



**Georgia Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators
Public Relations Committee
Media Report**

FEBRUARY 2009

Two Shot at Campus Quad

24 Year Old Suspect in Custody

Online Editor

Issue date: 1/28/09 **Section:** News

This morning at approximately 2:00 am, there was a shooting at the Campus Quad Apartments, which are located on Columbia Drive, approximately 2 miles north of the Campus. The shootings took place at a party attended by West Georgia students.

No students were injured, but one individual died at the scene and another was wounded and transported to Tanner Medical Center then transported by Life Flight to Atlanta, where he is in critical but stable condition.

The City of Carrollton Police, assisted by University Police responded to the scene and have located a number of witnesses to the incident.

Traveris Wilson, 24, was arrested shortly after the shooting, and was later charged with murder.

A number of students were present during the shooting and need to be aware of the counseling services available on campus.

If you or someone you know needs to speak with a counselor, please call either Health Services at 678-839-6452 or Student Development at 678-839-6428. There is no charge for these services and they are confidential.

Thanks to the University Police for helping us to keep students informed of this matter. Readers may check next week's issue of The West Georgian for a full report.

The West Georgian urges students to call the police during loud altercations before they get out of control.

This story is developing.



<http://media.www.thewestgeorgian.com/media/storage/paper523/news/2009/01/28/News/Two-Shot.At.Campus.Quad-3606343.shtml>

UGA to sit out emergency drill

Jan. 16 activation tested readiness

By Lee Shearer | lee.shearer@onlineathens.com | Story updated at 10:59 pm on 2/2/2009

The University of Georgia will not test its campuswide alert system Wednesday as institutions and governments across the state conduct a tornado drill.

Emergency workers essentially tested the system early on Jan. 16, when they accidentally activated the system, sending out messages to about 50,000 people, said Steve Harris, head of UGA's Office of Security and Emergency Preparedness.

On Wednesday, students and workers will receive old-fashioned signals of a weather emergency from tornado sirens, NOAA Weather Radio and the local radio and TV stations.

Tornado sirens all over Athens are scheduled to blare sometime between 9 a.m. and noon Wednesday as part of the annual drill during Severe Weather Awareness Week.

The Athens-Clarke Emergency Management Agency will activate the siren system, which includes three sirens on the UGA campus. If actual bad weather threatens Wednesday, the test will be delayed until Friday.

Normally, a dispatcher in the UGA Police Department would activate UGAAlert as part of Wednesday's test, and the system would make 70,000 phone calls, and send 15,000 text messages and 70,000 e-mails.

The emergency message that went out to most UGA workers and students about 6 a.m. Jan. 16 should have gone out only to members of a UGA emergency team that responds to possible chemical spills, according to UGA Police Chief Jimmy Williamson.

Instead, the message got through within minutes to nearly 90 percent of the subscribers to the system- a good success rate, Harris said.

A worker in UGA's Driftmier Hall spotted what looked like a mist rising from a chemical reaction, but was really just steam escaping from a cracked pipe, the emergency team discovered. About 350 people asked to have their names removed from the alert system's roll afterward, apparently annoyed at the early morning false alarm, Harris said.

But the system did work properly Jan. 16 - unlike the last time the system was used, during an August tornado drill.

In the August test, people in the UGAAlert system should have begun receiving messages seconds after the National Weather Service issued the test signal.

But two separate problems delayed the first messages for 13 minutes.

Originally published in the Athens Banner-Herald on Tuesday, February 03, 2009

http://onlineathens.com/stories/020309/uga_384088862.shtml

Break in VSU fires case

By Johnna Pinholster

February 02, 2009 10:40 pm

— VALDOSTA — An arrest has been made in connection with a series of small fires at a Valdosta State University residence hall.

Early Monday morning, two fires were contained before they could cause cosmetic damage to Langdale Hall, President Dr. Patrick Schloss said.

“The fires were fairly minimal,” Schloss said. “Each were observed before they set off smoke detectors.”

In November 2008 and on Jan. 29, a total of nine fires have been reported at Langdale Hall. The incidents occurring on consecutive days in November forced the university to tighten hall security.

Students entering Langdale Hall between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. must have a student ID, Schloss said.

Carded and logged in at a central desk, students swipe their ID card to use the elevator. They are logged in again upon reaching their floor.

Stairwells can be used to go downstairs, but the elevator is the only access to go upstairs, Schloss said.

A university police officer stationed at Langdale Hall employs police assistants to make nightly foot patrols on the floors.

This week, technicians will install limited video cameras for surveillance.

The fires have caused evacuations of the residence hall, but Schloss said the fires were a nuisance rather than a structural or safety threat.

A \$10,000 reward for information regarding the fires is still being offered by the university.

The 450-bed Langdale Hall serves mostly female students, with one floor reserved for males. The residence hall is scheduled for renovations next year.

University officials are not releasing the identity of the individual arrested in connection with the residence hall fires, stating that this is an ongoing investigation.

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Langdale Hall on the Valdosta State University main campus was victimized by arson this past weekend.

http://www.valdostadailytimes.com/local/local_story_033223924.html

Bike Thefts Increase Since Winter Break

By [Tasha Posid](#) Posted: 02/02/2009

Many Emory students have become victims of bicycle theft since returning from winter break, with nine thefts occurring within the last two weeks, according to Emory Police Department reports.

Bicycle thefts tend to occur just after major breaks on campus, such as winter, spring and summer breaks, according to Lt. Cheryl Elliott of EPD.

“We traditionally see, as do all college campuses, an increase in bike thefts over Christmas break,” Elliott said. “We also experience an increase during spring break, although we do usually lose very few at the beginning of the school year.”

