Prostitution Crackdown Results In 32 Arrests, Mostly At Local Motels

Costa Mesa PD Special Investigations Unit (SIU) made 32 arrests for prostitution over the last two weeks, according to Police Chief Rob Sharpnack.

The majority of these arrests have come from the Vagabond Inn and the La Quinta, Sharpnack said.

These arrests involved both in-person solicitations and meet ups secured through online advertisements, he said.

Additional investigation has shown the prostitutes have left for other cities and the word from multiple interviews is that the Costa Mesa Vice Unit is cracking down and Costa Mesa is not a safe haven for prostitutes.

Police sweep snares 10 for probation violations

On Monday, Feb. 29, 2016, the Costa Mesa Police Department partnered with the Orange County Probation Department in a collaborative effort to arrest 10 people in the city who were in violation of probation.

The offenders will face charges that range from drug use and possession, identity theft, conspiracy, providing false information to officers and possession of drug paraphernalia. These are new charges in addition to violation of their

probation.

Officers conducted the compliance checks on offenders who are subject to Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS), per Assembly Bill 109 (State Prison Realignment).

These checks were designed to locate and audit the activity of local criminal offenders residing within Costa Mesa who are under the supervision of the Orange County Probation Department.

Three of those arrested were found in a residence in the 100 block of Costa Mesa Street, while five others were found in the 2900 block of Babb Street.

The other arrests occurred in the 300 block of Princeton Drive and the 2000 block of Meyer Place.

Eight of the offenders were from Costa Mesa and the other two from Huntington Beach.

CMPD Park Ranger Returns from Deployment

January was a month of achievement and celebration for the Costa Mesa Police Department with several new hires and promotions.

In addition to four new officers joining the department, on Jan. 21 the CMPD welcomed home Park Ranger Lorna Lyttle who had been deployed to Bagram, Afghanistan as a member of the

U.S. Army Reserves.

Lyttle joined the CMPD Feb. 19, 2006 and worked for the department as a park ranger for four years before her decision to enlist with the U.S. Army Reserve. Her service in the Army Reserves began on May 17, 2010 and she was deployed to Bagram Afghanistan in April of 2014.

“You don’t feel the full affect until you land and realize where you are,” she said.





Lyttle spent a year as a convoy escort protecting and assisting with the move of fuel and U.S. military equipment between bases.

Lyttle is glad to be back, “It was an experience that I will never forget and now that I am home, I am just trying to get back to the daily grind and back to living life as I knew it before I left with a whole lot more gratitude for being a US Citizen.”

When she is not working Lyttle enjoys spending time with her family, relaxing and going for a good drive.

Lyttle’s long term goal is to further her education and promote through the army ranks. She currently holds a sergeant title and hopes to attain rank of an officer.

In the meantime, she is happy to be home and back with the

CMPD; her other family.

“They are my other family, you see them every day and spent a lot of time together,” she said.

Chief Sharpnack names Jennifer Ruffalo as new Communications Supervisor

The Costa Mesa Police Department continued a trend of new hires and promotions this Wednesday Feb. 17 as Chief Rob Sharpnack announced the promotion of Jennifer Ruffalo to Communications Supervisor at a swearing-in and badge-pinning ceremony outside his office.

“These promotions are so uplifting for our department,” Chief Sharpnack said.

Sharpnack noted that the department’s communication staff answered more than 120,000 calls for service last year. And he had high praise for Ruffalo, who began her career with Costa Mesa police in 2004. Two years later, she was already a training officer and shift lead.



“You gain such an appreciation for what these folks do day in and day out,” Sharpnack said. “Jennifer is a team player who always puts the organization first.”

In 2009, Ruffalo was working with a trainee who had taken a call from a person in distress who was unable to speak. Working closely with the trainee, they were able to assist the caller with their emergency situation.

Later that year, the trainee was given an Award of Recognition at the State 911 level for exemplary performance, and that 911 call is still used in the department’s communication’s training program.

