

**MERRIAM POLICE  
DEPARTMENT**

**1992  
ANNUAL REPORT**

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# **I**NTRODUCTION

Merriam has promoted and maintained its image of being a planned and well managed community. During recent economic downturns, few cities have been able to continue with the high standard of city services and public safety services in a manner provided by Merriam.

This document was written by Chief Kenneth Sissom. It has been compiled to chronicle the 1992 events and experiences of the Merriam Police Department. Its purpose is to illustrate these activities and provided services through narrative and statistics.

## Law Enforcement Code of Ethics

As a Law Enforcement Officer, my fundamental duty is to serve mankind; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the Constitutional rights of all men to liberty, equality and justice.

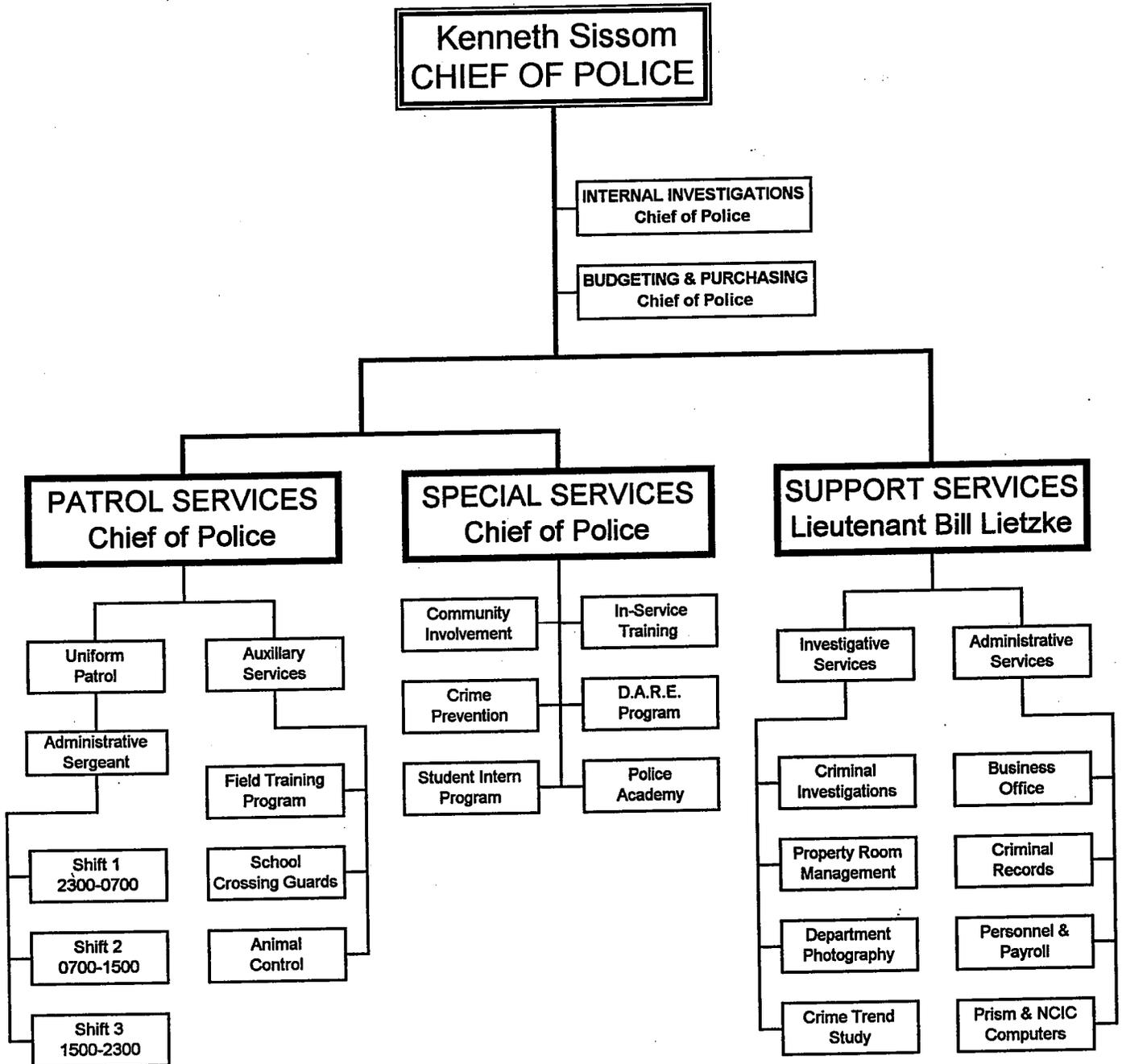
I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all; maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn, or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed in both my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the laws of the land and the regulations of my department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.

I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.

I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of the police service. I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before God to my chosen profession.....  
law enforcement.

# MERRIAM POLICE DEPARTMENT

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



**POLICE DEPARTMENT ROSTER 12/31/92**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>YEARS OF SERVICE</b>
KENNETH SISSOM	Administration	13
BILL LIETZKE	Administration	12
BOB SMITH	Investigations	15
SYD TUBBS	Patrol	13
STEVE HAYNES	Patrol	12
RANDY DAVIS	Patrol	11
TIM BURNETT	Investigations	10
AL JONES	Patrol	9
TISH MADRIGAL	Patrol	8
DAN KELLERMAN	Patrol	8
JOAN HUETTENMUELLER	Patrol	7
CHARLIE YOCUM	Patrol	15
BILL TROUT	Patrol	9
MIKE DANIELS	Patrol	5
JEFF MAGEE	Patrol	5
LARRY BIRT	D.A.R.E.	4
LORI VICTORINE	Patrol	4
DARREN MCLAUGHLIN	Patrol	3
CHARLIE SWEANY	Patrol	2
TODD SPARKS	Patrol	2
BOB SCHLUBEN	Patrol	2
GAVIN RUDDY	Patrol	1
GERRY EICKHOFF	Patrol	1
DAVE MELTON	Patrol	less than 1
DAVE THOMAS	Animal Control	5
JOANIE CROTCHETT	Clerical	4
LISA ALDRICH	Clerical	1
KAREN GIBSON	Clerical	less than 1



PART ONE CRIMES

INTRODUCTION

Each year the Merriam Police Department must report the number of Part 1 crimes that were reported. Part 1 crimes are those crimes which, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigations, are reported most often to police. There are eight (8) crime categories listed as Part 1 crimes. They are:

- |           |            |             |               |
|-----------|------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1. MURDER | 3. ROBBERY | 5. BURGLARY | 7. AUTO THEFT |
| 2. RAPE   | 4. BATTERY | 6. THEFT    | 8. ARSON      |

The first four are referred to as CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS, and the last four are called CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY. There are many other crimes committed each year (Disorderly Conduct, Criminal Damage to Property, Trespassing, etc.) that are not listed as Part 1 crimes.

DISCUSSION

During 1992 there were 995 Part 1 crimes reported to the Merriam Police Department. This represents a 7% increase in total Part 1 crimes over 1991. Although the numbers represent an overall increase, it is encouraging to report that this increase is in the area of property type crimes. The most serious types of crimes are crimes against persons. In this category there was a 16% decrease in reported crimes. Assaults and batteries decreased 13% over 1991. The primary cause of this decrease is not known. Perhaps the aggressive department's Anti-Domestic Violence Program has had an effect. Robberies have decreased 46% over 1991. While this is an impressive statistic, it should be pointed out that in 1991 robberies increased 85% over 1990. During the past 14 years, the average number of robberies reported to the Merriam Police has been 13 per year. This would indicate that 1992 was an average year, in terms of robberies.

Under the classification of Crimes Against Property, there has been a noted increase across the board in 1992 over 1991. Thefts and burglaries represent the largest portion in this classification. From the arrests and investigations conducted by Merriam and other departments in the area, it has been the experience that the persons responsible for the majority of these crimes are juveniles or adults under 21. Drug abuse has been a large motivator in many of these crimes. The Merriam Police Department has and will continue to take a very serious attitude against drug dealers and users.

SUMMARY

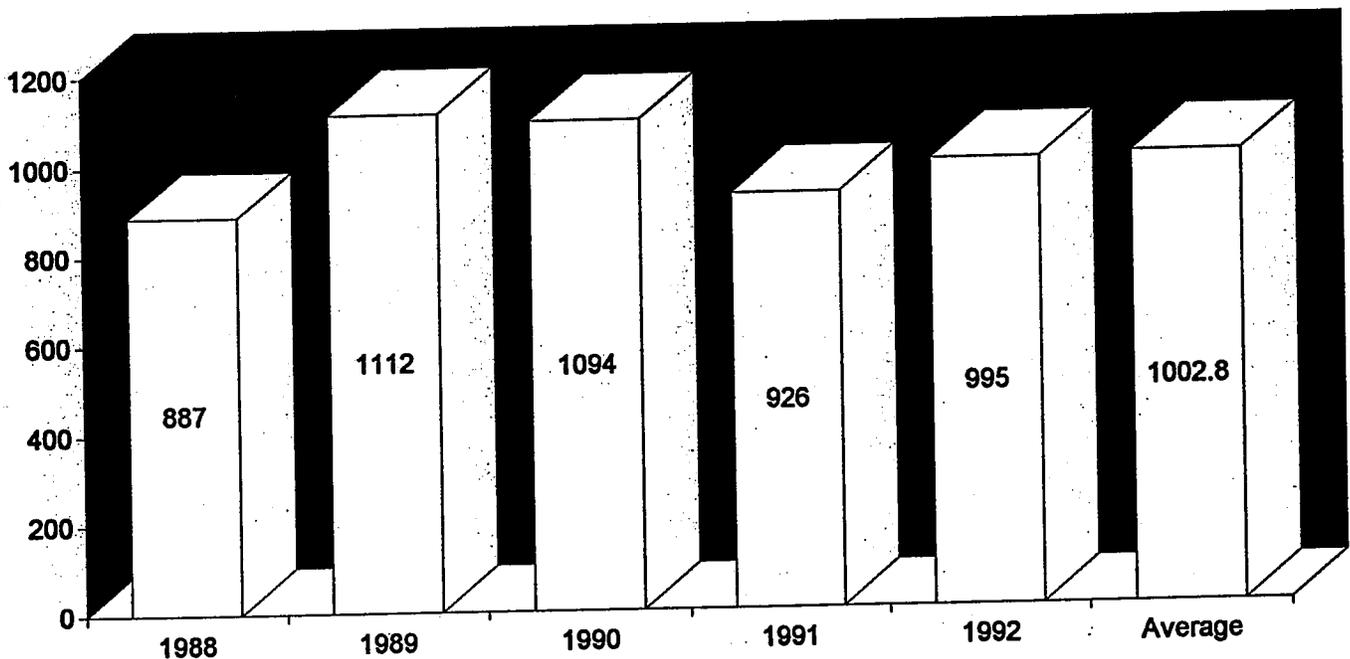
Although there was a reported increase in crime in 1992 over 1991, the total picture is

# **A** NNUAL CRIME STATISTICS

not that dismal. When a comparison of the statistics is made for the past five years the 1992 statistics are just under the average (1992-995/average-1003). We will continue our Anti-Domestic Violence Program in 1993. We will also increase patrols and get our citizens more involved in helping us to combat property crimes in 1993 through the Neighborhood Watch and other community programs.

The graph and chart listed below give a specific breakdown of the Part One crimes that were reported in Merriam. On the next page, you will find a city map with the Part 1 crimes listed by grid area.

## PART ONE CRIMES 1988 TO 1992



Crimes Against Persons		
	1991	1992
Murder	1	1
Rape	4	2
Robbery	24	13
Battery	255	222
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>238</b>

Crimes Against Property		
	1991	1992
Burglary	251	290
Theft	349	411
Auto Theft	41	52
Arson	1	4
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>757</b>

Total Part 1 Crimes 1991 = 962 1992=995 Increase of 7%

# Merriam crime against persons down

by Robin L. Roberts  
Journal Herald Staff

The city of Merriam experienced a 7 percent increase in Part 1 crimes last year. That's the bad news.

The good news, according to Police Chief Kenneth Sissom, is that the Part 1 crimes against persons rate was down 16 percent in 1992.

There are eight crime categories listed as Part 1 crimes — murder, rape, robbery, battery, burglary, theft, auto theft and arson — and the first four are referred to as crimes against persons.

During 1992, Sissom said, 995 Part 1 crimes were reported to the Merriam Police Department, an increase of 7 percent over Part 1 crimes reported in 1991. But reported rapes were down from 4 to 2 last year, Sissom noted, robberies were down 46 percent (from 24 to 13) and batteries were down 13 percent (from 255 to 222).

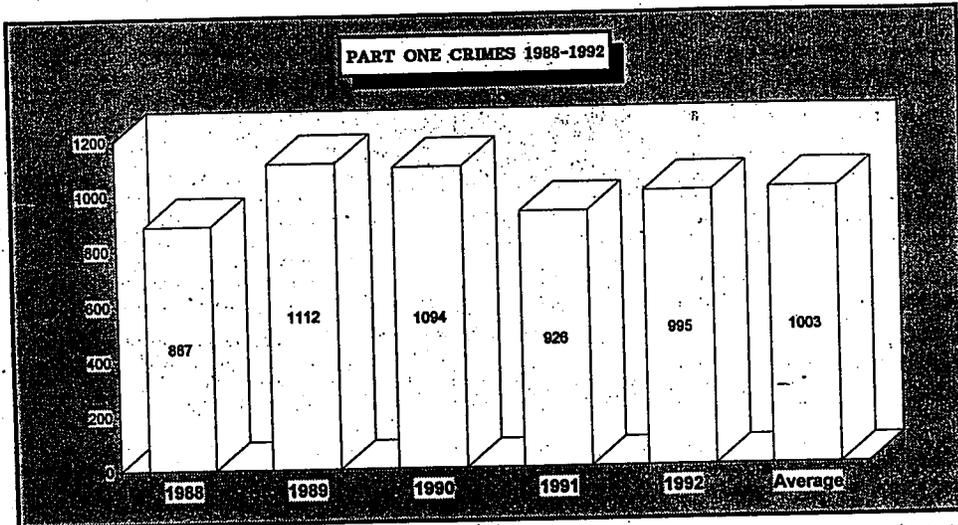
The murder rate stayed constant with the stabbing death of KCTV-5 cameraman Michael Long, who was allegedly killed by his wife, Joyce Long, in their Merriam home. In 1991, Keely A. Corbina became Merriam's only murder victim of the year when she was strangled by her 29-year-old live-in boyfriend, Curtis Bond.

"The primary cause of this (battery) decrease is not known," Sissom said. "Perhaps the aggressive Anti-Domestic Violence Program that has been in existence in Merriam for the past three years is starting to take effect."

While the decrease in robberies appears to be an even more impressive statistic, Sissom added, "it should be pointed out that in 1991 robberies increased 85 percent over 1990."

"During the past 14 years, the average number of robberies reported to the Merriam Police has been 13 per year," Sissom said. "This would indicate that 1992 was an average year in terms of robberies."

Meanwhile, in terms of Part 1 crimes against property, "there has been a noted increase across the board in 1992 over 1991," the



chief said. According to department statistics, 757 burglaries, thefts, auto thefts and arsons were reported to the Merriam Police in 1992 — a 15 percent increase over the 642 Part 1 crimes against property reported in '91.

"From the many arrests and investigations," Chief Sissom said, "it has been our experience that the persons responsible for a majority of these crimes are juveniles or young adults. Drug use has been a primary cause or motivation."

"These criminals are stealing property and converting the property to money for drug purchases. In many drug houses, thieves can trade stereos, jewelry or firearms for illegal drugs, especially crack cocaine."

"The Merriam Police Department continues to take a very hard-line approach to dealing with drug violators."

Though Merriam's overall Part 1 crime rate was up in 1992, Sissom said, he was "delighted" with Merriam's '92 crime stats after comparing them to Kansas City, Kansas' and Kansas City, Missouri's.

"Last year's (Merriam) crime stats would have been hard to beat, because our crime rate went down fairly dramatically in 1991," Sissom said.

	1991	1992	Difference
MURDER	1	1	0%
RAPE	4	2	<50%
ROBBERY	24	13	<46%
BATTERY	255	222	<13%
TOTALS	284	238	<16%

	1991	1992	Difference
BURGLARY	251	290	13%
THEFT	349	411	15%
AUTO THEFT	41	52	21%
ARSON	1	4	400%
TOTALS	642	757	15%
Total Part One Crimes	928	995	7%

Fortunately, he added, even though the '92 Part 1 stats were up, they were still well below the city's five-year average (see chart).

To minimize crime in 1993, Sissom added, "we will continue

our Anti-Domestic Violence Program, increase patrols and get our citizens more involved in helping to combat property crimes through the Neighborhood Watch and other community programs."

# Shawnee crime stats a mixed bag

by Tom Coffman  
Journal Herald Staff

The chances of being victimized by violent crime in Shawnee in-

cases they were assigned.

A breakdown of Part 1 categories shows little consistency in Shawnee crime. Although local detectives did not handle a homicide investigation in 1992,

burglary reports in 1992, a dramatic jump over the 303 burglary reports filed the previous year.

Several categories of non-violent Part 2 crimes also saw

Offense	1992	1991
Homicide	0	1
Rape	12	7
Robbery	34	42

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# Serious crime up slightly in Merriam for '92

By John Holloway  
Sun Staff Writer

Part 1 crimes were up 7 percent in 1992 in the city of Merriam.

According to Police Chief Ken Sissom, although crime was up slightly, it was in property crimes as opposed to violent crimes.

In fact, Sissom said crimes against persons, serious crimes which endanger the victim, experienced a 16 percent decrease.

Its reason to be hopeful, according to Sissom, "Over all I think it was (a good year)," said Sissom, who took over as head of the department earlier this year. "When you look at the total picture, over the past five years, we are still below the average."

Assaults and batteries were down 13 percent, and Sissom credits the city's aggressive Anti-domestic Violence Program, in place for three years now, as one possible reason for the drop.

Robberies decreased 46 percent in 1992 compared to 1991, however, in 1991 there was an 85 percent increase compared to 1990.

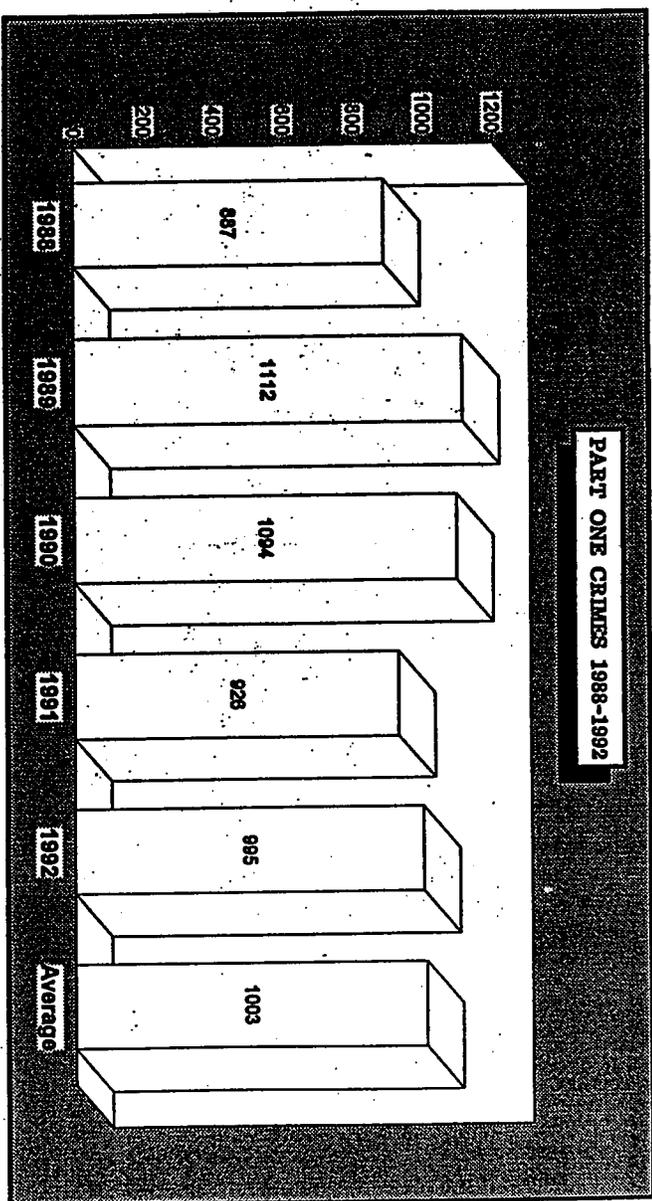
There were 13 robberies in 1992, which is the same as the 14-year average.

As for property crimes, Sissom reports that thefts and burglaries were the largest types of these crimes, and that all property crimes saw an increase.

He said investigations reveal that juveniles or young adults are responsible for the majority of these crimes. Also, drug use has been a primary motivation.

"Drug use is a very big factor in criminal behavior and motivation," Sissom said.

"When you do develop suspects, you commonly find they have a drug arrest background," he added.



He said while people might be ruining Johnson County residences for goods to trade for drugs or convert to cash, the drug houses themselves have not gotten a foothold in Johnson County.

"It's my belief that a drug house won't flourish well in Johnson County," he said. "If one moved in, we'd be notified within a few weeks. In big cities it can go on for months and the police will never be involved."

Sissom reported that the 995 total Part 1 crimes was just under the five-year average of 1,003 such crimes.

Sissom said the department will continue its Anti-domestic Violence Program in 1993, increase patrols and attempt to get citizens more involved in helping the department combat property crimes through Neighborhood Watch and other community programs.

By John Holloway

Sun Staff Writer

That traffic ticket in Shawnee might cost you a little more next

and expired tags costs \$25.50.

If the city council approves an increase in parking fines, \$10 would be added to a parking violation.

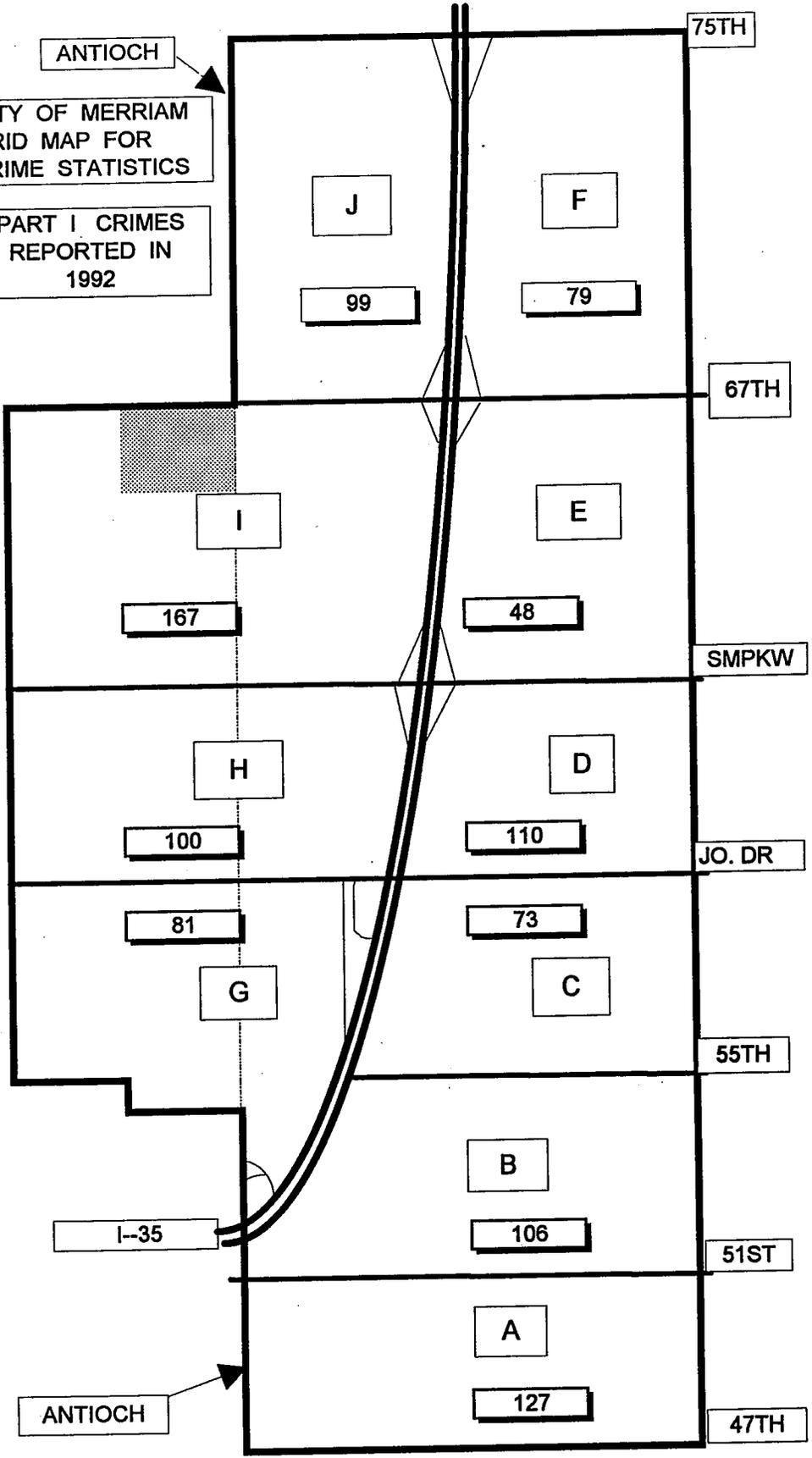
were raised in 1988.

If the council approves, here is a selected list of violations and the current and proposed fines:



CITY OF MERRIAM  
GRID MAP FOR  
CRIME STATISTICS

PART I CRIMES  
REPORTED IN  
1992



ANTIOCH

75TH

67TH

SMPKW

JO. DR

55TH

I-35

51ST

ANTIOCH

47TH



## **INTRODUCTION:**

The Patrol Division is made up of those officers that work in uniform. They are the most visible arm of the city government. At the base of the chain of command is the Police Officer. This group is the most important part of the police department. They are responsible for handling calls for service, enforcement of federal, state, local and traffic laws. They handle the arrest of criminal violators, investigation of traffic accidents, handle neighborhood disputes and generally assist the public whenever they are called upon.

The next group up in the chain of command are the Master Police Officers. This group has specialized technical skills beyond the basic police officer. Master Police Officers are the assistant shift supervisors. It is their duty to act as supervisors when the shift sergeants are on days off, ill, on vacation, or is otherwise unavailable.

Next in the chain of command are the Sergeants. Each shift is assigned a Sergeant. The general supervision of the shift is their primary responsibility. They make sure the shift runs smoothly. They act as back-up officers and will command high risk incident or crime scenes. Their position requires that they have a high level of job knowledge in police procedure. They answer directly to the office of the Chief of Police.

At the end of 1992, there were 12 police officers, 4 master police officers and 3 sergeants.

## **PATROL ACTIVITY - 1992**

Basic calls for service by the public are the backbone of any law enforcement agency. The success or failure of police department is measured on how it responds to general calls for service. The City of Merriam has long been known for having a busy police department. The diverse population and business community coupled with the presence of a major interstate highway and other main thoroughfares in the city is responsible for this high rate of activity.

In 1992, Merriam Police Officers responded to 18,959 primary calls for service. This figure is slightly less (1.1%) from 1991. These calls vary in nature to reports of crimes to animal complaints and traffic accidents.



**18,959 CALLS FOR SERVICE EQUATES TO APPROXIMATELY 52**

**PRIMARY CALLS PER DAY OR 1 CALL EVERY 28 MINUTES.**



## INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

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The Investigations Unit of the Merriam Police Department is staffed with three Police Officers. The Unit Commander is Lieutenant Bill Lietzke. He has been Investigations Unit Commander for the past one and a half years since he was promoted.

As Unit Commander, Lt. Lietzke makes all the case assignments and is responsible for the smooth operation of the Unit. He supervises two full-time investigators -- Sergeant Robert Smith and Master Police Officer Tim Burnett. Being assigned to Investigations requires careful administrative consideration. Those officers assigned to Investigations must be experienced and self driven. Their duties cause them to operate much of the time outside the station, and in some cases outside the city, following up cases. The Merriam Officers assigned to the Investigations Unit have a combined length of experience that totals over 40 years.

In 1992, some minor changes were made in the unit. They have the responsibility of investigating crimes from all categories. The department no longer depends on other agencies to investigate certain types of crimes, such as auto thefts. In the past these investigations were handled by the Johnson County Sheriff's Office. This unit is now responsible for the investigations of all major crimes that occur in Merriam. When they are not busy on a major case, they will investigate crimes or incidents of lesser priority, such as hit and run accidents, minor thefts or city ordinance violations. All officers assigned to Investigations are now Metro Squad qualified. They will assist other agencies with homicide investigations when called upon.

### UNIT SUMMARY

In 1992, the Investigations Unit investigated 907 cases. Of those cases 512, or 56.4%, were cleared arrest or exception. On 55 occasions during 1992, Investigators were called out while off-duty. This created a total of 150.25 hours of call-out overtime.

Several major crimes were investigated by the Unit in 1992. Some of these include:

- 1 HOMICIDE
- 3 SUICIDES
- 2 RAPES
- 9 ROBBERIES
- 19 AGGRAVATED BATTERIES

The largest percentage of the remaining cases involve thefts, and burglaries. NOTE: It is the Unit policy that investigators be assigned to follow-up on all residential and business burglaries reported.



## INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

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During the year, the unit has provided in-house cross training for three police officers in the skill of evidence processing. These officers can now be included in the call-out rotation basis with Officers from the Investigations Unit when there is a need to collect evidence at a crime scene. Having extra officers trained as evidence technicians will reduce the amount of overtime call-out hours, while increasing the expertise level of officers on the street. This has been a very successful program in its first year.

### TRAINING

The professionalism of the unit has been increased through the involvement in area schools and training seminars. Sgt. Robert Smith was transferred to Investigations from Patrol in March of 1992. He received the basic training needed to be effective in his new assignment:

The Unit Commander, Lt. Bill Lietzke attended the following schools and seminars:

- A twenty hour seminar on Police-Media Relations.
- An eight hour class on Supervising Major Crime Scenes.
- A 40 hour training class for Metro Squad Qualification.

Sgt. Robert Smith attended the following schools and seminars:

- A 40 hour Basic Investigations course in Hutchinson, Kansas.
- A 16 hours class on Investigating Child Abuse Cases.
- A 16 hour class on the Operation of the Smith and Wesson Identi-kit which allows him to do composites of crime suspects.
- A 40 hour training class for Metro Squad Qualification.
- A 24 hour school on Basic Interview Techniques.

Officers in the Investigations Unit were required to attend the other training that was offered to all officers. The state mandates 40 hours of in-service training per officer. Our investigators are among the highest trained officers on the department.

**NOTEWORTHY AND HIGH PROFILE CASES**

In 1992 the Investigations Unit handled many cases. Below are listed some of the high profile and major cases they were involved in:

- ▶ **Sgt. Jerry Bybee was assigned to Investigations until his retirement in March. In February he was assigned a missing persons case. The Merriam resident had been missing for nearly a year prior to being reported to the Merriam Police Department. Sgt. Bybee spent numerous man-hours on this case and was successful at locating the man alive and well in Florida. This investigation was done totally by phone and with the assistance of the authorities in Florida.**
- ▶ **In March, Investigator Burnett was assigned a child abuse case. He interviewed the suspect in the case for over one and a half hours and obtained a complete confession. There was no physical evidence in this case. The only evidence available was photos taken of the victim. The case would not have been solved without this confession.**
- ▶ **Also in March, Investigator Burnett was assigned eight burglaries to auto which occurred in an apartment complex on one evening. He developed leads through an informant. Suspects were located and charged in three of the eight cases.**
- ▶ **Sgt. Smith became involved in a case that was reported initially in 1991 that involved the theft of a back-hoe, valued at \$12,000. In April, an informant came forward with information about the previous case. Smith initiated his investigation and the back-hoe was recovered in Ottawa, Kansas and returned to the owner.**
- ▶ **In September, Merriam had its only homicide for 1992. The entire Investigation Unit was called out to King's Cove Apartment. Over 130 man-hours were spent by the Investigations Unit on this case. An arrest was made and the case is pending in District Court.**
- ▶ **During August the City of Merriam had a rash of auto burglaries. A suspect was developed. Both Investigators Smith and Burnett worked on interviews with the suspect. He was later charged with 8 counts of auto burglary. This same suspect is believed to be responsible for many more but would not confess to them. The burglary problem subsided after his arrest.**

## **I** NVESTIGATIONS UNIT

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- ▶ Investigator Burnett was involved in a case at Trinity Lutheran Manor Nursing Home in September. An 88 year old female victim had been reportedly sodomized by her son-in-law, in her room. Burnett questioned the suspect and received a full confession. This case is pending in District Court.
- ▶ During August and September a Circle K Convenience Store at 47th and Switzer was robbed three times. In each case, large quantities of cigarettes were taken. Sgt. Smith was assigned the case. During his investigations, he succeeded in locating suspects, who were later picked out of a photo line-up. The suspects were later charged in District Court. Several other robberies in Kansas City, Kansas were cleared involving these same suspects.
- ▶ In November, Investigator Burnett was called to the scene of an attempted suicide across the street from the Antioch Library. A man was found barely alive with a shotgun wound to the chest. The man later admitted that his wound were self-inflicted.
- ▶ During 1992, Investigator Burnett was involved in two homicide investigations with the Metro Squad. This gave him exposure to working major cases to better prepare him when he will be involved in future homicide investigations in Merriam.



