

THE BLUE LIGHT Bulletin

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Department

Tim Adams, Chief of Police

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Officials prepare to turn dirt at the groundbreaking ceremony on March 30 for the new Gastonia Police Memorial and Commemorative Park. They are, left to right, Chief Tim Adams, Assistant City Manager Larry Wood, Capt. Chuck Lifford, GPF President Rob Collis, Mayor Jennie Stultz, Mayor Pro Tem Walker Reid, Assistant Chief Rob Helton, Councilwoman Brenda Craig, Assistant Chief Stacy Conley, Councilman John Howren, and GPD Administrator Amanda Neese. (Photo by Michael Schwartz)



Groundbreaking For Memorial

By Donna Lahser
BLB Editor

The Gastonia Police Department (GPD) and Gastonia Police Foundation (GPF) hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on Wednesday, March 30 to celebrate the construction of the new Gastonia Police Memorial and Commemorative Park. Due to inclement weather, remarks were made in the Community Room, but officials were still able to turn dirt on site on GPD's southwest lawn under a tent.

"Chief Postell made this something he wanted to get accomplished when we moved into this building, and today we begin to make that vision become a reality," Chief Tim Adams said. "The first three months of 2011 have been very devastating for law enforcement in the U.S. Already to date this year 51 police officers have lost their lives in the line of duty, a 6 percent increase from the same time period in 2010. 2010 saw a 20 percent increase from 2009 of officers losing their lives in the line of duty.

"We have been very fortunate in Gastonia," Chief Adams continued. "Our officers are on the line every day combating crime and disorder in our

neighborhoods. We've always trained our officers to conduct themselves and their duties as safely as possible. We teach them officer safety techniques and allow them to train for violent situations. And I know that many people in our community – our churches and our community supporters – tell me all the time they are praying and holding our officers up in prayer and I think that has a lot to do with the safety we've enjoyed."

Members of the Gastonia Police Foundation board have been raising funds for the project. As of June 28, \$116,000 was raised along with \$40,000 in in-kind donations. \$32,000 of the \$116,000 is from the Buy a Brick program. The dedication ceremony will be Sunday, September 11, which will mark the 10 year anniversary of the 9-11 attacks on America. The public is invited to attend.

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Crime Reduction & Family Day

It is such an honor to serve as the chief of the Gastonia Police Department, a great police agency. The efforts made by members of this department over the past several years speak volumes for the caliber of people who serve the citizens of Gastonia each and every day. Six and one half consecutive years of crime reduction that continues to decline is only one way to measure the success of an agency.

Another way to measure our success is to witness first-hand the appreciable progress our employees make in the day-to-day operations as they come up with new and innovative ways to combat crime and make our citizens feel safe. Programs such as the Great Kids Camp, the new CSI Camp, the Explorer Program and Citizens On Patrol Program, just to name a few, are excellent. To sit and listen to our commanders, supervisors, line officers and civilians talk at command staff meetings about ways we can refocus efforts on problem issues in neighborhoods

amazes me and makes me very proud of the dedication and determination of the members of this organization.

We recognized over 50 officers, employees, volunteers and citizens for their accomplishments over the past year at our annual awards



A game of Cornhole at Family Day.

ceremony on May 20. The ceremony was held during the department's annual Family Day at Karyae Park on Linwood Road. Thanks to the Gastonia Police Foundation for sponsoring the event for the second year.

Attendance was estimated at over 250 and most likely the largest turnout we have ever had for this event. Everyone seemed to enjoy the music, events and food. Thanks to all those who worked the event.

As we are just beginning the summer months, it's hard to already think about the fall of the year, but coming on September 11th this year, we will be dedicating our new Gastonia Police Memorial and Commemorative Park. Most all of the funds have been raised and construction is underway. I strongly encourage everyone to join us for the dedication service that will be held on site and the unveiling of a memorial and statue to honor all the officers from our department who have made the ultimate sacrifice of giving their lives in service to the citizens of Gastonia.

I am very proud to be the chief of such a great group of employees and sincerely thank each of you for the hard work you do to make Gastonia a better place.

Be safe,

Tim Adams
Chief of Police



Explorers Complete Training

GPD Explorers completed training June 19-24 at the NC Academy for Law Enforcement Explorers in Salemburg, NC. Days started at 5:30 a.m. with physical training, and classwork ran late into the evenings. Caleb Price was named Explorer of the Week for outstanding leadership. Pictured, left to right, are D'Andre Mason, Jordan Taylor, Cody Huffstetler, Associate Advisor/Officer Chad Welch, Nick Swan, Brittany Dimmitt and Caleb Price. (Photo by Advisor/Officer Amy Hawkins)



Chief Adams presents a Lifesaving medal to Brandon Hovis and a Citizen of the Year award to Leanna Sigmon on May 20. (Photos by Michael Schwartz)

GPD's Annual Awards Presented

By Donna Lahser
BLB Editor

Dozens were recognized by Chief Tim Adams in the 2011 Gastonia Police Department Awards Program on May 20 during the department's annual Family Day celebration.