Ruffalo had her badge pinned on her by her sister Courtney as several high-ranking officers, city staffer and members of the communications team looked on.

“I thank you all for your support,” she said.

Former CMPD Chief Neth receives Mayor’s Award

Mayor Steve Mensinger presented former Costa Mesa Police Chief Roger Neth with the Mayor’s Award at the Tuesday Feb. 2, 2016 City Council meeting.

Mensinger noted that Neth was an instrumental figure in the formative years of the Police Department, bringing innovative technology and other best practices to the Costa Mesa Police Department.

Not only was he one of the first three officers hired by the City, but he is credited as being the very first officer on patrol.

And with 22 years at the helm of the Department, Neth is Costa Mesa’s longest tenured Police Chief.

Below is a video clip highlighting Neth’s career.

“I’d like to thank Mayor Mensinger for this honor tonight,” Neth said. “I’m very proud to receive it.”

Neth said the city’s first Police Chief Arthur McKenzie, who urged the officers to follow three principles: be innovative, be progressive and above all be professional.

“We were a new police department so we didn’t have to change old methods,” he said Tuesday night. “We built on those three principles.”

CMPD adds another officer this week

Costa Mesa Police Department brass and ranking city leaders welcomed new Police Officer Nick Wilson in a swearing-in ceremony early Tuesday morning.

Police Chief Rob Sharpnack officiated the ceremony with some welcoming words for the new lateral hire officer, who formerly worked as a Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputy. Sharpnack noted Wilson's already impressive career achievements.

"He really embodies what we embody as a city and a police department," Sharpnack said. "I'm excited to welcome Nick. We are fortunate to have him."

Wilson is one of three boys raised by John and Antonia Wilson in the small town of San Marino, nearby Pasadena. He is a graduate of San Marino High School, where he played high school baseball. He served as a cadet for San Marino Police Department from 2008-2011.

Wilson's father is a retired 31-year veteran of the California Highway Patrol and one of his brothers is an officer for the San Marino Police Department. Wilson graduated from Rio Hondo with an Associates of Science degree in Administration of Justice in 2011.

Wilson was hired by the Los Angeles Sheriff Department in 2012. Since then he served in the custodial environment and is currently assigned to the courthouse in Compton.

Several family members attended the ceremony, including his father and brother. Also attending was his wife, who placed

his badge on him after he was sworn in by City Clerk Brenda Green.



Mayor Steve Mensinger and Councilmember Katrina Foley, City CEO Tom Hatch and Assistant CEO Rick Francis, and several members of the police command staff were also in attendance.



The department's three new academy graduates, Brandon Kim, Tyrus Ranck and Matthew Richie, also made an appearance to support their fellow officer.

Chief Sharpnack noted that the department continues to move in

the right direction with these new hires, which puts the staffing levels now at 112 sworn officers.

Three new officers graduate academy and join Costa Mesa Police Department

The Costa Mesa Police Department continues its practice of hiring the best and the brightest new officers, three of whom graduated from the Orange County Sheriff’s Academy on Thursday night.

The new Officers, Brandon Kim, Tyrus Ranck, and Matthew Richie all finished in the top 10 of their class, with Kim receiving the Top Recruit ranking (No. 1 in the class).

In addition, Officer Ranck earned the Top Shot award with the best shooting score in the class.

“We are very proud of these new officers and we look forward to their contributions to our community and our department,” Chief Rob Sharpnack said. “We are happy to see that our new recruits have continued the tradition of being the top recruits in what is a very competitive sheriff’s academy class.”

In addition, three more recruits will begin their academy classes next week.

Art Beames and Kelly Vucinic retire from Costa Mesa Police Department

The month of December is typically filled with holiday cheer, family, parties and celebrations. And for some of Costa Mesa Police Department staff, it was a time to retire and enjoy the next chapter life brings.

