeant is greatly simplified by the traditional form of policing. The "It more routinized the work, the easier it is for the sergeant to check. The more emphasis placed on . rank and the symbols of position, the easier it is for the sergeant to rely on authority—rather than in tellect and personal skills—to carry out his or her duties. [S]ergeants are usually appalled by descriptions of the freedom and independence suggested in problem-oriented policing for rankand-file officers. The concept can be very threatening to them. This...can create an enormous block to implementation."

Goldstein maintains that the most effective means We currently \ luave of altering the attitudes of first-line supervisors is to con-

vince them that adopting a different management style makes good sense in today's environment. This environment, like its privatesector counterparts, is increasingly becoming more customer-oriented and more quality-oriented. Police agencies are also beginning to see the need to place more emphasis on the allpurpose officer and less on the specialist, who often "slows down and creates work for" line officers, says former Edmonton Alberta Police Superintendent Chris Braiden.

Those involved in POP who have observed the approach at work in the field, have noted that rank-and-file officers are highly enthusiastic about problem solving. When "cut loose" and assigned to a neighborhood to create a feeling of security and goodwill, officers seem to flourish. Equally important, they find their work rewarding and satisfying.

#### Supervisors Must Be Committed to POP

Unfortunately, a major impediment to officer-initiated problem solving is our failure to elicit and engage a commitment to POP from those with management and supervisory responsibilities. Goldstein points out that 'tit is disheartening to talk with officers on the street and those of lower supervisory rank who cite their superior—rather than the complexity of their job—as their major problem."

The successful implementation of POP requires both the support and the enhanced knowledge and skills of supervisory personnel. Specifically, successful POP re-

(cont. on p. 8)

#### **Submissions**

The PSQ editors encourage readers to send in articles on their POP efforts. When submitting descriptions, remember to consider the following questions:

- What is the problem?
- Who is affected by the problem, and how are they affected?
- How has the department handled the problem in the past?
- What information was collected about the problem?
- Were there any difficulties in getting the information?
- What was the goal of the problem-solving effort?
- What strategies Were developed to reach that goal?
- What agencies assisted the police department in achieving the goal?;
- Was the goal accomplished?
- What would you recommend to other police agencies interested in addressing similar problems?

Send submissions to. Problem-Solving Quarterly 1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 930, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 4666- 820, FAX (202) 466-7826..`



#### Dawn Lawn Mowing Complaints Eliminated

By Glenn Stofer

For many golfers, one of the most appealing aspects of the game is the quiet, tranquil setting of the golf course. In addition, golfers treasure the verdant, well-trimmed grass that covers the 18-hole playing field.

To provide both perfectly-cut greens and tranquility during business hours, golf course personnel must mow the lawns early each morning, often before dawn. This early lawn mowing schedule can lead to problems with a golf course's residential neighbors.

#### **Scanning**

In mid-February, Sergeant Dave DeKay of the St.. Petersburg (FL) Police Department received a call from the the Stouffer-Vinov. Resort's security director regardmg a noise complaint that a. neighbor in an adjacent residential building filed against the resort. The security director wanted to know whether it was illegal for the resort to mow the golf course early in the morning. DeKay provided the security director with a copy of the local noise ordinance, which indicated that lawn equipment was exempt from noise regulations after 8 a.m., but provided little additional guidance.

DeKay offered to measure the noise levels of the lawn mowers, but he was unable to do so that day because it was raining and the high humidity levels could have decreased the measuring instrument's accuracy. Realizing that more research into the ordinance would be required, and knowing that I was interested in taking on a problem-oriented policing project, DeKay referred the problem to me.

#### **Analysis**

I drove by the golf course and confirmed that the resort personnel began cutting the greens around 6 a.m. and that the mowers could be heard outside the complainant's residence. I then carefully reviewed the city noise ordinance and determined that the golf course was exempt from noise regulations between the hours of 8 a. m. and 8 p.m., but was required to generally operate within the 60-decibel range when mowing the lawn at 6 a.m. To confirm this interpretation of the ordinance, I consulted the police department's legal advisor.