Saving lives, breaking up a shoplifting ring, leading, providing a quick response, professionalism, faithfully supporting officers – these were some reasons expressed about why these awards are well deserved.

Awards include:

Lifesaving Medal

- Brandon Hovis saved a woman's life at a CPR call on April 6. In the call on Dixon Circle the woman was found not breathing and without a pulse. Officer Hovis performed CPR on her and she had regained a pulse when paramedics arrived.

Exceptional Duty Ribbon

- Bryan Lindsay and Barry Crisp

worked with the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Secret Service to break up a ring of 42 professional shoplifters and eight fences.

- Rodney Aldridge talked a suicidal subject out of jumping off a bridge on Dec. 24.

Chief's Achievement Award

- Amanda Neese does a lot for the GPD such as providing assistance to the chief and being a leader in the effort to build the GPD Memorial.

Officer of the Year

- Freddie Hurt takes pride in his job and is a leader wherever he is. Officer Hurt has received several citizen-initiated commendations for his hard work.

- Dustin Hunter volunteered as a Police Training Officer for a year before certification and being a paid PTO. Officer Hunter has a positive attitude and strong work ethic.

Professional/Educational Award

- Adrienne Walker – Intermediate Law Enforcement Certificate

- Shaunte Southern – Master's degree and Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate
- Bryce Carr – Intermediate Law Enforcement Certificate
- Andy Pinney – Associate's degree and Intermediate Law Enforcement Certificate
- Craig Singer – Intermediate Law Enforcement Certificate
- Lex Popovich – Associate's degree and Intermediate Law Enforcement Certificate

Citizen of the Year

- Leanna Sigmon has been faithful in supporting officers with an Adopt-A-Cop church program which has included providing gift cards, snacks and Christian literature.

Citizens on Patrol

- Don Brittain – 233 volunteer hours (May 2010-May 2011)
- Doug Carpenter – 303.25 volunteer hours (May 2009-May 2010)

(Please see **GPD Awards**, page 7)

New CSI Camp at the Schiele Museum

By Mike Lari & Chuck Lifford
BLB Staff Writers

The East Patrol District undertook the challenge of providing a youth camp that would be meaningful to the kids and provide officers a chance to interact with the children. The concept became a reality during the week of June 20-24. The camp, called *CSI: Not As Seen on TV*, was a joint project of the Gastonia Police Department and the Schiele Museum of Natural History.

Capt. Chuck Lifford presented the idea with Sgt. Mike Lari to Dr. Ann Tippitt, director of the Schiele, who enthusiastically agreed to partner with the PD. The Schiele Museum hosts numerous camps for kids throughout the summer, and proved to be an ideal partner for the undertaking. Sgt. Lari and Mandy Jordan, Live Animal Director at the Schiele, planned and coordinated the camp.

The camp's objective was to give the participants a realistic view of what real crime scene investigators do at the scene of a crime, as opposed to the Hollywood version most people see on TV. The campers quickly learned the real world involves tedious, detailed work and much documentation.

Since neither Sgt. Lari nor Mrs. Jordan were crime scene investigators, they sought out experts to fill the void. Det. Heath McMullan from the department's

CSI Bureau volunteered to become part of the team. Det. McMullan proved to be an excellent



Det. Heath McMullen helps CSI Camp students roll fingerprints above. In the upper right photo, students process a crime scene. (Photos by Michael Schwartz)

resource based upon his many years of field experience and prior presentations at local schools. Det. McMullan developed the course curriculum and created presentations to introduce the information.

Camp costs were offset by tuition paid by the campers and a grant from the Gastonia Police Foundation. The Schiele served as the fiscal agent for the event.

Consistent with other museum camps, the number of camp participants was limited to 12. By early June, all the slots were filled and some remained on a waiting list. Some folks even expressed

interest in attending an adult version of the camp.

On June 20, all 12 campers showed up ready to learn and have some fun. Sgt. Brackett, who heads the CSI bureau, came out to help along with three of the department's

Explorers: Ashlynn Windham, Travis Gilman and Michael Watkins. The Explorers were invaluable camp counselors.

After being welcomed to camp by Assistant Chief Helton, Day 1 started off with the kids learning about fingerprints. They watched a PowerPoint about the history of fingerprints, the main characteristics and most

common features. Then they rolled each other's fingerprints and practiced lifting fingerprints off of objects and cars.

