

ANNUAL REPORT

Boulder Police 2011



CHIEF'S MESSAGE

“Of course, we will continue to explore ways to make the Boulder Police Department the best that it can be through improved communication, technology, and education.”



As we reflect on 2011, the department recognizes some of its most significant events. From the shocking Todd Walker homicide on the evening of St. Patrick's Day to the diligent work of department members to solve several cold cases, I am continually reminded of the dedication and conscientious efforts department members demonstrate each and every day.

In this annual report, we decided to focus on some behind-the-scene accomplishments which were not highly visible to the general public. One of those was a prestigious invitation for our Victim Advocate Team Coordinator to attend a de-briefing on the mass shooting in Arizona where Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords sustained life-threatening injuries. We were proud to have officers participate in

Operation Mountain Guardian in Denver last summer which simulated a terrorist attack. Our training efforts often include both commissioned and non-commissioned members and everyone seemed to take something away from the wellness training given by Nicoletti and Associates. Several members have sharpened their Spanish speaking skills with classes focused on how to use the language in a law enforcement setting.

We celebrated one of the largest awards ceremonies in recent memory. Not only were department members recognized for their outstanding efforts in 2011, we also acknowledged twelve citizens for going above and beyond their normal civic duty. This collaborative effort is important for public safety. We would often not be able to solve crime without assistance from the public.

Of course, we will continue to explore ways to make the Boulder Police Department the best that it can be through improved communication, technology, and education. We are fortunate to be part of a community that shares our values and supports our efforts and we thank you all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark R. Beckner".

Mark R. Beckner
Chief of Police

411: There were 81,218 calls for service in 2011, compared to 78,383 in 2010. Response time decreased from four and a half minutes in 2010 to three minutes and 47 seconds in 2011.



OMG EXERCISE



Operation Mountain Guardian – OMG for short – was the largest multi-agency terrorism drill Colorado has ever seen. Staged at four main locations in the Denver metro area, more than 100 agencies and 400 volunteers participated in the all-day event.

The exercise was based on actual terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India in 2008, in which 164 people were killed in 11 coordinated attacks. Similar scenarios were planned over 1 ½ years for the Denver exercise, sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security. The main goals of the drill were to figure out how multiple agencies would respond to major attacks taking place in several locations, and to determine how well the agencies communicated with one another during the emergency. “Terrorists” attacked the Park Meadows Mall, an elementary school, the Community College of Aurora and Union Station.

The Boulder Police Department’s SWAT Team, the City of Boulder Bomb Squad, the Boulder County Hazmat Team and the Boulder Fire Department put their skills to the test that day, mainly focusing on events in and around Union Station. The lessons learned are being put to use in the situations our agencies respond to every day.



MAJOR CRIMES

“Police received about a dozen tips, one of which led investigators to McGregor.”



University of New Hampshire football player shot and killed on University Hill in Boulder

It was St. Patrick's Day and the revelers were out in full force that night, as they are each year. The Boulder Police Department was fielding a lot of calls about drunks, fights and loud parties – the usual for the Irish holiday.

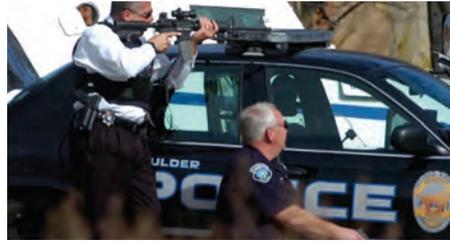
It was during the overnight hours that University of New Hampshire football player Todd Walker was murdered on University Hill. He was walking with his friend Elizabeth Roach, a University of Colorado student, when the two were confronted by a man with a gun. Roach initially believed it was an attempted robbery, but during an altercation between the two men the suspect fired his gun at Walker. Walker was rushed to the hospital, but died of his wounds. Roach said her friend had been trying to protect her from the assailant.

The murderer was 23-year-old Kevin McGregor of Longmont. Police received about a dozen tips, one of which led investigators

to McGregor. It came from a coworker of McGregor's, a manager at Which Wich sandwich shop. She told detectives that she recognized the sweatshirt the assailant wore as possibly belonging to McGregor, and that he kept a gun hidden at the sandwich shop.

Police found the gun and the sweatshirt after executing search warrants, and McGregor was charged with First Degree Murder and other charges. He was found guilty at his trial, which ended in early February 2012, and was sentenced to life without parole.

411: There were two homicides in Boulder in 2011; four in 2010.



Standoff: Suicidal gunman at Boulder Community Hospital

Boulder police were able to bring about a peaceful conclusion to a standoff with a young man armed with a handgun outside of Boulder Community Hospital in April.

The 21-year-old man was apparently upset over a recent break-up. A doctor noticed that the man seemed distressed and when he approached him outside the building, the man allegedly put the gun in his mouth and pulled the trigger. According to a hospital spokesman, the gun did not go off.

The Boulder Police Department's SWAT Team responded, and SWAT negotiators spoke with the man for several hours, trying to persuade him to surrender. Ultimately, Donald Shine gave up and went peacefully with police. He was charged with Disorderly Conduct and Unlawfully Carrying a Concealed Weapon. He was also evaluated for mental health issues.



FBI manhunt for bomb suspect ends at grocery store

The FBI launched a nationwide manhunt for the Southwest Plaza bombing suspect, 65-year-old Earl Albert Moore, after pipe bombs were found in the Littleton, CO shopping center. Law enforcement agencies everywhere were notified, and Boulder police thought he might have come to town to hide out. Officers kept an eye out for anyone fitting Moore's description.

However, it wasn't police, but an early-morning shopper at a local King Soopers, who led authorities to Moore. The woman (who wants to maintain her privacy) was picking up a few things at the store on Baseline Road before heading to work that morning. She noticed a man quietly drinking coffee inside the grocery store's Starbucks who looked similar to suspect photos she had seen in news stories. The quick-thinking shopper called 9-1-1, and nearby officers rushed to the scene.

Officers Steve Cast and Greg Perry were the first to arrive (Perry was already in the store picking up some breakfast). Moore tried to walk away when Perry began to approach him, but Cast cut off Moore's escape as he pulled up in his car. Moore was taken into custody without incident.

Peeper hides in portable toilet to spy on women

And last, but not least, who can forget the strangest story to come out of Boulder in 2011? This incident made international headlines within hours of occurring, because it was just so weird.

A woman at the Hanuman Yoga Festival got the surprise of her life when she used one of the portable toilets at the event. She noticed something moving in the tank, and asked a man standing nearby to check it out. He saw movement under a tarp, inside the tank of the toilet. When he stepped outside to call for help, the door locked behind him.

A festival security officer waited for the suspect outside the toilet. A few minutes went by, and then a man covered in excrement and scratches ran away and escaped the security officer and police. Dubbed the Porta-potty Peeper by the local media, 30-year-old Luke Chrisco eluded police for a week before a sharp-eyed officer from the Vail Police Department realized that the man he had pulled over on Interstate 70 was the suspect from the Boulder incident.

There were several tip offs. One was the unusual leather cuff bracelets the suspect was wearing at the time of the



Luke Chrisco, aka Porta-potty Peeper

stop; the Vail officer had heard about them in the media. Chrisco was contacted by police because people had reported that he was panhandling at a gas station near the Interstate.

Chrisco admitted to Boulder detectives that he had hidden in the toilet. During jail house interviews with local reporters, he explained that he did it so he could be "blessed" by women's "energy." Chrisco also admitted to drilling peepholes in various businesses around Boulder. He remains in custody and faces charges of Unlawful Sexual Contact and Criminal Invasion of Privacy.

411: In 2011, police made 75 arrests in misdemeanor sex assault cases, compared to 72 arrests for the same charge in 2010.

411: There were 38 robberies,
196 aggravated assaults and
473 burglaries reported in 2011.



Arrests

Police discovered a harassment suspect at the homeless shelter matched the description and sketch of a man wanted for an attempted abduction of three young boys. Lawange Bassudde (above) was subsequently arrested and charged with several offenses including attempted second degree kidnapping.

David McCoy was arrested, charged, and found guilty on four counts of unlawful sexual conduct, two felonies, and two misdemeanors and sentenced to six years to life in prison after he lured young men to his apartment and then sexually assaulted them.

Milestones

The Department had one of its largest award ceremonies in recent memory celebrating the many accomplishments of department members and the general public. Twelve Citizenship Awards were given to community members who went above and beyond to assist in apprehending suspects or saving the lives of others. Lifesaving awards were presented to Officers Andrew Kirshbaum, Kathy Lowe, Beth McNalley, Ron Perea, and Patrick Vest. Officers Jim Byfield and Christian McCracken received the Purple Heart Award. Officer Nathan Vasquez was given the STAR Award and Officers Marcus Askins, Steven Faber, and

Composite Artist Renee´ McCoy received the Award for Excellence.

Officer Brian Rech was presented with Officer of the Year and Detective Traci Cravitz received Detective of the Year.

Karen Yokomizo-Burton retired in June after 30 years of service. Her last assignment was with the Traffic Division as an Accident Report Specialist.

Graffiti

After leaving more than 75 tags in sixteen different locations in Boulder, 19-year-old Nigel Perez-Paine was arrested with paint on his shoes, pants, and fingers. When asked about his condition he responded "I'm an artist" and said he had just painted the window well in his bedroom.

Training

Boulder Police brushed up on their driving skills by using a "skid car" vehicle modified with a set of hydraulic lifts attached to casters. It imitates the feeling of hydroplaning or sliding on ice and gives officers the ability to develop muscle memory in a safe environment while listening to dispatchers at the same time.

Dr. Jamie Brower from Nicoletti and Associates talked to department members about wellness in law enforcement. She engaged her audience with a great sense of humor and an ability to present the material in an interesting and informative way. Some of the highlights included, dealing with stress and conflicts at home, in addition to more serious subjects like suicide and depression.

Sandra Diaz taught an advanced Spanish language class to interested department members. One Officer commented "Ms. Diaz has provided a real-world application of spoken Spanish and an insight into legal and technical terms in a judicial setting, better preparing us to conduct accurate and in-depth interviews. Her Spanish-speaking and teaching ability are impeccable, and her preparation and enthusiasm for teaching and coaching in her class are without parallel." Ms. Diaz provided department members with an opportunity to hone their conversational skills, and gain a deeper understanding of Latin American culture. She has been a great asset to the Boulder Police Department.

OCCUPY BOULDER

“We support people’s First Amendment rights, and we need to balance those rights with enforcing the city’s trespassing regulations.”



The economic downturn of the past few years has frustrated many across the country, and in September, protestors took their complaints to the street – Wall Street, to be exact.

Occupy Wall Street protestors camped out in a New York park and began to air their grievances against what they perceived to be corporate greed and economic inequality. The movement eventually made its way to Denver and then Boulder.

In Boulder, activists initially camped out on the lawn of the county courthouse, but eventually moved to the Sister City Plaza outside of the Municipal Building. Overnight camping is against the law in the city of Boulder, and police began

issuing tickets to campers, and arresting those who had been contacted previously for camping.

In early January 2012, the city manager passed a rule which prohibited anyone from remaining in city parks, parkways or recreation areas, with the exception of bicyclists and pedestrians passing through the area. To make sure that the Occupy participants understood the new rule, Boulder Police Chief Mark Beckner made a low-key visit to the campsite. “We support people’s First Amendment rights, and we need to balance those rights with enforcing the city’s trespassing regulations. We want to keep the city safe and clean for everyone,” said Beckner.

411: Police issued 342 trespassing tickets in 2011.



VICTIM ADVOCATES

“Almost everyone I met had some direct connection to someone who was shot...”



Victim advocates are an important part of the Boulder Police Department. They're the people who help crime victims deal with their immediate crisis, whether it's some type of assault, a robbery or perhaps the unexpected death of a family member.

Advocates are trained to provide emotional support during traumatic events, but sometimes even the advocates need an advocate.

That was the case in January 2011 when Arizona Rep. Gabrielle Giffords was shot in the head as she was hosting a meeting with constituents outside a Tucson grocery store. A gunman opened fire on the group, shooting a total of 18 people. Six of the victims died from their injuries.

Victim advocates from Tucson responded to the scene and to the hospitals where the injured were taken, but the chaos and crisis was almost too much to bear for some of them. The National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) called Boulder Police Department Victim Advocate Team Coordinator Susan Townley and requested that she fly to Tucson immediately to assist with group crisis intervention for the Arizona advocates, who were having a difficult time coping.

“Almost everyone I met had some direct connection to someone who was shot or someone who was present at the shooting,” said Townley. One advocate had just left the shopping center a few minutes before the shooting started.

“There was so much grief; one staff member in the county attorney's office had a friend who was killed.”

Townley says many of the advocates were frustrated. There was a significant amount of trauma in a very short period of time; they spent much of their time waiting for assignments and not actively helping victims; and probably the most challenging issue of all: not being able to “fix” the situation.

“The advocates understood that intellectually, but emotionally they felt they weren't helpful enough,” explained Townley.

She said the group crisis intervention focused on allowing the group to vent, and to share their frustrations and worries with others who were experiencing

411: The Victim Services Unit helped more than 1,880 people in 2011

the same emotions. They wrote all of their thoughts and concerns on an easel and talked about the importance of self care. “As advocates, we don't always take time for ourselves, and we need to do that. If you like to hike, make time. If you like to talk about feelings, make sure you have someone who you can talk to about whatever's coming up for you,” said Townley.

One thing sticks in Townley's mind about her time in Tucson: “The resilience of people. Being able to get up the next day and do what they need to do to service the victims of the tragedy, and sometimes even thrive in their work. And being able to use that information in our daily lives.” She says she felt humbled to be asked to assist during the tragedy.

CODE ENFORCEMENT



A new code enforcement unit is out on the streets of Boulder, keeping an eye out for quality-of-life issues like scattered trash, overgrown weeds and snow that hasn't been removed within the 24-hour time limit. The team consists of Supervisor Jen Riley, plus code enforcement officers Gayla Berry and Aaron Wise, who work dayshift Monday through Friday.

In the past, these issues were handled by the Public Works Department. Duties were transferred to the police department in October to lend a more focused approach to enforcement. “We can be more proactive because we don't have the other duties Public Works had. They were responsible for a number of different fields, and we are more focused on nuisance-oriented problems,” says Supervisor Jen Riley.

The team manages issues citywide, but makes frequent trips to high-complaint neighborhoods like the University Hill. “We receive a lot of complaints on the Hill because of trash concerns. Many times the problem is animal-created and we try to educate residents about ways to deter wildlife. It's important to educate people about problems and solutions. Education is our first priority; we try to be reasonable with citizens,” says Riley.

All three team members are new to the city. Before they hit the pavement, they trained in a 3-week mini-academy to learn about the police department, and become educated about code enforcement tactics, procedures and legal issues. Getting to know the layout of city was a top priority. Riley explains, “The geography was a challenge to learn because we were all new, but it comes together quickly when you're driving it.”

Any time a code enforcement officer is called to investigate a complaint they visit the site in person and take photos for documentation purposes. If a violation is found, the officer will post a notice that gives the resident a certain number of days to correct the issue. At the end of that time period, the officer reinspects the property. If the problem has been corrected, the complaint is closed out. If not, officers will have a conversation with the resident explaining why they need to comply.

COLD CASES

The murder of JonBenet Ramsey in December of 1996 is probably the most famous cold case homicide on the books at the Boulder Police Department, but there are several others which also remain unsolved. Paul Moilanen was found in March 2007 at a local campsite; his skull was fractured and investigators consider his death a homicide. His killer has not been found.

The oldest cold case murder (in recent memory) was the execution-style shooting of 22-year-old Sid Wells in 1983. Wells was a student at the University of Colorado when he was found dead by his brother at Wells' apartment in Boulder's Spanish Towers condominium complex. Wells had been shot in the back of the head with a shotgun and Wells' roommate, Thayne Smika, was the main suspect.

The case received national attention because Wells was dating actor Robert Redford's daughter, Shauna, at the time.

Police arrested Smika about two months after the shooting. Detectives were able to connect shotgun shells found at the murder scene to a gun belonging to Smika. However, because of issues created by a deal made by then-district attorney Alex Hunter (in which a grand jury would not indict Smika), Smika

was set free and has been on the run since 1986. Police don't know where Smika lives, and detectives continue to follow up on leads and investigate the case.

Fast forward to January 2011: Boulder police, with the help of new district attorney Stan Garnett, issued a warrant for Smika's arrest. Through another, separate warrant, investigators were also able to search phone records belonging to Smika's family members, who claim to have no idea where he is.

Smika will face first degree murder charges if and when he is arrested.

Deputy Chief Dave Hayes was a detective at the time of Sid Wells' murder in the early 1980's and nearly 28 years later, he is still actively involved in the case. "I'm the only detective left who was here when it happened, and I need to carry on. I bring a history to the investigation, and it's the right thing to do," said Deputy Chief Hayes.

The Boulder County District Attorney's Office honored the deputy chief with the 2011 Distinguished Service Award. According to a letter the DA's office sent to Deputy Chief Hayes, he was chosen because of "his tireless pursuit of justice for homicide victim Sid Wells and the remarkable compassion that

you showed his family." DC Hayes has kept in touch with the Wells family since the homicide in 1983.

DC Hayes believes the case is solvable, especially with so many major advances in technology.

Technology isn't the only thing that helps bring cold cases to a close. Sometimes, it's a matter of reorganizing case files and looking at them with a fresh perspective. That's what local historian and cold case researcher Silvia Pettem brings to the table when she volunteers in the Boulder Police Department's Detective Unit. Pettem has authored more than a dozen books and has become a nationally-recognized "go to" person for cold case investigators. At BPD, she focuses on cold missing persons cases.

Pettem also works on the Sid Wells case, using a combination of the latest Internet resources along with what she calls "old fashioned archival and newspaper research."

"If I had my life to live over again, I would be a detective," said Pettem. "I have admiration and respect for my coworkers and am honored to be given the opportunity to help make a difference."

Pettem has made a difference. She helped identify the victim of a 1954 homicide in Boulder and now that victim – Dorothy Gay Howard – has a gravestone to mark her final resting place in Boulder's Columbia Cemetery. For decades, the grave was only marked by a stone that was inscribed, "Jane Doe, April 1954, age about 20 years."

Pettem first noticed the grave during an autumn walk through the Columbia Cemetery. She was there as part of the cemetery's first historical gravesite tour, where local history buffs portrayed some of the cemetery's most famous residents. (Pettem was playing the part of Mary Rippon, the University of Colorado's first female professor. Scandalously, Rippon had a secret marriage and a secret child).

As Pettem wandered the cemetery getting ready for the tour, her curiosity was piqued by the Jane Doe gravestone. In her research, she learned that Jane Doe was a young woman who

was found by a couple of University of Colorado students hiking in Boulder Canyon. The woman's battered body had been there for days, and although the body was not far from the road, it was nearly impossible to see. Jane Doe remained a mystery for more than 50 years.

As Pettem started looking into the case, she came up with the names of potential victims. Ultimately, Jane Doe's body was exhumed and her DNA was compared to a surviving sister, after a great-niece came forward with suspicions that her great-aunt was Jane Doe. She was, and the family member was identified as Dorothy Gay Howard, who had disappeared from Phoenix in the fall of 1953 when she was just 17 years old.

Howard's grave is now marked with a new gravestone, in combination with the old, with the victim's own name. Pettem was honored in 2011 with the Historic Preservation Award from the City of Boulder Landmarks Board for her work on the Dorothy Gay Howard Gravestone Reconstruction. With funds donated from the community, Pettem had a memorial bench constructed nearby.



Homicide suspect Thayne Smika (mug shot) and Smika age-progression sketch



Deputy Chief Dave Hayes, June Menger (Sid Wells' mother) and Chief Mark Beckner at Distinguished Service Award ceremony



Memorial bench at the gravesite of "Jane Doe"