## ANIMAL CONTROL UNIT

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The Animal Control Unit consists of one full-time officer. His primary duty is to handle all matters that concern animal problems in the City of Merriam. In 1992 the Animal Control Officer handled 927 service requests from citizens in Merriam. This officer works a normal forty-hour week. There are many times that police are called to handle animal problems when there is no Animal Control Officer on duty. The officers will handle these calls for service, whenever possible. In 1992, Police Officers responded to and handled 239 animal calls for service. This number is not included in the 927 calls handled by Animal Control.

In the past two years the role of the Animal Control Officer has been changing. When the department became short handed in the front office, the Animal Control Officer was trained to fill in. In addition to assisting in the front office he assisted the Municipal Court with warrant entries. He was involved in community education by giving two animal safety presentations at South Park Elementary School. He also handed out materials at the Turkey Creek Festival in May/1992. During the year the Animal Control Officer has also directed traffic at accident and fire scenes, acted on several occasions as a replacement crossing guard and took care of running many errands the department needed taken care of. His assistance many times has kept police officers on the streets and not taking care of non-patrol assignments.

The Animal Control Officers involvement in non-animal control functions increased with the right-sizing that occurred in mid-1992. During this process one (1) full-time clerical position was removed and replaced with a part-time position. The Animal Control Officer was assigned to fill in during some of the time the part-time person was not working. He also worked the front office during any absence that was due to illness or vacation. Not only has this officer proven to be a very flexible employee, his position has become more valuable to the city.

This change in the duty assignment is not without consequence. When you take the Animal Control Officer off the street, one-fourth of the time, there has to be an impact on the amount of work that is being done in the area of animal control. On the next page I have listed the Animal Control Unit statistics for 1991 and 1992. I have also listed a comparison chart that illustrates the difference in performance between the two years. Overall, there has been a 1.5% decrease in Animal Control Unit activity. This is insignificant when you consider the number of hours, during the year, the officer spent off the street and in the office. The largest decrease in statistics is in the area of animal impounds. There was a 23% decrease in the number of dogs and cats that were impounded in Animal Haven. This figure would be consistent with spending less time patrolling the city for stray dogs. In 1993, the Animal Control Officer will work to increase the number of impounds as much as possible.

1991 ANIMAL CONTROL STATISTICS													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTALS
Service Requests	75	51	76	80	76	78	65	81	99	111	75	79	946
Enforcement Actions	19	19	28	27	23	23	32	30	25	33	27	20	306
Animal Impounds	15	9	12	16	22	10	12	16	24	24	20	11	191
Investigations	72	66	98	101	83	81	88	82	81	125	83	83	1043
Reports Written	64	54	59	65	67	60	65	66	68	66	102	57	793
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>3279</b>

1992 ANIMAL CONTROL STATISTICS													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTALS
Service Requests	68	80	73	89	78	67	84	81	67	103	69	68	927
Enforcement Actions	29	22	27	10	29	26	20	29	16	32	26	18	284
Animal Impounds	15	11	8	15	8	8	9	19	4	18	21	10	146
Investigations	99	103	89	100	95	86	85	113	71	101	77	71	1090
Reports Written	77	69	61	82	56	68	58	73	39	64	89	48	784
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>3231</b>

COMPARISON 1991/1992			
	1991	1992	DIFF.
Service Requests	946	927	-2.10%
Enforcement Actions	306	284	-7.20%
Animal Impounds	191	146	-23%
Investigations	1043	1090	4.40%
Reports Written	793	784	-1.20%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3279</b>	<b>3231</b>	<b>-1.50%</b>



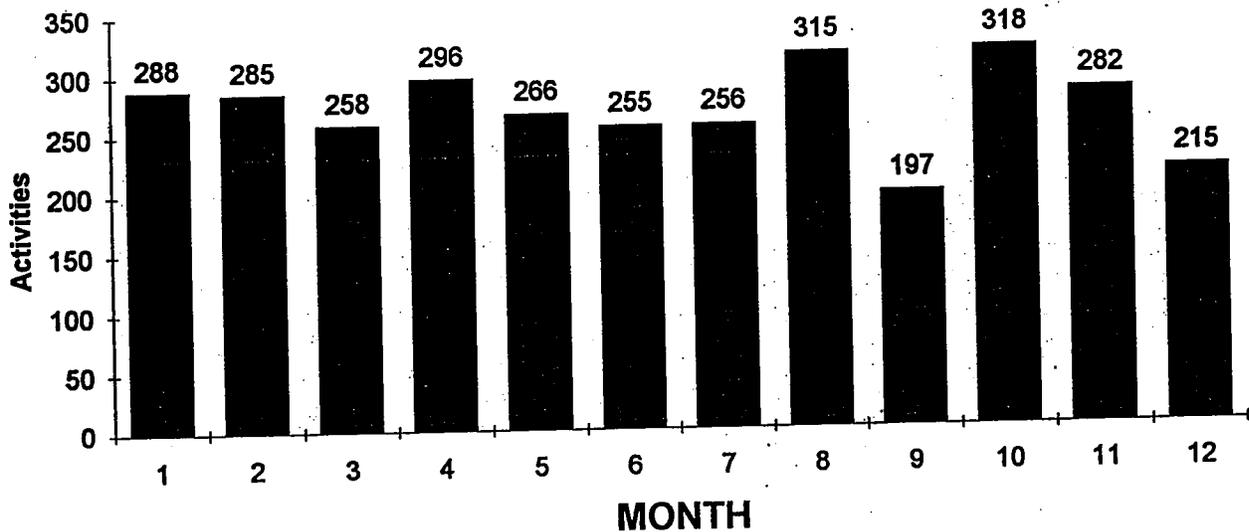
POLICE DEPARTMENT  
9000 W. 62ND TERRACE  
MERRIAM, KANSAS

**DAVE THOMAS**  
ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER

OFFICE: 677-3111

DISPATCHER: 782-0720

### ANIMAL CONTROL ACTIVITY BY MONTH / 1992





## **.A.R.E. PROGRAM**

1993 will be the Merriam Police Department's fourth year of being involved in the program. Currently Officer Larry Birt is assigned as the D.A.R.E. Officer. He is supervised by Sgt. Syd Tubbs, who is also D.A.R.E. trained and serves as a back-up D.A.R.E. Officer. This program is funded by a Federal/State grant. The grant pays approximately 75% of all the program costs. The grant will expire on its fifth anniversary. At that time the city may reapply for a new 5 year grant, if they are still available.

### PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

Project D.A.R.E.'s primary goal is to prevent substance abuse among children. This will be accomplished through the following objectives:

- ★ To equip students with skills to resist experimenting with drugs.
- ★ To help students develop self-esteem.
- ★ To teach positive alternatives to substance abuse.
- ★ To develop student's skills in risk assessment and decision making.
- ★ To develop "life's skills" in a positive manner.

In the D.A.R.E. Program, a uniformed police officer is be assigned to conduct classes in Merriam Elementary Schools. The D.A.R.E. Officer is in each of the 4 Merriam elementary schools, once a week, giving lessons in all grade levels. Officer Birt also meets with children in the school cafeteria during lunch and interacts with them on the playground during recess. Officer Birt is totally responsible for making his schedule. It is his responsibility to attend needed P.T.A. functions, meetings with teachers and school administrators and keep training current.

### 1992 D.A.R.E. ACTIVITY SUMMARY

In 1992, the Dare Program reached a total of 1,182 grade school children. In May approximately 175 sixth grade students from Merriam, South Park, Crestview and West Antioch Elementary Schools graduated from the D.A.R.E. program.



## **D.A.R.E. PROGRAM**

During the year, Officer Larry Birt was also very involved in the National D.A.R.E. Officers Association, attending the National conference in July at Louisville, Kentucky. He also attended the Kansas D.A.R.E. Officers Conference in Wichita, Kansas. Each month he attends informal training meetings with local D.A.R.E. officers. All these meetings are important as they give the D.A.R.E. Officer a chance to exchange information with other officers who experience successes and setbacks during their time as D.A.R.E. Officers. This exchange gives our Officer the opportunity to enhance the program throughout the year.

During the summer of 1992, the D.A.R.E. Program was expanded. Three summer sports clinics were conducted at the Merriam Community Center. This new program was developed in hopes that it would get children involved to give them opportunities to learn new skills or to enhance ones they already had. This program helped to keep them active during the summer in a positive way. It also allowed the D.A.R.E. Officer to keep in touch with some of the students during the summer months to reinforce some of the more important aspects of the D.A.R.E. Program that is taught during the school year.

With the help of the Merriam Community Center Staff and the Merriam Fire Department we were able to host three, week long, summer clinics. In June, Officer Birt coordinated a D.A.R.E. Soccer Clinic. In July a volleyball clinic was held. The summer clinics were finished off in August with a basketball clinic. The clinics were well attended with more than 60 students from the 6th and 7th grades -- most Merriam residents. Another important aspect of the clinics was their cost -- they were free. This gave the under-privileged kids a chance to get involved. Sign-ups were restricted to Merriam residents at first then opened up later to fill the classes.

The D.A.R.E. Office was also involved in many other activities throughout the year. In February, Officer Birt took 150, 6th grade students to the Municipal Auditorium to attend a special D.A.R.E. Circus, sponsored by the Kansas City Police Officer Association. Also during the summer, D.A.R.E. Officer Syd Tubbs was a counselor at a 1 week youth camp for High School students. This was held at the Tall Oaks Camp in Linwood, Kansas. Our D.A.R.E. Officer got involved in this event at the request of the Merriam Christian Church. Other events the D.A.R.E. Officer was involved in include the Turkey Creek Festival and the Merriam Fall Fun Festival.

### GOALS FOR 1993

In October the D.A.R.E. Officers, Larry Birt and Syd Tubbs attended training on a new program called the Kansas Family Initiative Parenting Program, in Wichita. This new program involves teaching classes to parents on how to keep their kids off drugs. Plans

**D****.A.R.E. PROGRAM**

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are being made at this time to have one of our D.A.R.E. Officers instruct this program in the months to come.

On May 21, 1993, the Merriam Police Department D.A.R.E. Program will host a graduation party. Approximately 175, 6th grade students are expected to attend. The party will be held in Merriam at Skateworld. Entertainment and refreshments will be provided, free of costs. This will be an opportunity for the students of the different schools to meet each other, prior to their attendance in 7th grade at one of two area middle schools. The emphasis on this party is to reinforce to students that they can have fun with others in a drug-free environment. It should also be noted that many Merriam businesses, groups and individuals have given donations to make this party possible.



## COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Merriam Police Department offers a variety of community services in addition to the traditional police services. The community services that were provided are described below:

### ⇒ POLICE RIDE-A-LONG PROGRAM

The Merriam Police Department operates a Ride-A-Long program for citizens. This program allows interested persons the chance to ride with a police officer during a normal tour of duty. During this time the citizen can observe what a police officer does and get the chance to ask questions. This service is not advertised except by word of mouth.

In 1991, 39 participant were involved in this program. In 1992, 24 persons rode with officers. In 1993, with the advent of community-oriented policing this program will be advertised to selected groups of Merriam citizens (Neighborhood Watch and Association groups, etc.)

### ⇒ FINGERPRINTING SERVICES

The Merriam Police Department offers the service of fingerprinting to all citizens of Merriam. Many persons are required to have their fingerprints taken for various reasons. With an appointment they can have this service done at the station. During 1992, approximately 40 persons used this service.

### ⇒ VACATION HOUSE WATCH PROGRAM

When a Merriam citizen goes on vacation they can come to the station and complete a House Watch Request form. This form lists the dates they will be gone, who has a spare key to the home and is responsible in case of an emergency. When a house watch request is received, it is assigned to Patrol. The district officers then records this information and they check this house once during their shift as long as shift activity will allow. During the house checks, officers will physically walk around the house to make a visual security check. The walk around checks are done during daylight hours only. During hours of darkness, officers do drive-by security checks. The summer is the most active time of the year for house watch requests.

During 1992, the Merriam Police Department received 85 house watch requests.



## THE PROBLEM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

American society has always been plagued with the problem of domestic violence. In the past 30 years, police have responded to family disturbances and handled them in much the same way. Officers would be called to the scene of a domestic violence disturbance. There they would try to reason with the disturbing parties and attempt to temporarily settle the dispute. Commonly, the officer would try to convince an angry husband to calm down or possibly leave for the night. This would bring a temporary end to the problem, at least from the officers perspective. In a majority of these cases the officers would be called back to the scene of the disturbance, finding the problem worse than in the original call. In some regrettable situations, homicides and serious assaults resulted from the delayed actions on the part of the police officers.

## RESEARCH AND SOLUTIONS

In the early 1980's a major study was conducted that concerned the problem of domestic violence. This study illustrated that is a direct correlation between the reoccurring family disturbances and their relationship to homicides and assaults. Studies indicated that domestic violence can be significantly reduced if the primary aggressor (many times the angry husband) is arrested and taken out of the home for a cooling off period. The study suggested that the police make more arrests at scenes of domestic violence. As an example, if an officer was called to the scene of a disturbance and they determined that the husband did threaten or strike his wife the husband was arrested and taken to jail for a cooling off period.

In 1989, the Merriam Police Department, in a joint venture with the Johnson County District Attorney's Office, began an aggressive program to deal with the problem of domestic violence. A large part of this program called for an increase in arrests at disturbance scenes. In a majority of the family disturbance calls one or sometimes both of the disturbing parties are arrested for criminal offenses arising from the domestic disturbance.

In 1990, the Kansas State Legislature passed a law that specifically covers how police departments handle domestic violence. This law requires police departments to have written policies on how they deal with domestic violence situations. The Merriam Police Department had a policy already in place.

Since 1989, the Merriam Police Department has witnessed a decrease in return calls to residences in Merriam due to this policy. It is the Department's goal that each citizen be given the opportunity to live in an environment that is free from the fear of domestic violence.

# **D**omestic Violence - 1992

## 1992 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACTIVITY

In 1992, Merriam Officers responded to approximately 300 residential family disturbances. In 157 of these disturbances it was determined that a criminal offense had occurred. In 84 cases the offender was arrested for a domestic violence related offense. These cases were all referred to the Johnson County District Attorney's Office. Charges were filed in most cases where the offender was not present when police arrived at the scene. In all cases, the District Court is involved and the family is forced to seek counseling which is closely monitored by the court system. Any repeat offense by a violator is dealt with in a strict manner.

### ARREST PROFILE

In 1992, 84 persons for domestic violation type offenses:

- ✓ Of the 84 arrests, 77% of the persons were arrested for criminal battery.
- ✓ 84% of those arrested were males, 16% were females.
- ✓ Of those arrested in 1992, 76% were White, 23% were Black and 1% were Asian.
- ✓ The average age is 30 years of age. The oldest person was 50, the youngest 18.
- ✓ In 1992, March was the most active month for domestic violence with 12 arrests. The least active month was September with only 2 arrest.

Below is a listing of domestic violence offenses committed in 1992 compared to 1991.

OFFENSE	1991	1992	OFFENSE	1991	1992
MURDER	1	1	HARASSMENT BY PHONE	15	6
AGGRAVATED BATTERY	5	3	THEFT	1	5
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	6	3	DAMAGE TO PROPERTY	11	8
SIMPLE BATTERY	106	106	TRESPASS	3	10
SIMPLE ASSAULT	3	1	DISORDERLY CONDUCT	6	10
TERRORISTIC THREAT	15	4	TOTALS	172	157

## **I**SSUE OF LIABILITY

Any progressive Police Department must be concerned about civil liability. In 1992, the primary topics of potential liability that cities were facing were categorized in three areas:

- ◆ **USE OF FORCE**
- ◆ **VEHICLE PURSUITS**
- ◆ **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION**

In 1992 the Merriam Police Department reviewed it's policies concerning these three areas of civil liability.

### USE OF FORCE:

The use of force issue was in the middle of reform with many police department. With the Rodney King incident, the need for reform became more evident to many police departments. Prior to 1992, plans were underway to introduce a new training procedure that would best deal with the use of force issue. This training took place and was completed in 1992. The basis of this new procedure was to give officers more alternatives or options when they had to use force to effect an arrest.

Officers became better trained on how to verbally diffuse a situation. With this skill officers could possibly keep a verbal situation from becoming a physical confrontation. As verbal techniques do not always work, officers were trained to use non-lethal, pain compliance techniques that involve open-hand contact with the resisting person. These techniques are designed to get the person to do what you want without causing any serious injury.

Another option that was instituted in 1992 involves the use of pepper mace. This is a product that is well tested to be safe and effective when used by the police. If a person resists arrest, they may be sprayed with pepper mace. This will cause them to become immediately incapacitated. After incapacitation they are handcuffed and secured without any injury to them or the officer. The effects of pepper mace are reduced by allowing the person to wash the effected area with cool water. In 20 minutes they are back to normal.

With the new use of force procedure, officers were equipped with a new collapsible baton. This baton is carried by the officer at all times in a holster on their utility belt. Each officer became certified on the use of this new baton. This training restricts the officers to striking only 4 areas of the body. These are the large muscle areas of the

arms and legs. Head and joint strikes are strictly prohibited by the new procedure.

**VEHICLE PURSUITS:**

Vehicle pursuits is another area that has become a high liability issue. In 1992, the Police Administration began closely investigating all incidents where Merriam officers were involved in vehicle pursuits. Each pursuit is critiqued and measured to be use the officer was in compliance with the pursuit policy. In February, 1992, each officer attended a training class on pursuits. During this training the department policy on police pursuits was made very clear to all officers. The policy states that only under "serious circumstances" would a vehicle pursuit be acceptable. These circumstances would have to involve a serious felony committed by the person being pursued, and then only under acceptable conditions. 1991, there were 24 persons charged with attempting to elude a Merriam Police Officer. In 1992, this figure dropped to 3 persons charged.

**COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION:**

In 1992, a new OSHA regulation went into effect. This law affects Fire, Ambulance and Law Enforcement Personnel in their work. It was designed to mandate how workers deal with persons who may be infected with a serious communicable disease like HIV (Aids) or Hepatitis. Under the new regulations officers must wear rubber gloves when handling objects that could be contaminated with body fluids. The police department must supply the employees with the gloves as well as face masks, eye protection, disposable gowns or aprons and the proper fluid solutions for cleaning areas that have been exposed to body fluids, either on surfaces or on their hands, face, etc.

In the fall of 1992, with the assistance of the Merriam Fire Department, each officer was properly trained to use the new equipment. Each officer was supplied with the necessary equipment to place the city in compliance with this OSHA regulation.

**P****ROFESSIONISM AND EDUCATION**

In the past 10 years the Merriam Police Department has made great strides in the area of professionalism. This has been achieved through changes in policy and procedure, a effective hiring process and though officer education.

**DEPARTMENT MANUAL:**

In 1992, each officer received the first completely up-dated Department Manual. In August, when the manual was distributed, department wide training took place. Each officer was explained the various changes. Many of these changes simply brought the procedures in line with what is being done by officers.

**OFFICER EDUCATION:**

Studies have shown that an officer is usually more professional when they have the experience of a college education. It is no secret that in the last 10 years the caliber of officers on the Merriam Police Department has changed and improved.

In 1982 only 47% of the officers on the department held any type of college degree. In fact the largest percent (42 of 47%) of the degrees were two year Associate of Arts Degrees. A survey, conducted in late 1992, found the numbers were higher. The number of officers with college degree has risen to 75% In fact, 54% of the officers have four year college degrees. The largest stride came between 1991 and 1992 when there was a 15% increase in the number of officers with college degree. From the departments experience it has found that officers with a college education are easier to train, more articulate with the public and better prepared to deal with the stresses of a career in law enforcement.

**S****IGNIFICANT POLICE INCIDENTS**

During the course of a year the Merriam Police Department handles thousands of calls from the public. Many are routine calls. Some calls are not so routine. The following pages represent some of the unusual, high risk or otherwise notable cases that the Merriam Police Department was involved in. It should be noted that during 1992 the Merriam Police Department worked one homicide. As you read the brief accounts listed below some are marked with a ★. This indicates that this is an incident that could have easily resulted in a death.

1] On January 25th, Merriam Officers were receiving information by police scanner of a foot pursuit in Overland Park involving a suspect of a prowler call. The suspect gained access to a vehicle and fled the area, toward Merriam. A Merriam Officer was standing by in the path of the suspect at Johnson Drive and Goodman. As the suspect approached the officer, he suddenly turned and drove through the neighborhood streets, South of Johnson Drive. The Officer gave pursuit. Both the suspect and the officer turned East and back into Overland Park. A few minute later the pursuit was again headed toward Merriam, Westbound on Shawnee Mission Parkway. Speeds were described to be in the 60-70s. The pursuit took place on a Saturday evening at 8:00 PM. Because of the day/time/location at Hadley, the officer decided to discontinue the pursuit. The suspect vehicle continued West on Shawnee Mission Parkway and collided with a uninvolved third party, who was turning left from South Antioch onto East Shawnee Mission Parkway. The investigation in Overland Park determined that the suspect had just burglarized a residence. A woman in the uninvolved car was seriously injured, requiring hospitalization.

2] On February 10th, a couple that lived in the apartment complex at 55th and Antioch received a knock on the door. When opened an armed man burst in and held his gun to the male resident's head. The man demanded money that he claimed the resident owed him for a drug sale. The resident agreed to call his father to come over to pay the man. Unfortunately for the armed man, the police were also called. When officers arrived the man was taken into custody and charged with Aggravated Assault and Kidnapping.

3] On February 18th a woman living at the El Conquistador Apartments was accosted as she returned home, by a man who was hiding inside her apartment. The man wrapped an electrical cord around the woman's neck while another man removed her jewelry. The contents of her purse was dumped out and her money was stolen. The men fled the apartment. Officers were called and an area search failed to turn anything up. This case remains open.

**S****IGNIFICANT POLICE INCIDENTS**

4] ★ On April 10th, a disturbance took place at the apartments at 5006 Merriam Drive. The argument was between two female roommates about one woman sleeping with the other woman's boyfriend. The verbal disturbance became physical when one woman stabbed the other in the chest with a steak knife. The victim got the wound to stop bleeding and put a band-aid on it. The police were called the next morning. The suspect was not at home when police arrived. Reports were forwarded to the District Attorney's Office for review. Disposition is unknown.

5] ★ On May 7th, a woman was picked up by her boyfriend at her place of employment in Lenexa. The couple began arguing in the car. The man began beating the woman in the vehicle as they drove to the Comfort Inn, where they were both staying. There he convinced the woman he had calmed down and they got on the elevator to go to the room. On the elevator the beating started up again. The man dragged the screaming woman to their room where he put a pillow over her head and tried to smother the woman. The man suddenly stopped and grabbed her purse and took \$23 from it without her consent. The man then started choking the woman to the point of passing out. After some more attacks the man stopped and eventually went to sleep. The next morning the woman was taken to Shawnee Mission Medical Center. Officers found the woman badly bruised with one eye swollen shut. Charges were filed by the Johnson County District Attorney's Office. On November 13th, the man was arrested in Nashville, Tennessee. The case is still pending.

6] On May 7th, a Merriam Officer stopped a traffic violator on I-35 from a violation that occurred on Johnson Drive. The officer noticed a strong odor of marijuana coming from the vehicle. The officer asked the man if he could search the car and the man agreed. As soon as the back-up officer arrived the search was started. A small quantity of marijuana was located on the driver's seat. The drugs were placed on the trunk of the car as officers confronted the driver. The driver suddenly grabbed the evidence and stuck it in his mouth and began trying to swallow it. Officers grabbed the suspect attempting to keep the man from swallowing the marijuana. During the ensuing resistance one officer was knocked down a steep hill and injured. The other officer was successful at subduing the man but not from keeping him from ingesting the evidence. The man was taken to County Jail. NOTE: The officer's injuries turned out to be more severe. This officer was off work for several weeks and will probably have to have orthopedic surgery this year as a result of this injury.

7] ★ On May 23, Merriam Officers responded to a shooting call at the intersection of Antioch and Shawnee Mission Parkway. When they arrived they found a 29 year old man lying in his car. The man was bleeding from a gunshot

**S****IGNIFICANT POLICE INCIDENTS**

wound to the right leg. Investigation discovered that another vehicle had been involved. The two vehicle drivers got into a rolling disturbance on I-35. The suspect was mad at the victim as he thought he had cut him off in traffic and he began ramming his truck into the suspect's car. The suspect was following the victim when he got off of the interstate at Shawnee Mission Parkway. As both vehicles came to a stop at the Antioch light the victim got out of his car and approached the truck on the passengers side. The passenger of the suspect vehicle pulled out a handgun and shot twice at the victim striking him once in the leg. The suspect vehicle then fled the scene. The victim was hospitalized. This case remains open.

8] On June 9th, a man in the 5800 block of Grant committed suicide in his home. His body was discovered by his ex-wife and a current girlfriend. The man was depressed possibly due to an illness. When police arrived and began their investigation, they found a large amount of military ordinance, including live handgranades. The area was secured and the military was called in and the explosives were removed. The man turned out to be a military collector with some unauthorized items in his collection.

9] ★ On June 30th, an woman was walking to her car in the parking lot of El Conquistador Apartments when she was attacked by a knife wielding man. The man slashed at the woman with a large knife cutting her across the arm and leg. The man then stated "got ya" and laughed as he left the area. This woman had a similar incident occur in Olathe about two and a half weeks prior where the same man pulled a gun on her. The woman stated she does not know the man, nor does she know why he is after her. This was the last known attack on this woman. This case remains open at this time.

10] On August 18th, a Merriam Officer was patrolling near the area of Merriam and Johnson Drive when he observed a disturbance going on in a vehicle. A man was observed to be striking a woman in the head, inside the vehicle. The officer immediately stopped the car. Once the car stopped the woman/victim got out of the car and ran back toward the officer's car. The officer asked the woman to take a seat his patrol car for her safety. The officer then took the man into custody until his backup could arrive and the matter could be sorted out. After the backup arrived it was determined that the woman had been forcibly kidnapped from a bar in Shawnee by an ex-boyfriend. The man was taken to county jail.

11] On September 3rd, officers were sent to an apartment in Kings Cove Apartment complex. The dispatchers received information that a man had been stabbed at that location. Upon arrival officers found a man lying on the floor.

**S****IGNIFICANT POLICE INCIDENTS**

Standing over the man was the man's estranged wife who had called for an ambulance. It was immediately determined that the man had been stabbed in the chest and was killed. The wife admitted responsibility and was arrested. All members of the Investigations Unit were called out. With the exception of the Johnson County Crime Lab, no other agencies were used. This case is pending in court.

12] On September 3rd, the Merriam Police Department was contacted by Trinity Lutheran Manor reference a situation that had occurred there. The nursing home reported that a man was observed fondling an 88 year old female patient. An employee first observed it. The employee confronted the man, who was known by the employee to be the woman's son-in-law. A few minutes passes and the employee decided to again check on the patient. When they entered the room the son-in-law was forcing the woman to commit oral sodomy on him. The patient suffers from acute alzheimer disorder. Merriam investigators later interviewed the suspect and received a complete confession. He was later charged with Sodomy.

13] On November 10th, Officers were dispatched to a disturbance call at the "Newton House" located just North of the Harkin's Gas Station lot. When officers arrived they found a rear basement door standing open. Inside they observed a man lying on the floor. A shotgun was lying next to the man. From a brief and labored conversation, the man admitted to his attempted suicide. He was taken to emergency surgery at Shawnee Mission Medical Center where he lost one lung. It was later determined that the man was due to be charged in a large embezzlement case in Missouri the following week.

14] On November 16th at 11:30 PM, a man was stopped waiting at a red light on Antioch at Johnson Drive. Another vehicle pulled up on the left side of his car very close. As the driver looked at this car, the driver of the other car extended his arm toward him and was armed with a chrome plated revolver. The gun was pointed directly at the driver's face. The driver ducked down and ran the red light in an effort to escape. The other car did not follow.

15] On November 23rd, the parents of a 10 year old boy reported that their son had left the house that morning and had not been seen since. The boy did not attend school that day. As officers began investigating they determined that none of the boy's friends had any contact with him either. As darkness fell, several officers were involved in an organized search of the area. A little while later the Merriam Fire Department was called in to assist. The search went on until 1:00 AM the next morning with no results. Later this same morning the boy came home. He had spent the night in an abandoned car, parked a couple blocks from

**S****IGNIFICANT POLICE INCIDENTS**

his house. He was unharmed.

16] ★ On December 1st, a man living in the Merriam Garden's Apartment received a knock on the door. As he went to answer it two men broke inside and demanded payment for a debt owed to them by the resident. When the resident advised them that he had no money the men decided to beat him up and take some of his property in exchange. The resident grabbed a knife during the struggle and stabbed one of the men. Both the men fled the scene and were later picked up and arrested at a Merriam business.

17] On December 6th, at 11:25 PM, a patrol officer noticed two suspicious persons lurking in the doorway of the Johnson County Mental Health building at Shawnee Mission Parkway and Craig. This has been a business that has been broken into several times over the past 2 years. During the initial contact the officer noticed a bulge in the coat of one of the men. The officer patted the man down for his safety and found a pair of brass knuckles. A further check revealed a pellet gun hidden in his rear waist band. Further interview revealed that the two men were planning to rob the Subway Sandwich Shop on Shawnee Mission Parkway, just outside Merriam city limits. The two men were also admitted gang members (Crips).

18] On December 8th, officers were called to meet with S.R.S. at an apartment in Merriam Gardens Apartments. S.R.S. was investigating a case of child abuse involving a 7 month old infant. Officers with S.R.S. removed the child, who was transported to Shawnee Mission Medical Center for an evaluation. Several bruises were found on the child head and face. His weight was unusually light, indicating that he was malnourished. The child was taken into State custody.

19] On December 19th, a car was observed by an officer driving suspiciously in the vicinity of a convenience store. When the officer later stopped the car it was determined that the driver and passenger were from out of town. The driver, who was not the car owner, said that he borrowed the car but was unsure who the owner was. The officer asked the driver if he could search the car for weapons or drugs. The driver agreed. A brief search turned up a quantity of drugs and \$4,000 in cash. The money is in the process of being seized under drug forfeiture laws. The driver and occupant were both jailed.

## NEWS FROM THE AUTO CLUB



December 1992

The City of Merriam has been awarded a PEDESTRIAN SAFETY CITATION in the American Automobile Association's 53rd Annual Pedestrian Safety Inventory.

Pedestrian accident summaries and safety activity reports were compiled by the AAA-Auto Club of Missouri and submitted to a national judging panel. Some 2,400 cities from throughout the nation entered this year's inventory. The panel reviews accomplishments and programs designed to reduce pedestrian accidents. Cities are evaluated in comparison to others of similar population size.

Awards and citations are presented to cities and states based on low pedestrian death and injury rates for 1991 and on accident prevention programs which are evaluated in seven key areas--accident records, safety legislation, enforcement, traffic engineering, traffic safety organization, quality school safety programs, and public information and education programs.

Merriam was judged along with 931 other cities in the 10,000-25,000 population group and Merriam had a pedestrian death rate of 0.0 per one hundred thousand population compared to its population group rate of 1.5. Merriam's pedestrian injury rate per one hundred thousand population was 42 compared to the total group rate of 45.

Merriam's low death and injury rate and having reached 5 years without a pedestrian death has earned Merriam this award.

Pedestrians, who accounted for 15 percent of all traffic deaths in 1990, are often overlooked when traffic safety programs are developed and funding to reduce highway deaths and injuries is sought. In 1991, preliminary figures indicate that 5,635 pedestrians were killed.

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