EPD works with MARTA, Georgia Tech and Georgia State University throughout the year to determine any increase in bicycle thefts in those location. EPD has repeatedly found that the rate of bike thefts increases around breaks at those locations as well, but lowers as the semester continues.

“It is unusual to last this long into the first month of the semester,” Elliot said of the rash of bicycle thefts. “But it also depends on the success rate of the perpetrators. If they’re successful, they continue to take advantage of bikes that are left.”

There have been nine reported cases of bicycle theft since the beginning of the semester, and three cases have been reported in the past week.

A 21-year-old student called EPD on Jan. 24 at 3:50 p.m. to report that someone had just stolen her bicycle from outside of the Dobbs University Center. The student stated that she had parked her white Bianchi mountain bicycle outside of the DUC and returned two minutes later. She observed a white male subject with brown hair riding the bicycle away from the DUC. She chased him until he reached Clifton Road, at which point the student called EPD. They were not able to locate the individual or the bicycle.

Another student, 18, called EPD on Jan. 24 to report that someone stole a Trek 7000-series mountain bicycle from outside of the Woodruff P.E. Center sometime between Jan. 17 at 3 p.m. and Jan. 24 at 12 p.m. The student further stated that the bicycle had not been secured to the bicycle rack at the location.

Someone also stole a \$300 bicycle from outside of the Woodruff Residential Center. A 19-year-old male student reported that someone stole his bicycle from the rear of the building sometime between Jan. 26 at 5 p.m. and Jan. 27 at 7 p.m. The student stated that the bicycle had been secured to the bicycle rack with a chain and lock, but that neither his bicycle nor the chain was at the location when he returned. He did not know his bike’s serial number.

The other five cases of bicycle thefts occurred at Woodruff Residential Center, Harris Hall, Candler Library, Trimble Hall and the DUC.

Elliott says that there are two ways for students to prevent their bicycle from being stolen.

“The first thing is to have a good lock,” Elliott said and recommended that students use a ‘Kryptonite lock,’ a U-shaped lock that is harder to break than ordinary cable locks.

“Cable locks are easy to remove from bikes,” Elliott said. “In the past six years, we’ve only had one bike stolen that had a U-lock.”

Elliott also encourages students to register their bicycles with EPD by calling 404-727-BIKE or by visiting the EPD station in the North Decatur Building. Students who register their bicycle with EPD will have their bicycle’s serial number recorded and will receive a decal for their bicycle.

EPD offers several other prevention programs for students, including Operation ID, tabletop discussions around campus and opportunities to register bicycles with the National Bike Registry.

—Contact [Tasha Posid](#).

<http://www.emorywheel.com/detail.php?n=26487>

Suspect in VSU fires identified

Resident assistant charged with first degree arson

Johnna Pinholster

The Valdosta Daily Times

VALDOSTA —

Published February 04, 2009 12:12 am - A search of the booking records at Lowndes County Jail revealed that it was a student and resident assistant who was arrested Monday in connection with a series of fires at Valdosta State University.

A search of the booking records at Lowndes County Jail revealed that it was a student and resident assistant who was arrested Monday in connection with a series of fires at Valdosta State University.

Cherrish Amber Prickett, 19, has been charged with four counts of first degree arson, according to Lowndes County Jail records.

Prickett was arrested by Valdosta State University police Monday afternoon. She is listed as a fifth floor resident assistant at Langdale Hall, according to the university Web site.

From November of 2008 until Feb. 2, a total of nine fires have been reported at Langdale Hall.

Valdosta State University President Patrick Schloss said that the student will not be allowed to return to the university campus to attend classes or enter the residence hall.

“We are 100 percent confident, based on the work that we did leading up to the apprehension, that the suspect is responsible for the fires since the holidays,” Schloss said.

Valdosta State University police and officials will continue to look into whether or not others had knowledge of the suspect’s actions or participated in the other fires, he said. All fires have

been minimal. The last two, which occurred early Monday morning, were contained before causing any cosmetic damage.

The university has enacted a variety of security measures to ensure the safety of Langdale Hall residents since November.

Students entering the residence hall between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. are required to swipe their ID card to gain access, log in with the front desk and again sign in with a resident assistant once reaching their floor.

Motion detectors are fully functional in the residence hall. Card swipes for elevator access and security cameras will be operational by Monday of next week, Schloss said.

A university police officer stationed on the first floor of Langdale Hall monitors the front entrance, and police assistants make nightly foot patrols on the floors.

Technicians are scheduled to install limited video cameras for surveillance near the elevator this week. A \$10,000 reward for information regarding the fires is still being offered by the university.

With 450 beds, Langdale Hall's first floor is reserved for male students, with the remaining four floors housing female residents.

http://www.valdostadailytimes.com/local/local_story_035001220.html

Resident advisor is arrested for arson at Valdosta State

Posted: Feb 3, 2009 06:08 PM

Updated: Feb 3, 2009 06:08 PM

By Robin Jedlicka -
February 3, 2009

VALDOSTA, GA (WALB) -

A Valdosta State University resident advisor is in jail tonight charged with arson. 19 year old Cherrish Prickett is charged with four felony counts of first degree arson.

Police say she set nine fires in Langdale Hall, where she works on the fifth floor. The two most recent were yesterday.

She has confessed to the crimes, and is being held without bond at Lowndes County Jail.