I later contacted the resort's security director, who said that the golf course had received approximately eight complaints about the morning mowing. The security director indicated that he was interested in measuring the noise: levels to determine whether they were in compliance with the law.

#### Response

I arranged to meet with the resort's security director, club manager and golf course maintenance supervisor at the golf course. The resort personnel drove Officer Dave Sanders and me to the mowing location they believed was at the heart of the noise complaints. The resort personnel indicated that they were concerned about the complaints and were willing to do whatever they could to resolve the situation; however, they said that they could not change the mowing

time, as the golf course had to be ready for business by 7:30 a.m.

The golf course maintenance supervisor said they would try two different approaches to reducing noise levels for the complainant.

First, golf course personnel would change the order in which they mowed the greens, and mow the green closest to the complainant's apartment some twenty minutes later than usual.

The resort personnel indicated that they were concerned about the complaints and were Willing to do whatever they could to resolve the situation.

Second, they would also rake the bunkers later in the morning, which would decrease the amount of noise by reducing the number of machines in operation early in the morning.

I offered to conduct a dosime-, ter test the next morning toga°s' -determine whether these <u>dinnges</u> would put noise levels within the legal limit.

I then contacted the complain ant, who said that the lawn mowing only really bothered him on the weekends, when he wanted to sleep late. I informed the complainant that I would be conducting a dosimeter test the next day to determine whether the golf course was in compliance with the noise ordinance, and the complainant said he would be interested in learning the results.

(cont. on p. 6)

# New National Crime Reporting System Rich Source of Information for Problem Solvers

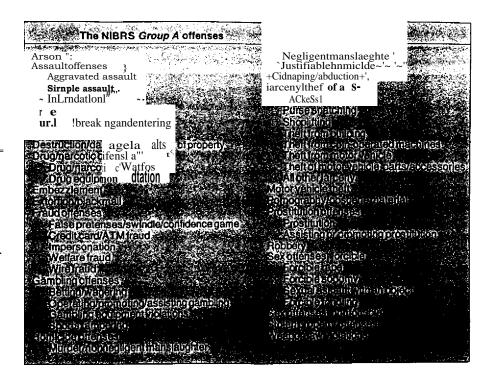
The National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which has begun to replace the summary-based system currently used by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) program, will eventually offer problem solvers a national database that can provide insight into the dynamics of over 50 different crimes ranging from assault and robbery to liquor law violations.

Currently, relatively little data analysis can be done on crime statistics forwarded to the FBI, because they are in the summary format. The new system will collect and provide in-depth incident information on 46 Group A offenses (see inset, this page) and, over 10 Group B offenses (see inset, this page). In addition, the., system will capture 53 data elements reflecting different aspects of a crime, incbii1 ng the time and place of the incident, as well as the ' race, age and sex of the offender and victim (see inset, back page).

Through NIBRS, officers can team whether alcohol use by an offender increases the level of injuries sustained in assaults in bars or nightclubs

"NIBRS represents a new way of thinking about crime, providing details about victims, offenders

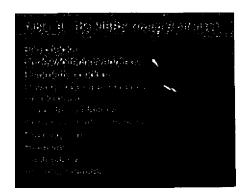
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and the environments in which they interact," reads a recent Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) report.

To date, three states, Alabama, North Dakota and South Carolina, have forwarded 1991 incident-based data to NIBRS. Iowa and Idaho are expected to submit 1992 data, and 21 additional states are expected to forward test data for 1992 and 1993.

Through cross-tabulations of different incident based data elements, police and other criminal justice personnel can learn more about the relationships between the different aspects of a crime. For example, according to an analysis of the 1991 data, robbers only used guns in 18 percent of robberies committed on the premises of bars or nightclubs, but they used guns in 41 percent of robberies committed at hotels and motels. Cross-tabulations also show that only 57 percent of rape



victims over age 30 knew their as sailants, whereas 82 percent of rape victims between the ages of 12 and 17 knew their assailants.