Day 2 featured blood. The children discovered information about blood types and learned the differences between human blood and that of animals. The campers undertook a practical exercise with synthetic blood to test for different blood types. They finished the day learning to diagram a crime scene, along with evidence marking, measuring, collecting and labeling.

Day 3 was field trip day to the

(Please see **CSI Camp**, page 5)



GPD's SWAT Team Wins Second Overall

Gastonia's SWAT Team finished second overall out of 14 teams in the Southeastern Regional SWAT Competition held in Harrisonburg, Va., June 9-10. Gastonia's team finished first in four of the competition's 11 events including the 100 Targets event, the Sniper Initiated event, the Obstacle Course and Pistol Shoot. Pictured to the left is GPD Officer Adam Wilson in the 100 Targets event in which three officers have 100 seconds to engage 33 targets each. Photos below are of the Obstacle Course. The transport photo shows Deputy Stephen Strickland with the Gaston County Sheriff's Office, GPD Officer Craig Singer and Sgt. David Sisk with the Mount Holly PD. The log photo shows GPD Officers Matt Willis, Adam Wilson, Brian Atkins and Lex Popovich. Others attending the competition were Sgt. Jimmy Arndt, Sgt. Travis Brittan and Capt. Steve Duncan. (Photos by Lex Popovich and Steve Duncan)



CSI Techniques Learned & More

(CSI Camp, from page 4)

police department. After a tour of the PD, campers went to the CSI lab. They mixed ingredients to make the chemical ninhydrin, which is used to reveal latent fingerprints. They also used cyanoacrylate, or "super glue," for the same purpose. "Blue star," a chemical that can reveal trace amounts of blood and other organic materials when viewed under a black light, was made. Finally, they used the AFIS computer to match fingerprints to the national database.

The campers returned to the museum for Day 4 to review

several different topics. Initially the children learned interview and interrogation techniques taught by Sgt. Lari and Det. Michelle Smith. The second block of instruction was crime scene photography. The day concluded by making plaster casts of shoe prints and car tire tracks.

It all came together on Day 5. The campers used their skills and knowledge from the week to work two mock crime scenes. One scene was a simple burglary. The other was a robbery that turned into a shooting. The kids did a great job processing the scene to determine the guilty parties. The day's final treat was lunch at CiCi's Pizza,

sponsored by the Gastonia Police Foundation.

Overall, the youth learned much during the week. It was the opinion of some that they received more training in crime scene processing than most police officers experience during their entire careers. Two of the campers, who were Boy Scouts, were able to earn fingerprinting merit badges. The campers got a taste of some of the tedious work that actual crime scene investigators have to do on a daily basis. And everyone involved got to make new friends and have fun too. Soon planning for the 2012 camp will start. Volunteers anyone?

Counselor's Insight

A Good Time to Show Your True Grit

I recently watched the movie *True Grit*...the one with John Wayne, not the more recent version. The young heroine of the movie was seeking a lawman with "true grit" to go after the man who murdered her father. (That reminds me of the 3-legged dog who walked into a saloon looking for the man who shot his paw...but that's for a different column.)

John Wayne, "Rooster Cogburn," was the man she found to help her – a lawman who refused to give up until the job was done. It was impossible for me to watch the movie without thinking of the fine men and women of the

Gastonia Police Department; not because Rooster was a lawman but rather because of his so called grit.

I ride with you and witness the empathetic, diligent work that you do, shift after shift, day after day, month after...well you know. I'm sure that you feel the appreciation sometimes, but probably more often, you feel the sting of comments from the online readers of the *Gaston Gazette*. Or you feel the financial pinch of paying more for your insurance coverage or the lack of meaningful raises. Thank you for laying your life on the line for people who don't always appreciate you or even understand

what you do. Thank you. Now I'm asking you to be men and women of true grit. Dig in. Hang on. Don't give up. What you're doing is worth it. There is a huge silent majority of people who love you and respect you. I do, my children do, and there are more where I come from.

Winston Churchill made this observation, "The nose of the bulldog has been slanted backwards so that he can breathe without letting go." We need you. Don't give up, just breathe without letting go.

Be safe!

Dennis Boyce

GPD Tidbits

Rob Helton Promoted Assistant Chief



Asst. Chief Helton

Capt. Robert Helton has been promoted to the position of assistant chief of police, which now gives the GPD two assistant police chief positions, Chief Tim Adams announced March 9.

"This change was done mainly for succession planning, to add depth to our top command structure and to more evenly distribute command level responsibilities," Chief Adams said. "In order to accomplish this change, the captain's position in



Asst. Chief Conley

Budget and Homeland Security was converted to an assistant chief's position. Funding for this change was made possible through existing funding built into our pay scale for the rank of corporal. The decision was made several years back not to implement a corporal rank."

Assistant Chief Stacy Conley, who was promoted to assistant chief on Dec. 20, 2008, will supervise support operations of the GPD including the Criminal

Investigations Division, Special Investigations, Records and Homeland Security.