The month of December marked the retirement of six of CMPD staff.

Recognized at the December's Meet and Greet located at City Hall, crime prevention specialist Kelly Vucinic and animal control officer Art Beames were recognized for their tenure with the CMPD.
Beames, who had 24 years served with the County of Orange and became a part-time animal control senior police aide in March 1991. In June 2003, he was promoted to full-time animal control officer.

"The most memorable animal call I can think of was a caiman in a trashcan," said Beames when asked to recall the wildest call he received. "Oh wait, one time I was told to check the kennel room before my shift, and to my surprise opened the door and saw a mountain lion cub. I didn't realize it was domesticated at first."

Vucinic, who retired with 27 years of service, was hired in 1988 as a records technician and later was promoted to community service officer in patrol, traffic and narcotics. She was promoted to crime prevention specialist in 2007.

"My favorite memory is when Santa would land at local schools by helicopter and hand out candy canes to the kids," said Vucinic when asked to recall a happy memory.

Both Beames and Vucinic have plans to relax some while they figure out what to do exactly in retirement.
Beames plans on working on household projects and helping out his wife’s family.

In addition, he has dedicated time to volunteer at his church and pursue photography.

Vucinic will spend more time with her family and will try to step out of her comfort zone of always having things planned. In addition, she will continue to work part-time as an usher at the Angel Stadium.

Police arrest 10 in DUI/Driver’s License checkpoint

Nearly 290 vehicles were screened by Costa Mesa Police Department officers who conducted a DUI/Driver’s License checkpoint on Friday, Dec. 18, 2015 along northbound Harbor Boulevard at Flower Street between the hours of 8 p.m. and 2 a.m. with 10 arrests made for suspicion of DUI or driving without a license or on a suspended license.

The checkpoint was jointly operated by both Costa Mesa Police Officers and the California Highway Patrol. Checkpoints are placed in locations that have the greatest opportunity for achieving drunk and drugged driving deterrence and providing the greatest safety for officers and the public.

DUI/Driver’s License checkpoints lower DUI deaths and injuries. A major component of these checkpoints is the

deterrent effect they have on those who might drive drunk or drug impaired, which brings about more awareness and encourages everyone to use sober designated drivers.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), checkpoints have provided the most effective documented results of any of the DUI enforcement strategies, while also yielding considerable cost savings of $6 for every $1 spent. This checkpoint resulted in the following:

- 3,252 Vehicles through the checkpoint
- 289 Vehicles screened
- 18 DUI investigations administered
- 4 DUI-Alcohol suspects arrested
- 6 Drivers cited/arrested for operating a vehicle unlicensed or on with a suspended license

This checkpoint was funded by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Police graduate 20 from citizen's academy

The department held a citizen's academy graduation on Wednesday Nov. 18 at 6:30 pm.

There were 20 citizens who graduated from the 11 week program. The academy is designed to provide citizens with an understanding of the police department's operations. Students will learn from police department personnel who are experts in the areas of S.W.A.T., narcotics, major crimes, patrol operations, traffic laws, criminal law, crime scene

investigation, and other related fields.



Students will also be scheduled for a ride-along during the academy. Students gain an overall knowledge of the Costa Mesa Police Department, how it's organized, how it serves the community, and who the people are who respond when citizens call.

Substation for a day a big hit on Shalimar Drive

On Saturday, Oct. 31, the Costa Mesa Police Department hosted a "Substation for a Day" on Shalimar Drive. The goal of the event was to reach out to the local community, and make them aware of services that are offered.



The department partnered with Mika CDC, who took care of notifying all the local residents. From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., residents were able to come out and greet the officers and explorers, and since it was Halloween, all children in costume received a bagful of candy.

Crime prevention information was available, including child safety ID kits and trick or treat safety information.



Recreation leaders were there with large games for the kids, and several of the police officers on hand played with the kids. Several adults came out and met with officers, offering some information on criminal activity in the area.