Although the data will be published in aggregate form, problem solvers will find it useful in a number of ways. Because the figures capture information on both completed and attempted crimes, officers can learn more about - :... what factors generally increase the likelihood of certain crimes occur-

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## Mark Your Calendar: 1994 POP Conference

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#### (Golf Coarse, cont. from p 4)

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i conducted the dosimeter test from the backyard of the apartment building *over* a 20-minute period, beginning around 6:25. a.m. It appeared that, for the most part, the sound level of *the* movers remained between 50 and 55 decibels, in conformance with the city ordinance; a printout at the police station confirmed that the lawn equipment operated in the legal range.

I advised both the golf course maintenance supervisor and the complainant about the test mutts. I told the maintenance supervisor that I Would conduct additional do-

simeter tests if the police department received additional complaints.

#### **Assessment**

No noise complaints have been filed since I informed the complainant of the dosimeter test's results. I checked with the complainant and he said that *noise* from the lawn mowing had been less of a problem since the golf course had changed its mowing patterns.

Glenn Stofer is a sergeant with the St. Petersburg (FL) Police <u>Department</u>

#### PERF Offers Problem-Oriented Policing Training

PERF provides POP training for command staff, mid-managers, first-line supervisors, and field officers. The training can be specially designed to meet your department's needs. The basic training program covers:

- The evolution of problem-oriented policing
- The problem-solving process
- Examples and case studies in problem solving
- Ways of implementing problem solving in your department

PERF trainers use a wide range of training tools, including lectures, videos and interactive workshops. The workshops *give* participants *the* opportunity *to,apply the* effective problem-solving process to the kinds of crime pmblems their agencies experience.

If your agency is interested in obtaining POP training, please contact PERF at (202) 466=7820.

(Graffiti, cont. from p. 1)

#### **Scanning**

In early 1993, Redmond, Washington, faced a citywide graffiti problem that threatened to overwhelm the police department is 56 commissioned officers. The 42,000 residents of this Seattle suburb were filing over 60 graffiti complaints per month (out of an average total of 1700 complaints per month). Before January 1993, the department rarely fielded calls regarding graffiti

Newspaper editorials implying that police and local government had not been responsive to the issue, or were not equipped to handle the problem, increased the sense of urgency about implementing an effective solution.

According to the complaints, both citizens and business owners believed that gangs were `narking their turf with the graffiti. The police department established organized cleanup procedures and stepped up directed enforcement

patrols in areas that had a lot of graffiti, in the hopes of finding a long-term solution to the problem. We occasionally arrested graffiti suspects. However, these strategies were not particularly effective, most likely because we did not clearly understand the origin and meaning of the graffiti, or the reason for its sudden frequent appearance.

#### **Analysis**

Officers working in the area of a popular teen social club encountered a carload of youths, one of whom had in his possession a knapsack filled with spray paint cans. From an interview with this individual and other people associated with the graffiti. officers learned of the existence of an entire underground network of people engaged in "tagging. Officers subsequently interviewed approximately a dozen taggers and found that most of those responsible for Redmond's graffiti blight considered the vandalism a form of hiphhop art— a means of artistic and social self-expression.

During this period, Officer Bill Corson had been going through case reports of graffiti by hand, looking for information about the primary locations of the tagging, the meaning of the tagging and the identities of the perpetrators. He examined approximately 60 cases (one-half of the most recent month's incidents and a sampling of reports from prior months).

Initially, the graffiti was thought to be the work of gang members, because taggers who had been seen or identified wore loose-fitting, "sagging" clothing and behaved **defiantly** in public. However, in analyzing the cases, Corson found that most of the graffiti, which took the form of initialing, name writing and murals, was found only on public property, such as street signs and utility boxes. Little graffiti was found on privately owned fences, garages, cars, or other typical graffiti magnets.

In talking with the teenage taggers who had been identified, Corson learned that a body of } popular iiteinture ON graffiti art existed. He went to the library, reviewed several books and maga zines on the topic and learned that non-gang-related taggers often refer to area codes in their graffiti to indicate where they live. Having worked on gang is sues in another police agency, Corson knew that gang members often refer to penal codes for such crimes as murder in their graffiti to intimidate people in the community. Based on this and' other information gained through analyzing the problem, Corson concluded that most of the graffiti in Redmond was not being generated by gang members

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## Crime Prevention Month OpporUz ty for Developing Problem-Solving Partnerships

The marking of Crime Prevention Month this October offers police departments and communities an opportunity to mobilize for prevention, celebrate their achievements and spur actions that address the root causes of crime and disorder.

The National Crime Prevention Council will distribute the 1994 guide to celebrating Crime Prevention Month to.

law enforcement agencies and community organizations at no charge. Titled "Working Together to Stop the Violence," the guide provides tools and information on planning crime prevention projects. To obtain single copies of the publication while supplies last, write to NCPC, Attn.: CP Month 1994, 1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor, Washington, DC 20006-3817.

(Sergeants, cont. from p. 3)

quires supervisors with the following attributes.

#### Characteristics of a Good Problem-Oriented Supervisor

- Allows officers freedom to experiment with new approaches.
- Insists on good, accurate analysis of problems; coaches officers through the problem-solving process; gives advice.
- Grants flexibility in work schedules when requests are proper; helps officers manage their time and develop work plans.
- Allows officers to make most contacts directly and paves the way when they are having trouble getting cooperation.

Protects officers from s.; pressures within the ... department to revert to ,'' traditional methods, as well as from undue criticism.

- Runs interference for officers to secure resources, identifies new resources and contacts for officers and makes them check them out.
- Knows *the* problems officers are working on and whether the problems are real
- Knows, officers' beats and important citizens in them and expects officers to know the beats and citizens even

 Supports officers even if their strategies fail, as long as they learned something useful in the process, and completely thought out the strategies.

> Manages problem solving efforts over a long period of time; doesn't allow efforts to die just because officers get sidetracked by competing demands for time and attention.

> Gives credit to officers and lets others know about their work; provides more positive reinforcement for good work than negative reinforcement for bad work

- Allows officers to talk about their work with visitors and at conferences.
- Coordinates efforts across shifts, beats and outside units and agencies.
- by monitoring calls for service, crime patterns and community concerns.
- Assesses the activities and performance of officers in relation to identified problems rather than with boilerplate measures.
- Expects officers to account for their time and activities, giving them a greater range of freedom.
- Provides officers with examples of good problem solving so they know what generally is expected.

 Realizes that this style of police work cannot simply be ordered; officers and detectives must come to believe in it.

Good POP supervisors should also be prepared to answer the following questions: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the traditional form of police supervision? What are officers complaints about management? What are officers' complaints about their work?

Supervisors should also anticipate the likely objections to POP from officers and detectives. Supervisors should be prepared to respond to such statements as, "This is social work, and we're not social workers," "We don't have the skills or training to do all this," and "Other cops won't see us as real cops."

### Look for Ways POP Can Be Institutionalized

The importance of changing the culture **of** the police agency moving toward problem-oriented policing cannot be understated. For change to be successful, police executives must examine the forces that encourage and discour age innovation within their organizations, the prevailing police culture and the beliefs that serve to preserve it, and ways in which they might implement POP within their organizations. We call for a radical change in the way the police organization views itself and conducts its affairs. The sergeant plays a vital role in the change process.

kon Glensor is a PERF fellow sand a deputy chief in the Reno (NV) Police Department

#### St. Louis Officers Address Crime and Disorder Problems Related to Citizens with Mental Illness

The following problem solving articles are reprinted with permission from the St. Louis (MO)
Police Department's monthly publication, Keys to the City.

#### DISTURBANCE CALLS

#### Scanning

Last October, Seventh District Officers Fran Krupp and Laure Lamezyk received a call to 5876 Kennerly in the Wells-Goodfellow neighborhood for burglars in the building. They met the caller, Mrs. R., who is in her late eighties and legally blind. Mrs. R. complained that people had broken into her basement and that she could hear them talking while they did their aa ary r

The officers found NO SIGNS of intruders. Mrs. R., however, was convinced that people had entered her basement, but for the time being, she was satisfied with the officers' inspection. Krupp later recalled having heard several other assignments to that same address in the past.

#### **Analysis**

Krupp checked the CAD system and found records of 188 police calls to 5876 Kennerly. This address was listed as the tenth highest call location in the Seventh District. Over the past three years, police had been dispatched to this address almost 300 times for either "burglars in the building" or "disturbances." Krupp also discovered that no police reports had ever been completed on these calls; they had all been designated as unfounded, requiring no further action.

Talking with other officers who handled calls at this location, Krupp heard the same story over and over—an elderly female called the police because she heard noises coming from her basement. In all cases, the calls were designated unfounded.

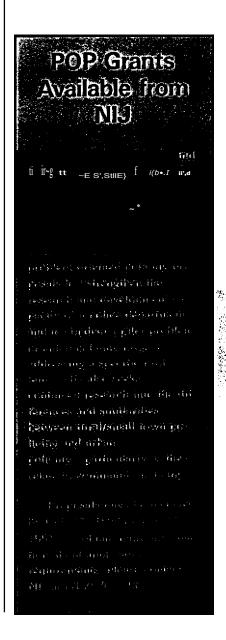
He was aware that his grandmother occasionally called the police, but was shocked when he the 4 actual numbers.

The police department had already spent an estimated 240 staff hours handling the previous calls and it was obvious that if something weren't done, these calls for service would continue.

#### Response

As an interim step, the supervisors agreed that every time a call was dispatched to this location, the precinct sergeant would call the complainant to determine whether the police were really needed. If not, the sergeant would call off the responding officers.

Later, it was learned that Mrs. R lived with her nephew. Krupp contacted him and described the problem. He was aware that his



(Mental illness, cont. from p. 9)

grandmother occasionally called the police, but he was shocked when he heard the actual numbers. With his cooperation, a meeting between the family and the officers was arranged. Krupp, Lamczyk and Sergeant Greg Wurm met with the family. During the 30-minute meeting, the family agreed that something had to be done. They assured the officers that they would work with Mrs. R. to eliminate the unnecessary calls for police service.

#### **Assessment**

Following up several weeks later, Krupp found that no calls had been dispatched to 5876 Kennerly. Concerned for Mrs. R's well-being, Krupp and Lamczyk went to Mrs. R's house to make sure she was all right. When they arrived, Mrs. R greeted them at the door and told them that her family had forbidden her to call the police without first checking with them. Over *the* next three months, only one call was dispatched to 5876 Kennedy.



#### Scanning

In February of this year, Seventh District Officer Fran Krupp was working secondary employment at Dillards department store in the St. Louis Center, a downtown shopping complex, when she arrested a 39-year-old man for shoplifting. The man, Marion G., was caught stealing an alarm clock.

After taking Marion to the secunty office, Knipp began filling

out a summons release form. When Marion realized he was not going to be booked, he started crying and begged Krupp to take him to jail, where he would be fed and given a place to sleep for the night.

#### **Analysis**

Krupp was curious why arrest, far from being a deterrent, had actually become the incentive for the man to commit a crime.

Marion explained to Fran that he stole from the St. Louis Center almost daily **and** sold the goods on the street. He used the money for food and transportation to the Veterans Administration Hospital, where he was receiving **outpatient** care for a mental illness.

As Krupp continued the interview, she learned that without medication, Marion hears voices that tell him to do weird things. Several years before, he had been judged incompetent to handle his own affairs, and consequently, his disability checks were delivered to a payee, in this case his mother, who lived in Illinois. Within the past year, Marion's mother had put him out of the house, but she had-continued to cash the checks.

'Krupp realized there was little she could do that evening, but she gave Marion enough money for food and transportation to the hospital and instructed him to meet her at the shopping center the following day.

The next day, Knipp contacted a counselor from the Harbor Light Shelter and explained Marion's situation. The counselor told Krupp that the Harbor Light could become the payee for Marion and help him recover from his illness. They would provide room and board for as long as he needed it,

and through their pharmacy program, he would always have a supply of his medication.

### Marion explained to Fran that he stole from

the St. Louis Center almost daily and sold the goods on the street. He used the money for food and transportation to the hospital, where he was receiving outpatient care for a mental illness.

#### Response

When Marion returned to Dillards the following afternoon, Krupp arranged for the two of them to go to the Harbor Light Shelter. The counselor started the paperwork that would allow Marion to reassign a payee for his disability check.

#### **Assessment**

Several months have passed, and Krupp reports that Marion has not been seen in the St. Louis Center.

## New Address for PSQ

Problem Solving Quarterlyand PERF are moving to new headquarters in mid-August. Our new address will be: 1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 930, Washington, DC 20036. Our telephone number—(202) 466-7820--will remain the same.

#### Response

Once Corson made the distinction between gang graffiti and the more innocuous tagging, he organized a meeting with the identified taggers. At the meeting, he described two different scenarios for addressing the graffiti problem. The taggers, police and other community members could work together to develop ways of addressing citizen complaints about tagging that would satisfy all interested parties; or the police could aggressively investigate and arrest taggers who defaced property.

The teenagers suggested establishing a legal place to paint, in return for a tagging cease-fire. The teenagers also offered to discourage others from illegal tagging if the city designated a public place where they could practice their art.

Corson assisted the tagging **network's more outspoken repre-**

sentatives by making a formal request to the Redmond City
Council to authorize construction
of a "Hip-Hop Art Wall." The
council approved the wall in late
1993. Corson and several of the
taggers convinced four local businesses to donate concrete and
other materials needed to construct the wall, which was erected
in early May 1994.

#### Assessment

During the year-long effort to gain the local government's approval to construct the art wall, the department received only isolated reports of graffiti approximately four per month. During this period, the teenagers were so enthused at the prospect of a legal art wall that they spread the word about the agreement throughout the underground population of artists in the region. The message was, "Don't tag Redmond...the city is going to give us a place to paint!" Since the wall was constructed in May, the department has received only a

few complaints each month about graffiti.

In analyzing the cases, Corson found that most of the graffiti, which took the form of initialing, name writing and murals, was found only on public property, such as street signs and utility boxes.

Corson and others involved in the effort maintain ongoing communication with the taggers, whom they regularly encounter on the street and at the wall. The taggers themselves initiated a permit system for painting on the wall, under which registered taggets obtain laminated identification cards that give them access to the wall.

Chuck Krieble is a sergeant with the Redmond (WA) Police Department

#### Electronic Bulletin Board Gives Montgomery County Citizens Access to Crime Information

In early June, the Montgomery County (MD) Police Department began a 90-day pilot test of an electronic bulletin board open to the public that allows citizens round-the-clock access to crime information.

Bulletin board users can obtain crime reports (by block), crime

prevention tips and relevant information on state and local laws —all at no cost.

Users can also obtain information on repeat calls for service to particular blocks in police reporting areas, helping them to identify the nature and scope of problems in their area. Citizens can also use the bulletin board to communicate with persons involved in neighbhorhood watch groups.

The idea for the bulletin board came from Officer James Hockenberry, who views the creation of the system as an internal problemsolving effort. As part of the department's move to problem-oriented policing, Chief Clarence Edwards encourages creative. solutions to administrative problems in the agency. Before the bulletin board was created, Says Hockenberry, the department had difficulty responding to all the requests it received for crime information.

Hockenberry estimates that approximately 500 citizens will log on to the bulletin board each month.

If you would like more information on the Montgomery County project, please contact Hockenberry at (301) 565-5761. (NIBRS, cont. from p. 5)

ring. For example, officers can learn whether alcohol use by an offender increases the level of injuries sustained in assaults in bars or nightclubs, and whether rapes are more likely to be completed in alleys or fields at different times of the day. Officers can also compare the national averages with local averages to identify **unusual** aspects of local problems.

UCR staff will provide agencies with ideas on how they can analyze their own local data forwarded to UCR under the NIBRS program. For example, UCR staff suggest that departments consider asking local universities for assistance in analyzing NIBRS data.

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