In his new role, Assistant Chief Helton will supervise Field Services including East, West and Central Patrol Districts, Crime Prevention and volunteer programs, Training, and Property and Evidence.

***Sgt. Mike Smith was recognized on June 2 with the Spirit Award for his dedication and enthusiasm for the Run for the Money 9 sponsored by the Community Foundation of Gaston County.

(Please see **GPD Tidbits**, page 7)

GPD Tidbits, continued from page 6

***Sgt. David Morton has been selected as the new Commander of the Hostage Negotiations Team.

Matt Sherrill and Gladys Grier have been selected as new Hostage Negotiators.

***Sgt. Reid Brafford has been selected as GPD's new specialized driving instructor.

***Eric Seagle and Ben Reese are new SWAT Team officers.

***New Shift Tactical Officers are: Clint

Bridges, Jonathan Hallman, Thomas Doby, Jonathan Scher and Warren Roberts.

***Reggie Hicks, Brooks Luckadoo and James Bliss have been selected for PTO positions.

***Detective Jeff Bryson and

Officer Reggie Hicks have been appointed new members of the Mobile Command Unit.

***Detective Stan Baker celebrated his retirement



Assistant City Manager Larry Wood presents a retirement certificate to Det. Stan Baker.

with family and friends in a ceremony on Jan. 27 in the Community Room. Stan started his career with GPD in 1982, and after completing

BLET, he served

with Charlie Team then David Team. He served as David Team's breathalyzer operator and as a FTO. He served as a Shift Sniper until going to the ID Bureau in 1991 where he served until retiring. He

also served as the Honor Guard bugler.

***Transfers: Capt. Steve Duncan to the Criminal Investigations Division (CID), Nancy Capistran to the CID, Jonas Hansen to the ID Bureau, Jamie Prather to the temporary detective's position, Gladys Grier to Central District Community Coordinator, Tim Pilkington to West District Community Coordinator, Chris Baxter to East District Community Coordinator, and Sgt. Chad Hawkins to Central District Community Coordinator Sergeant.

***Newly hired police officers are Charles Bain, 12/6/10, Joshua Smith, 12/6/10, Joshua Williams 2/21/11, Jason Harris, 3/7/11, Andrew Pate, 3/14/11, and Casey Justice, 6/27/11.

GPD Awards, continued from page 3

Explorer of the Year

• Cody Huffstetler – 311.25 volunteer hours. He was also selected as the Explorer President for the Explorer Academy June 19-June 24 in Salemburg, NC.

Commendations

• Randy Gantt, Ashley Helms, Justin Etters, Jarrod Peterson, Jack Hughes and Craig Singer for the apprehension of four suspects in the process of stealing copper.

• Justin Etters, Clay Anthony, Thomas Doby and Jason Eaker for work on a drug interdiction case in which 312 pounds of marijuana, 1.3 pounds of hashish, 15.66 grams of cocaine and \$161,110 in cash were seized.

• Brandon Hovis for professionalism in working with a crime victim.

• Matthew Sherrill, Dustin Hunter, Chad Welch and Laura Biggerstaff for work on a break-in and malicious damage case involving two juvenile suspects.

• Ashley Helms, Kevin McSwain, Jarrod Peterson, Jack Hughes, Andy Pinney, Clay Anthony, Jim Bliss, Brandon Hovis, Jason Sarratt and David Lingafelt for a quick response to a call for service where someone was attempting to steal the air conditioning unit on top of a building.

• David Myers for professionalism displayed to the victim of a stolen credit card.

• Shawn Martin for professionalism at a call for service.

• Chad Hawkins and Mike Lari for assistance with the Raleigh Police

Department's assessment center for police sergeant.

• Don Roper for assistance with the Raleigh Police Department's assessment center for a police lieutenant.

• Dustin Hunter for a call in which the suspect was found hiding under a house.

• Randy Kistler and Sharyn Hartzell for assisting a stranded motorist.

• Steve Moore for professionalism in an illegal dumping call on North New Hope Road.

• Robbie Bryson, Joe Burch, Randy Gantt, Lindsay Lail, Ben Reese, Warren Roberts, Craig Singer Adam, Wilson and Mike Watts for the investigation of a meth lab discovered on Oates Road.



Torch Run for Special Olympics

Officers from law enforcement agencies in Gaston County finish strong on the Catawba/South Fork River bridge near Belmont, the end of a 14 mile run through Gaston County for Special Olympics on May 18. The annual event is part of the North Carolina Law Enforcement Torch Run which has benefited Special Olympics since 1987. (Photo by Michael Schwartz)

**Gastonia Police Department
Office of Public Information
P.O. Box 1748
Gastonia, NC 28053**