This gave the adults an opportunity to meet with officers in a non-threatening environment. In addition, 34 bicycles were licensed. This type of event is designed to bring the community and law enforcement together, and encourage a partnership to keep neighborhoods safe.

Costa Mesa police promotes three to leadership roles in the department

Three Costa Mesa police officers were center stage on Wednesday as the department and community welcomed newly promoted Capt. Bryan Glass, Lt. Joyce LaPointe and Sgt. Dan Miles in a moving and upbeat swearing-in ceremony at the City Council Chambers.

“We have three excellent leaders here with us today, and I am honored to have them here with us,” said Police Chief Rob Sharpnack, who thanked the officers’ families for their support. “This experience galvanizes the team and we stand together to support a common cause. I encourage you all to stay hungry and committed to that cause.”

Glass, a 20-year veteran, splits the captain duties with Capt. Mark Manley. He will be charged with overseeing the Support Services Division, which consists of Investigative Services Bureau, the Special Investigation Unit, Gangs, Crime Scene Investigation, Records and Evidence bureau, Telecommunications, emergency management, jail operations and SWAT.

“I’m very fortunate to be given the opportunity and privilege to serve the department, the city and the community in this new position and over the last 20 years, he said. “I’ve had a blessed career.”

Capt. Glass, who has been acting captain since Chief Sharpnack was promoted, said he is very heartened at the direction the department is going.

“Today reminds me of when I first got hired because of all the new officers coming into the organization,” he said. We have a steady flow of sworn and professional staff coming into the department brining in new life and energy and opportunity. It’s a good sign for the department.”

Cpt. Glass was born and raised in northern California. He spent five years serving in the U.S. Marine Corp before being hired by Costa Mesa Police Department in October of 1995. He then graduated from the Orange County Sheriff Academy in 1996 and began work as a police officer in March of that year.

As an officer, Cpt. Glass has had the opportunity to work a variety of assignments throughout the department. In November 2005, Cpt. Glass promoted to the rank of sergeant and was assigned to Patrol Services until being selected as the Chief’s Adjutant and Department Press Information Officer. In January 2010, Cpt. Glass promoted to the rank of lieutenant and was assigned as the Field Operations Administration Lieutenant.

Cpt. Glass has a Bachelors of Art in Social Science from Chapman University, a Master of Science in Emergency Services Administration and a Master of Public Administration through California State University Long Beach. He is also a POST Command College graduate of Class #53.

LaPointe, who is the department’s first female lieutenant, worked in patrol, as a field training, bike patrol, traffic and tactical flight officer and as a defensive tactics instructor. In 2006, she earned her private helicopter license.

As a sergeant, she managed patrol teams, the Field Officers Training Program, jail operations, emergency management, and

Force Tactics training. She is also is the recipient of the Mothers against Drunk Drivers Century Award and a Life Saving Merit award. She was born in Mt. View, California and graduated from Southbay Christian High School in 1986. She attended Vanguard University on an athletic scholarship for basketball and softball and she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in kinesiology.

Sgt. Miles has spent almost 17 years as a Costa Mesa police officer. After being hired by the Costa Mesa Police Department, he attended the Goldenwest Police Academy He worked three years in patrol, seven years as a motor officer, and seven years in the Special Investigations Unit. During those assignments, Sgt. Miles worked on the Major Accident Investigation Team, did five tours on the DUI Enforcement team and was a field training officer.

He also spent time as an undercover officer and for two years was assigned to a DEA Task Force, where he handled over $60 million in seized US Currency.

He grew up in Covina, California, where his father, Dave Miles, was a police officer, with the Covina Police Department. Dan graduated from Walnut High School in 1992. He attended both University of Iowa and UC Santa Barbara, the later where he was captain of the swim team until he was injured. He later transferred to Mt. San Antonio College, where he played water polo and obtained an associate’s degree. He has a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice.