

UP FRONT

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A CENTURY OF SERVICE -

A CENTURY OF PRIDE

INSIDE —K-9 HONORS • READER SURVEY

P.O.P. Goes to 360 N. 43rd.

Officers Joe Howie and Valerie Truderung believe that two elements are essential to rid a neighborhood of an ongoing drug problem. These two vital ingredients are documentation and cooperation. Howie and Truderung hope to use both to successfully solve a decade old drug problem on their beat.

In August of 1988, WECAN officers stationed at the Southeastern Division were told of an escalating drug problem at 300 North 43rd Street. When the officers initiated their investigation of the drug problem, they promptly realized that traditional enforcement would not be sufficient. The officers needed assistance from outside the criminal justice to halt a rising problem.

In following the Problem Oriented Policing (POP) model, and alternative approach to traditional policing, the officers concentrated on the whole problem, rather than the individual incidents. Officers Howie and Truderung did not focus solely on the persons involved, but also on what was causing or allowing these persons to sell and use drugs at this location. They also looked at what resources were necessary to solve this drug problem.

Their initial scanning of the problem revealed three important factors. First,

most of the drug dealing and use centered around one specific home. Second, this home was in poor physical condition, with broken sewage lines, abandoned vehicles in the driveway, trash that was thrown all over the yard, and several broken windows and doors. Third, the elderly owner's children and grandchildren were allowing and participating in the drug dealing.

Armed with this information, Howie and Truderung began documenting each visit to this home. They recorded each arrest, each drug seizure, and every radio call regarding drug activity at this specific address. They also requested cooperation and assistance from other individuals and departments as they searched for a permanent solution.

Howie and Truderung had the San Diego County Health Department compel a reluctant owner to repair the sewage line and clean up the yard. The officers had the County Social Services remove two young children from the home for protection. The SDPD Crime Analysis Unit supplied the drug related radio calls to that specific address, and, in an unusual move for police officers, Howie and Truderung conducted a brief but revealing survey of the area residents.

When the officers could not empower the property owner to control the behavior of her children and grandchildren or force her relatives to move out, Howie and Truderung turned to the San Diego City Attorney. The officers realized that the civil

process of abatement was necessary to effectively and permanently stop the drug problem at this home. At the time this article was written, Howie and Truderung continue to work with the City Attorney's Office, Civil Division, on the abatement procedure.

In veering from traditional enforcement, these officers understood the larger problem and creatively attacked it with non-traditional resources. In applying POP, officers hope that recurring police problems can be solved in a lasting manner.



P.O.P. Problem Oriented Policing Update

The Problem Oriented Policing (POP) project has created the Problem Analysis Advisory Committee (PAAC) to assist patrol officers in solving problems on their beats. The PAAC meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month from 1300-1430 at the Southeast substation, and are chaired by Captain Jerry Sanders. Anyone interested in finding non-traditional ways to solve traditional police problems is welcome to attend.

Each month a guest agency is invited to present issues of interest to patrol officers. At the January meeting, the San Diego Housing Commission sent Cathy Lexin and Kathy Farrington to discuss public housing issues. Farrington informed officers of the conditions for disqualification of Section 8 benefits (federal subsidies for privately owned housing), and said that the Housing Commission will inspect properties at anyone's request if the tenants or landlords are suspected of violating

conditions specified in the lease agreements. Lexin reported that regular communication resulting from the POP program now takes place between the Commission and the police department. This new relationship has encouraged the Commission to examine existing policies and lease agreements, and action is underway to remedy practices that allow tenants engaged in narcotic or other crime activity to continue to receive subsidies. If officers have questions regarding Housing Commission policies, please contact Nancy McPherson, POP Coordinator, at 236-6816.

Officers also make presentations on problems they are trying to solve using a POP approach. Southeast Patrol Officers Gail Arcediano and Dave Walker reported on their success in applying POP principles to an apartment complex at 5400 Imperial. Arcediano said that prior to using POP, she and her partner

conducted routine patrol and made arrests for illegal activity in the complex. Using a POP approach, they were successful in working with the management company and the resident manager to evict problem tenants and implement new security measures in the complex.

WECAN Officer Bobby Wight discussed his efforts at 2701 Imperial where a gambling room attracts narcotic activity. Wight plans to shut down activity at the gambling room and has completed extensive crime analysis reports, talked with area residents, and searched historical records for information on ownership of the property. As Wight's case demonstrates, officers presenting POP cases to the PAAC may be at any stage in their problem solving efforts. The emphasis is on using the PAAC's resources and expertise to work through POP problems.

PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING

• YOU CAN
DO IT

C.S.O. Makes An Impact

What is it that finally provokes officers to take the initiative to solve an on-going problem? Is it the continuous radio calls? Maybe it's the never-ending reports emanating from one address. Or is it a combination of both when the officer holds little or no hope that the problem will cease on its own? For Community Service Officer Sheila Kinney, all three reasons motivated her to apply problem solving on her beat.

One of CSO Kinney's most time-consuming duties is removing abandoned vehicles from the streets in Southeast San Diego. The vehicles are usually dilapidated and attract little attention from the police administrators and analysts who must respond to more immediate public concerns. Just like police officers who frequently respond to recurring radio calls unaware that a pattern may be developing, Kinney gave little regard to the repeat calls of abandoned cars. What caught her interest and attention was the fact that the increasing calls of discarded vehicles were coming from one residential street.

The residents in the area of 4700 Nogal Street started regularly calling in complaints of abandoned vehicles on the street and also of a car repair shop on that street. As CSO Kinney responded to the majority of the calls, she observed that several vehicles had expired registrations, some of the abandoned cars were reported stolen, and that people were often repairing the vehicles when she drove by in her van. She also noticed that the radio calls were escalating, along with the reports she took, and realized that the situation was quickly getting worse.

Kinney saw that traditional policing was not working on this problem, so she began

to think of alternative approaches to dealing with those irritating radio calls. She began to identify and concentrate on the group of related incidents as one whole problem, instead of focusing on reacting to single calls. Problem Oriented Policing (POP) was in motion.

After completing an initial scanning of the problem, Kinney applied immediate enforcement. She issued parking citations, impounded cars with expired registration dates of over one year, marked vehicles for possible violation of the 72-hour parking law, and verbally warned the owner of the car repair shop to keep the cars off the street.

As Kinney moved into the analysis stage, she learned that the car repair shop had a towing service that operated out of the backyard. She also found out that as the owner spotted possible abandoned vehicles on city streets and freeways, he had moved them to his residence, without any knowledge or consent of the registered owner. The shop owner would repair the vehicles, contact the registered owner and attempt to bill them for repair services or else he put a lien on the car. Kinney spoke with patrol officers and learned that they were also recovering stolen vehicles from that address. One owner reported that his car had broken down on the freeway. When he returned a few hours later, his car was missing. The other owner had his vehicle stolen from in front of his house.

Armed with the information she had collected, Kinney moved into a response stage. She spoke with the overburdened auto theft detail who could offer little assistance. She also phoned CALTRANS, as the car repair owner had begun parking the vehicles on a vacant lot, which was owned by the State of California. Kinney talked with the City Treasurer's office to seek assistance because the car repair owner did not have a business license. Finally, she placed a call to an urban development committee that specialized in zoning laws and reported the activity of the car repair owner.

A few weeks later, the radio calls stopped on 4700 Nogal Street, eliminating endless hours of filing reports and recovering abandoned cars in this neighborhood. Kinney was never sure which person or agency caused the car repair owner to cease his illegal behavior. What she knew for sure was that she had used initiative and creativity to move from a traditional reactive mode to a non-traditional approach to solving a recurring problem. Her major satisfaction came from knowing that she had disposed of a problem on her beat.

F. Y. I.

(Excerpts from Law Enf. News.)

• **Patchwork Enforcement:** The U.S. Customs Service under Commissioner William von Raab, has been cultivating a reputation for tough, no-nonsense enforcement of anti-smuggling laws. That type of enforcement took a bizarre twist last fall when Customs agents at the Buffalo, N.Y., port of entry seized a shipment of 5,000 commemorative uniform patches designed in honor of the agency's 1989 bicentennial. The patches, ordered earlier in the year by von Raab, were impounded when it was discovered that they did not bear tags indicating their country of origin — in this case, Canada. The 13,000 Customs employees who belong to the National Treasury Employees Union were incensed that the patches were made in Canada despite a contract provision directing that such items be American Made. Their feathers were ruffled further when they learned that the patches cost 59 cents each. Employees had been told that they would have to pay \$2.50 apiece for them. The top brass at the Customs Service downplayed the whole incident, calling it "a funny little story," but Robert Tobias, president of the NTEU — and no great fan of von Raab — begged to differ. He called it *l'affair d'applique* "perhaps the most unpatriotic and stupid blunder (von Raab) has made in his blunder-ridden tenure as head of the agency."

• **"I Told You To Go Before We Left the Office:"** Last spring, police officers in Gainesville, Fla., patiently watched a stolen motorcycle around the clock for 17 days in hopes of catching a burglar linked to nearly 200 break-ins. Then one officer took a two-minute break to go to the bathroom and while he was gone, the bike disappeared. Two Alachua County sheriffs investigators were placed on six months' disciplinary probation.

• **Many Are Cold, But Few Are Frozen:** A Westminster, Calif., man was fined \$58 after failing to convince a judge that four frozen corpses in his van entitled him to use a car pool lane on the freeway. Robert Hanshaw, who transports bodies for a mortuary transportation service, was stopped March 21 on a freeway entrance ramp. He told the officer that he believed the bodies in his van qualified as passengers, but that reasoning failed to win over Municipal Judge Richard Stanford Jr., who ruled that passengers must be alive to qualify for the two-or-more-passenger car pool lanes.