<http://www.walb.com/Global/story.asp?S=9782592>

Safety still a concern for those on campus

Number of police reports made on campus by GSU students alarmingly high

By: Sarah Balter

Posted: 2/3/09

For a number of students on campus, the university atmosphere is generally a safe one. The GSU Police are often seen patrolling the streets, and crowded university facilities seem secure despite daily throngs of students and staff members. Students often leave backpacks, cell phones, books, and bicycles unattended for a short time, trusting in the assurances of a safe campus environment. Students, professors, and administrators park vehicles in any of the university parking lots, paying good money to store these cars securely in large, solid, and secure parking enclosures. Students leave their dormitories in the mornings, certain that their households remain intact each day until they get home, and many walk around alone on campus after dark, exposing their iPod and iPhone cords as they listen to music along the way.

But a detailed analysis of the Georgia State Police Department blotter, updated daily and available online at <http://mailbox.gsu.edu/pipermail/safety-health/>, indicates that the GSU campus and these once-considered safe areas may not be all that secure. The only crimes which merit campus-wide notification via posted flyers are those which involve violence, mugging, and gun-related crimes-those that aren't brought to student attention, however, occur on a very daily basis throughout the campus.

"I'm very surprised at the number of reports issued per day, and very surprised at the kinds of reports," said Junior Christina Hartlage after perusing the blotter. "I didn't realize theft was so rampant on campus, especially in the parking decks. I thought they were monitored."

These thefts include reports of a number of personal items, including one stolen vehicle, two bicycles, three dormitory break-ins, one locker break-in, and stolen wallets and laptops, amongst others. Reports for the week prior add another stolen bicycle and one robbery at the University Commons involving the battery of a GSU female student. Reports for last week alone detail 16 occurrences of the same crime.

Dorm break-ins at the University Commons and the University Lofts are also common occurrences, sometimes involving violent altercations between GSU students and non-GSU criminal trespassers. Crime statistics based on these online blotter reports show that the parking lots, bike racks, dormitories, classrooms, laboratories, and common areas are all vulnerable to trespassing and theft.

Both vehicle break-ins last week were at the N-Parking deck, but reports of vehicle break-ins at any given student/staff/campus residence parking lot show up on the blotter twice to three times weekly, if not more. More patrols of parking lots and safer, more exposed locations for bike racks might raise the standard of safety in these areas; many theft, trespassing, and even violent crimes, however, could be avoided with an increase in student and faculty awareness.

The GSU Police, the largest university force in Georgia and the only campus police department in the state to have both National Accreditation and be State Certified, make an effort to share security

resources with students, including promoting the self-defense classes available through the Recreation Center at new student orientation seminars, and have continually encouraged students to be smart with their belongings and themselves on campus.

"Georgia State University provides the largest campus police department in Georgia to help insure your stay at the University is enjoyable, productive and safe," says their website. "With your help there is no doubt that this can be achieved."

The Department's efforts have been felt, to a certain extent, but the number of thefts and assaults that happen on campus -- as made evident by the blotter - is enough to say that their reach isn't quite fair enough.

Imani Mandela, sophomore and triple major in African American studies, English, and Broadcast Journalism, is shocked by what she saw reported weekly on the webpage.

"The last few semesters have felt fairly safe," says Mandela. "All of the jackings [muggings] that I've heard about have happened to other people, not me, and items stolen out of cars were other people's...[but] yes, [the reports] surprise me.

"There are multiple occurrences of theft every day. It does make me feel less safe about leaving my stuff in a classroom unattended while I take an hour long lunch. Definitely won't do that again!"

Backpacks and laptops are too often left unattended, presenting an open target to thieves; students who walk alone after dark might better deter would-be muggers by walking in groups, and by ensuring that their dorm doors are securely locked each morning before heading to class.

In December 2008 and this past January, several reports of stolen bags were made after students complied with the GSU Bookstore policy that requires that all backpacks be left on shelves outside the store. Changing these policies and those like them could better prevent the reports that show up at the school's station every day.

Also, the GSU website publishes crime reports on campus that are only as current as 2005. Updated information referring to the most current status of crime would be responding to the need for the university to have a greater awareness of the safety of its greatest asset: students, faculty, and general staff.

<http://media.www.gsusignal.com/media/storage/paper924/news/2009/02/03/News/Safety.Still.A.Concern.For.Those.On.Campus-3610272-page3.shtml>

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Our Campus is Safe, but How Safe and for How Long?

By: Katheryn Elie

Posted: 2/4/09

By Katheryn Elie

A&E Editor

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Why do students choose to attend West Georgia? There are several different reasons. From the exceptional academic quality, to the 109 different programs of study (including master, specialist, and doctoral levels), to the many diverse student organizations to participate in, as well as being named by The Princeton Review as "one of the Best Southeastern Colleges and one of America's Best Value Colleges".

UWG is also accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and has numerous prestigious accreditations for many of its other academic programs. The University is also one of twelve U.S. programs that help gifted high school students earn high school and college credit at the same time while living on campus.

Despite recent fee increases, West Georgia still remains extremely affordable compared to other Georgia universities while still providing "Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment". Another great feature of West Georgia is the location. Carrollton was named a "City of Excellence" in Georgia in 2002, and is listed as one of "The 50 Best Small Southern Towns" by Peachtree Publishers in 2001.

This may be why Georgians are flocking to UWG, and contribute to the continuously increasing enrollment. Proving that UWG is the place to be.

However, in the past two years there has been an alarming increase in the rate of crimes. In Spring 2007, there was a rash of violence. Lawrence Webb, a student living in Tyus Hall, was assaulted outside of the dorm by three men. Webb reportedly took out a knife and began cutting and stabbing one of the assailants.

Another student, David Calhoun, was waiting on the lawn for friends at The Fish House directly across the street from campus, when a man from behind threatened him with a straight-edged knife and demanded his wallet. Calhoun luckily had his own knife, and was able to escape from the attacker.

There were also two cases of attempted robberies at Southridge Apartments around the same time.

The first incident occurred at 2:30 a.m. when the victim heard a knock at the front door. When he opened the door, two males rushed in and robbed the victim of his iPod, cell phone, and cash. A black revolver and a silver colored semi-automatic pistol were used instead of a knife.

Last semester there was a "shoot-out" at River Place Apartments, which is less than a mile from campus. It was reported that the gunfire originated from the 200 Building where there was a large party taking

place. Apparently, a conflict arose between two different groups, and multiple guns were pulled. Shots were fired from the balcony and other shots from the parking lot. Luckily the shooters had terrible aim and mainly hit cars.

There was however one victim that was shot in the parking lot. By the time police arrived, many of the suspects had already left, but they were able to locate one shooter and he was charged with reckless conduct and aggravated assault.

Last Christmas Eve, two men were killed and a third was critically wounded in a shooting at a home on Molette Street less than two miles from UWG campus.

Now, at the beginning of this semester there is yet another shooting (details can be found on the front page of this issue). To re-cap (in case laziness has taken hold), there was a shooting early last Friday morning at Campus Quad during a party. Two men were shot, one died, and the other is still in critical condition. There was a suspect that was arrested and is being charged with murder. Also, the victims and the suspects were not UWG students, nor did they live at Campus Quad. This is ironic because the complex's website states that "Campus Quad is a private off-campus student community".

This begins to bring the question of how safe are UWG students? One might think that living in a "student friendly" apartment within walking distance from class would be safe. It provides students with other people going through the same familiar experiences with studying and socializing. How about work out facilities to help keep off that Freshman Fifteen, and a pool to relax in. Even entertainment rooms with big TVs, DVD players, and a pool table where students can enjoy a variety of different activities.

What if there was a student wishing to find a place to live in where his environment was a little less social and a little more quiet? There are a bunch of cheap small houses around the campus to rent that a student could have a little more space, a little more privacy, and a little more quiet time.

Besides, it has to be safe since it is so close to campus. However, if the student is a Freshman or desires to live on campus, there are several different dorms and even the on campus apartments to choose from. A student could choose to share a room, or to have their own, share a bathroom with one other person, or multiple people. There is always something going on, and RA's to provide guidance and wisdom. People are always around, coming and going. There is always something exciting to do.

On-campus living is extremely safe. To get access into an on campus living quarter, a student must have the appropriate activation on their personal ID card, and have a physical key to even get into their bedroom. Especially with all the public safety officers patrolling campus for illegal parkers, there is a great sense of security.

Then how come there are shootings and stabbings occurring in these supposed safe and secure student living places? UWG students should feel safe to sleep, study, and socialize were ever they are on and around campus. Why are murder attempts and killings occurring on the steps of "student-friendly" doors? There has been a constant growth in the severity of these violent acts, starting at knifed muggings, to gun armed robberies, to shootings at parties where people just want to have a good time

and be young.

What's next? Is UWG vulnerable to a version of the Virginia Tech incident on campus? The questions of "what can be done" should be on the lips of every student until something is done, until Carrollton returns to the "City of Excellence" it once was.

<http://media.www.thewestgeorgian.com/media/storage/paper523/news/2009/02/04/Opinion/Our-Campus.Is.Safe.But.How.Safe.And.For.How.Long-3613600.shtml>

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Man tries to rob students downtown

Athens Banner-Herald | Story updated at 10:17 pm on 2/4/2009

Two University of Georgia students left a downtown bar early Wednesday and a ran into a panhandler who pulled a knife when they refused to give him money, Athens-Clarke police said.

Christopher Lee Geiger, 48, allegedly tried to rob the students at the corner of East Clayton Street and College Avenue about 12:20 a.m., police said, but he ran toward the UGA campus when one of the students called 911 on his cell phone.

Campus police caught Geiger near UGA's law school and turned him over to county officers, according to police.

Geiger, a homeless man from Statham, was charged with armed robbery, possession of a weapon on school grounds and panhandling, police said.

Originally published in the Athens Banner-Herald on Thursday, February 05, 2009

http://onlineathens.com/stories/020509/cop_384786870.shtml

Friday, Feb. 06, 2009

Pedestrians struck at Georgia College

By Ashley Tusan Joyner - ajoyner@macon.com

A Georgia College & State University employee suffered injuries Thursday when he was struck by a car while walking in a crosswalk on campus.

Campus police Sgt. Brian English said Zach Kincaid, associate director of communications at the Milledgeville college, was struck by a blue Lincoln Town Car at about 8:30 a.m. on Hancock Street near the Maxwell Student Union.

The driver of the vehicle was making a left turn onto Hancock Street from Clarke Street when she hit Kincaid and brushed another pedestrian, university communications specialist Judy Bailey, said English.

Kincaid was transported to The Medical Center of Central Georgia where he reportedly received treatment for a broken collar bone, English said. Bailey was not harmed in the incident, he said. English said charges are not pending against the driver, who was in town from McDonough.

“We know that she did have the green light,” he said. “But we can’t tell on camera if the protective turn was on or not ... who had the right of way.”

Police have closed their investigation of the vehicle accident, English said.

<http://www.macon.com/198/story/611807.html>

Ten Car Thefts Break Out at Peavine Deck

By [Tasha Posid](#) Posted: 02/05/2009

Ten cars were broken into on the first floor of Peavine Parking Deck on Tuesday within less than one hour, according to Emory Police Department reports.

“All the incidents occurring within the same time are obviously related,” said Lt. Cheryl Elliott of EPD, adding that the incident is under active investigation and that police are following active leads in the case.

The number of vehicle break-ins, or cases of entering auto, has increased since September 2008, according to Elliott, at Emory and elsewhere.

“There are other agencies that are also experiencing an increase, both residential streets and other parking areas,” Elliott said.

Elliott further stated that EPD has notified DeKalb and Decatur police departments of this increase, and that EPD and other agencies are taking precautions against further incidents.

The parking office has placed signs at the entrance of the parking decks warning drivers not to leave valuables in plain sight and Nored security officers have begun leaving notices on windshields of cars that display personal items in plain view.

EPD relies on students and drivers to assist them in preventing this type of incident in the future. Any people or vehicles exhibiting suspicious behavior should be reported to EPD, Elliott said.

Elliott also cautioned drivers to be especially careful during 8 a.m. until 3 or 4 p.m., while most people are in classes, away from their vehicles.

Tuesday's 10 cases of entering auto occurred between 9:40 and 10:30 a.m., according to EPD. A staff member parking his car at the time called EPD to report shattered glass on the ground around several vehicles.

Two students' cars were involved in the incident. A student reported \$200 in damages to his black 1984 Volvo 850. His \$200 Garmin 850 GPS unit had been removed. The other student's car, a beige 2003 Mazda four-door, received \$300 in damages, and a \$150 GPS unit, \$50 worth of poker chips and workout clothes were removed.

A white 1998 Ford F150 truck belonging to a staff member received \$200 in damages. The GPS mount was taken from the console.

Another staff member reported that his gray 2002 GMC pickup truck received \$200 in damage, and that his \$200 iPod Nano and iPod transmitter were missing.

Some small items were stolen from a green 2004 Jeep Liberty, the front window of which was damaged.

The front windshield of a staff member's gray 2003 Ford Expedition was shattered and his \$200 Garmin GPS unit was stolen.

Three other vehicles sustained damages, but no items were missing from them.

—Contact [Tasha Posid](#).

<http://www.emorywheel.com/detail.php?n=26520>

Students should secure items at RAC

Written by Mark Beavers Thursday, 05 February 2009 00:38

An Eagle Alert was issued to students on January 27 in response to recent thefts in and around the RAC area.

The alert stated that “there have been numerous thefts from the RAC area in the past two weeks.”

However, according to CRI Director Gene Sherry, the thefts are not a new problem at the RAC.

“We’ve noticed in the past that we have a little rash of (theft) in the beginning of the semester then it goes down to nothing,” Sherry said.

He said that there have been eight to 12 cases of items, mainly wallets, being taken at the RAC this semester.

Nobody has been caught or charged with taking any of the items from the center yet.

"We have not caught anybody taking something (because it is) hard to do. They are just picking up something that's just lying there," Sherry said.

The high volumes of people using the RAC daily also make tracking thefts difficult. Approximately 4,000 students, faculty and staff use the RAC daily, said Sherry.

Sherry believes there would be fewer thefts if students would be more responsible with their belongings.

"You just can't leave your wallet setting out in public," Sherry said. "When you are in the weight room, there are cubbies that people put their keys and IDs in. Don't."

Sherry noted that the RAC provides lockers for students to put valuables in, there are also signs near cubbies telling students to lock away valuables, and staff often warn students as they enter the RAC that they need to lock away important items.

According to Sherry, new students that are unfamiliar with the RAC are often the victims of theft.

If a student were to notice that his or her belongings were missing, the student should report the missing item to the RAC staff. The RAC staff will then notify public safety so that a report can be filed.

http://www.stp.georgiasouthern.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=550:students-should-secure-items-at-rac&catid=1:local-news&Itemid=53

Identity thefts victimize student wallets

CAITLIN BYRNES

Issue date: 2/10/09 **Section:** [News](#)

Natalie Szlachetka was at a party with a group of people from high school Friday night.

"I felt like I knew everybody," she said.

She had no idea that in this crowd of familiar faces, someone would take advantage of her belongings.

When Szlachetka woke up in the morning she couldn't find her cell phone or wallet. She hadn't thought to check for it the night before, and could not find it anywhere.

She called the bank to find out that her account had been overdrawn, and that she was the victim of Federal Trade Commission fraud.

"I was so surprised because I know I'd never do that to anybody so I didn't think that happened," Szlachetka said in a phone interview Monday afternoon. "I heard of people losing their cards, but not of someone actually using them."

Szlachetka is not alone in being the victim of this growing theft.

According to consumerfraudreport.org, people under 30 make up 25 percent of identity theft victims.

Identity theft is costing Americans billions annually, and growing at an alarming rate, said Jimmy Williamson, Chief of the University Police Department.

"It's one of these things people don't see in the same sense because it's a white collar crime," Williamson said.

Though identity theft through credit cards is common, identity theft can occur in a variety of other ways - stolen checks, accounts opened in another person's name, amounts added to a bill and false investments.

Internet auction fraud was by far the No. 1 form of identity theft according to identitytheftsecurity.com, making up 44.5 percent of complaints.

"Students are so trusting of individuals," Williamson said. "Just because you are on a college campus doesn't mean a criminal element won't come into the environment."

He said in on-campus cases, hall mates will sometimes steal credit cards or checks that are lying out in plain view.

"It is the same as preventing car thefts," Williamson said. "Don't leave stuff out."

Williamson also said to be aware of any unsolicited questioning of your personal information, especially if it is online or on the phone.

"We live in a society that wants that freebie. That plays into the hands of predators," Williamson said.

He warned about giving information to online scams about jury duty, winning money or an early stimulus check.

"Just don't do it," he said.

Szlachetka found out a few students from Georgia College & State University - whom she hardly knew - took her wallet. She spotted the students on a videotape at Choo Choo, a restaurant, and Racetrack, a gas station, where they had spent her money.

The parents of the offenders have repaid Szlachetka for what she lost - \$25 in spending, \$100 in gift cards and \$180 for her stolen cell phone - and she has dropped the felony charges. However, she said, she won't forget the incident in the future.

May Advincula, a University alumna whose credit card was stolen in October, said the theft made her

feel financially unprotected.

"I felt violated, my personal information was all out and there and I wasn't safe at all," Advincula said in a phone interview Monday. "Now I had to sit there and worry about someone stealing my identity. What would have happened if they had cleaned out my bank account?"

Advincula's account is still on a credit watch, and she is wary about making online purchases.

Williamson offered a few simple suggestions for how students can protect themselves from identity theft:

- Have a special credit card for online purchases that has a low limit.
- Save receipts and check them. Sometimes people add extra tip without the consumer ever knowing.
- Balance your checkbook. Predators know college students are unlikely to do this, making students an easy target.
- Use a fake date of birth on questionnaires. If predators have one piece of your information, it makes it easier to get others.
- Use a locked mailbox and shred personal information - such as pre approved credit cards - when done with it. Trash and mailboxes are the two easiest places for predators to get information, Williamson said.
- Check your credit history annually. You are entitled to one annual report, not score, each year. Look for a large number of inquires - it could be a sign that someone is trying to get into your account. A good Web site to visit is annualcreditcheck.com.

<http://media.www.redandblack.com/media/storage/paper871/news/2009/02/10/News/Identity.Thefts.Victimize.Student.Wallets-3620811.shtml>

Two GCSU faculty struck by vehicle in front of Sodexo

By: [Lee Sandow](#)

Posted: 1/30/09

Updated at 3:12 p.m., Feb. 5

Developing story

For the second time in as many weeks, a car struck a pedestrian in the Clarke Street and Hancock Street intersection.

Zach Kincaid of University Communications was struck by a car at approximately 8:30 this morning as he crossed at the crosswalk in front of Sodexo. He was taken from the scene by ambulance to the Medical Center in Macon.

It was determined that he had a broken clavicle, which is part of the collar bone. He was taken to an orthopedic surgeon for treatment.

Judy Bailey, also of University Communications, was also injured on the scene. Though the car did not strike her, it's impact knocked Kincaid into her. Her injuries were not severe; she drove herself to the Medical Center to meet with Kincaid.

At the hospital, she had her shoulder x-rayed due to some discomfort in her shoulder.

Saundra Golden, the driver of the car that hit Kincaid and Bailey, was making a left turn from Clarke Street when the accident occurred. According to Sgt. Michael Baker at GCSU Public Safety, Golden was very cooperative at the scene of the accident.

"They stopped immediately once they found out they had hit someone," Baker said.

Golden is not a GCSU student or faculty member. She claimed that she simply did not see anyone in the intersection.

Public Safety reviewed the footage from a security camera near the intersection. It was determined that Kincaid and Bailey were walking with the light, and the driver was thus at fault.

Freshman Chloe Jenkins was struck in the same intersection on Jan. 26 when a driver on Hancock Street turned left onto Clarke Street. She was not seriously injured.

Tim Vacula, photographer for University Communications, was also struck by a vehicle last month, Bryan Jackson, Director of University Communications, said. Vacula was not injured in the incident.

Jackson sent an E-mail out this morning urging students and faculty, as well as drivers, to be careful in that intersection.

"Once again, everyone is urged to use extreme caution when crossing this - or any - street," Jackson said in the E-mail. "Although there are crosswalks and traffic signals, it is important to remain alert at all times and to realize that an oncoming driver may not be paying attention. This is especially important for any pedestrian who may be using a cell phone or iPod, or who may otherwise also be distracted."

GCSU Public Safety is currently planning an enforcement campaign at the intersection, which will fine drivers who are not proceeding the way they should. It would also issue citations to pedestrians who did not follow the crosswalk signals.

<http://media.www.gcsunade.com/media/storage/paper299/news/2009/01/30/CampusNews/Two-Gcsu.Faculty.Struck.By.Vehicle.In.Front.Of.Sodexo-3615426.shtml?refeature=recentlycommentedstories>

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Governor appoints ABAC chief of police to executive council.

Staff reports

TIFTON —

Published February 12, 2009 11:45 am - Gov. Sonny Perdue announced today that he appointed ABAC Police Chief Bryan A. Golden, 45, to serve on the state's Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council. Golden has held his ABAC position since 1992. He is a member of the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police and the Georgia Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators. Golden earned a bachelor's degree from North Georgia College, a master's degree from Columbus State University and is a graduate of the Georgia Law Enforcement Command College, Columbus State University. He and his wife, Cathy, have two children.

http://www.tiftongazette.com/local/local_story_043115016.html

Pedestrian Safety a major concern

[Kyle Collins](#)

Issue date: 2/13/09 Section: [Campus News](#)

Two crosswalk incidences in two weeks have shaken the campus community. In hopes of prevention and education, GCSU Police began a pedestrian safety enforcement campaign at the intersection of Clarke and Hancock street on Monday.

Officers present at the site of the recent accidents handed out pamphlets to pedestrians and motorists. The booklet provided tips on who has the right of way in scenarios at crosswalks with and without traffic signals.

Justin Gaines, coordinator of environmental health and occupational safety (EPOS), said some drivers don't know the laws and many pedestrians think they always have the right of way. A lack of attention contributes to traffic mishaps as well.

"A driver will be on the cell phone trying to take care of everything, but driving and vice versa the pedestrian is trying to cross the crosswalk while on the phone, listening to the iPod or talking to their friends," Gaines said. "They're just not paying attention to what's around them."

Public Safety called a meeting with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) concerning the issues at the Clarke-Hancock street intersection. This Tuesday Gaines spoke with the GDOT representative about alternative crosswalk safety options.

The idea of raised crosswalks gets thrown out because Hancock Street lies on GA Highway 49, which brings tractor trailer trucks. The GDOT would never agree to alter the crosswalks based on the heavy vehicle traffic.

One workable option for the intersection is audible pedestrian signals. Originally designed to assist the visually impaired, these systems talk you through signal changes and provide a ticking

countdown representing the crossing time limit.

"We are going to try and get that implemented to make it as easy as possible for a pedestrian to know exactly what to do," Gaines said. "I'm a big advocate of it, and I'm going to push as hard as I can to see that it happens."

Senior criminal justice major John Butler said safety is a joint effort between drivers and pedestrians. Butler said increased punishment for violators would help.

"I think patrol should be set up by the bicycle cops and cite pedestrians who walk without the correct signal. In addition, motorists are supposed to remain stopped for the entire time that a pedestrian is in the crosswalk," Butler said. "A couple months of ticket giving will curb the carelessness."

The last few accidents left the motorist at fault. GCSU's media relations manager Judy Bailey said beefed up enforcement by the school and city could make a difference. Bailey and her co-worker Zach Kincaid were struck in last week's incident.

"I always knew there was a possibility, but I was shocked at what happened on Thursday," Bailey said. "Drivers have to obey the laws."

In the Governor's Office of Highway Safety's annual Highway Safety Plan (HSP) released in January, the reduction of pedestrian related fatalities stands out as a top priority goal for 2009. Trend statistics in the HSP taken from 2000 through 2006 total all types of pedestrian injuries related to motor vehicle collisions to 14,525. Injury rates remain the highest among the 15 to 19 year old age group.

The HSP pinpoints the cause to highway design and road construction focused on efficient traffic flow instead of safe pedestrian movement.

Education, changes in signal technology and stricter traffic enforcement compose GCSU's current strategic campaign against these alarming numbers.

Anyone wanting to find more information on driver and pedestrian safety laws can access electronic forms on the EPOS Web site info.gcsu.edu/intranet/epos.

<http://media.www.gcsunade.com/media/storage/paper299/news/2009/02/13/CampusNews/Pedestrian.Safety.A.Major.Concern-3628578.shtml>

Public Safety patrols in brand new Chargers

[Matthew Kuhl](#)

Issue date: 2/13/09 **Section:** [Campus News](#)

If you thought you saw an unfamiliar police car patrolling the streets of Milledgeville, you're not wrong. The GCSU Public Safety Department recently added two 2009 Dodge Chargers to its motor pool.

According to Deputy Chief Major Joe Grant, the Department had requested the cars in March 2008, but they only entered into service three weeks ago.

The cars cost about \$29,000 each, and Maj. Grant said that Public Safety looked for ways to economize wherever possible. One problem, said Maj. Grant, was that Public Safety had used mostly Ford Crown Victorias, and many of their old equipment would not fit the Chargers. Grant noted that the new Chargers used older dashboard cameras, since new systems would have cost about \$5000.

Maj. Grant said that the department had attempted to find used Chargers, but was forced to buy new ones, since the Charger model has only been on the police market for three years. In fact, the original order had been for 2008 Chargers, but by the time the manufacturer was able to fill the order, only 2009 Chargers were available. In spite of that, Maj. Grant said, the department paid the same price that it would have paid for the 2008 models.

One reason for acquiring new cars during a budget crisis, according to Maj. Grant, is fuel economy.

"Our Crown Vics only get about eight or nine miles to the gallon," said Grant. "The Chargers are supposed to get 16 miles to the gallon, but even if they only get a few more, that will be a great savings in terms of fuel costs."

Automotive Web site motortrend.com, in a profile of the 2009 Charger, said that Dodge had indeed improved fuel efficiency and made the cars more comfortable, which is an important feature since officers may spend hours in the car at a time.

Officer Scott Lance confirmed the greater fuel efficiency and comfort and suggested another upside to the Charger.

"It gives us more of a police presence. It's got more a dynamic look to it. It's more of a professional look, in my opinion....I've been driving Crown Vics since I started in 1998, and when we got these Chargers, I was overwhelmed by the difference in the body styles," Lance said. "I've seen the State Patrol driving them before, and when they would go by you, you just knew that that was a dynamic presence that they had and you wanted it for yourself."

According to state law, said Maj. Grant, the cars will be required to be used for 10 years or as long as they are serviceable, and he hopes that the cars, which have not been on the market for very long, will last that long.

"In our business, we have to keep up with technology, and right now it even looks a little more critical, with the budget crunch being so heavily affected right now. And it looks like we just bought a brand new car, when in essence, the cars were purchased eleven months ago," Grant said. "But things like that are necessary, and we've always bought used in the past, but we're trying these out."



Media Credit: [Drake Simons](#)

Public Safety purchased two brand-new 2009 Dodge Chargers this year. Public Safety was mostly driving Ford Crown Victorias and has purchased the new rides for \$ 29,000 a piece.

<http://media.www.gcsunade.com/media/storage/paper299/news/2009/02/13/CampusNews/Public.Safety.Patrols.In.Brand.New.Chargers-3628604.shtml>

GCSU revamps emergency plan

Issue date: 2/13/09 **Section:** [Campus News](#)

Have you ever wondered what would happen if an armed intruder came into your class? What if there was a chemical spill during lab? What would happen if one of your classmates had a seizure during an exam? The answers to those questions and more are in the Emergency Preparedness and Occupational Safety Guide, EPOS for short.

Justin Gaines, coordinator of environmental health and occupational safety, recently reworked the existing informational flip book into a 30 page detailed document with a corresponding laminated guide for quick and easy reference.

"I wanted to publish the whole thing and give a 5x8 three ring binder to everyone, but the budget would not allow it because it was fairly expensive," said Gaines. "So what I ended up doing was posting that online and then I created a guide, just a quick reference of eight different things that may occur on campus."

Mailed to all members of the faculty and staff of GCSU, the brightly colored guide references eight different possible on-campus emergencies. The four most common, Gaines said, are fire, severe weather, chemical spills and medical emergencies.

"Severe weather is the most prominent thing that would happen on campus," Gaines said. "Fire is always a problem whenever you have a lot of people in the building. Medical emergencies, we answer those just about every week. Not many people know what to do in a chemical spill, but we have chemicals on campus for which people need to know what to do."

The four additional emergencies included on the quick reference guide are bomb threats, armed intruder, utility failure and psychological crisis or substance abuse. In reference to the psychological crisis and substance abuse, Gaines said that GCSU wouldn't have the students they have today ten years ago due to the advancements in medicine.

"Medicine has advanced so much to where students can now be stabilized through medicine,"

said Gaines. "But we're seeing an increase in psychological crisis and substance abuse through medication, because these students may have been on this medicine through their high school years but decide they want a fresh start freshman year, choosing to stop taking their medications."

As far as armed intruders and bomb threats, Gaines is happy to say that GCSU has yet to run into that situation but considering the "hot topic" these situations have become, Gaines said that it is still very important to equip every faculty and staff member with the necessary steps to keep them and their students safe.

The EPOS guide also includes page citations that corresponds each situation to the more detailed explanation online at <http://info.gcsu.edu/intranet/epos>. The original thirty page EPOS is designed in a question format with just about any situation you can imagine happening including a rare Georgia earthquake.

But how much did this all cost? The guide is a full color, laminated reference sheet and laminated for durability, according to Gaines.

"This was about \$1.50 a page but with 1000 copies it was \$1500," said Gaines. "The way I wanted to do it in its entirety, it was going to cost around \$5000. \$5.00 per person. Ultimately, I'm hoping that next year we'll have the funds for this. What I recommend everyone doing is just keeping it close by. Mainly for the phone number, but also to read it and familiarize yourself with it."

Ultimately, Gaines hopes that everyone, faculty, staff and students, can become familiar with the EPOS whether through the guide or through the Web site.

"I tell everybody Action is quicker than reaction," said Gaines. "I always recommend that everyone put our number in their phone which is 478-445-4400."

<http://media.www.gcsunade.com/media/storage/paper299/news/2009/02/13/CampusNews/Gcsu-Revamps.Emergency.Plan-3628616.shtml>

Chi Psi outside rule of University police

CAITLIN BYRNES

Issue date: 2/18/09 **Section:** [News](#)

Chi Psi fraternity may skirt police investigation of alcohol-related incidents due to a loophole in jurisdiction. Chi Psi was named in two police reports this weekend as a drinking location by two underage offenders.

Located off-campus on South Milledge Avenue, the fraternity is not considered within the authority of University police.

"The thing is, my jurisdiction comes from the state of Georgia lawmakers. I only handle what's the property of the University," University Police Chief Jimmy Williamson said in a Tuesday phone interview.

"Those fraternities that are off campus are handled by the Athens-Clarke County police."

"It has nothing to do with if we want to investigate or not," Williamson said.

If the University police had jurisdiction over the off-campus fraternity houses, it would have precedence since it is a state agency, while Athens-Clarke County is local.

"It's just where you happen to live," Williamson said.

However, the ACC police said investigations beyond the "obvious" arrests at fraternity houses would not be furthered.

"We don't do any investigating to the fraternity or sorority whether it's on or off campus," Lt. Mike Tyndell of ACC police said in a Tuesday phone interview. "When we find out there's been a violation, it is turned over to the [Interfraternity Council]. They address the chartership of the fraternity."

Tyndell said the arresting officer would not go to the scene of alleged drinking, but the administration department could follow up. He mentioned he "was under the impression that was something UGA followed up on."

When asked if any police action would or could be taken against fraternity individuals providing alcohol, Tyndell said it was not pragmatic.

"I suppose if we could determine at the time who was handing out alcohol, then we could hold someone accountable, but in most instances you are talking about a party and where you don't know who is individually responsible," he said.

Chi Psi is smaller than most fraternities, with only 11 listed members.

"I'm not going to second-guess anything done at the scene that night," Tyndell said, when asked why the smaller scene was not investigated. "[The officers] wouldn't go to the scene. The department may follow up, but the arresting officer would not. That would come from administration department."

The Athens-Clarke County police could not confirm a criminal investigation is being done on Chi Psi.

However, the Office of Greek Life is looking into the allegations.

"We are reviewing the police reports and will conduct an investigation to see if the chapter is at fault," said Wes Fugate the Greek Life adviser to IFC, in a Monday phone interview.

Fugate said all chapters, regardless of house location, are investigated through Greek Life.

University student Patrick Dever of University Judiciary could not say if Chi Psi would be under investigation by that University body.

"I don't know that information, and if I did I would not be privileged to release it," Dever said

Chi Psi President Richie Kaiser declined to comment on the arrests and party in a Tuesday interview.

Some University fraternities have been investigated in the past for underage use and possession or distribution of alcohol to minors. On-campus fraternity Phi Gamma Delta was placed on probation last June after the fraternity violated the University's Social Events Policy at a party hosted in April. The fraternity is restricted on hosting events involving alcohol until June 2009.

<http://media.www.redandblack.com/media/storage/paper871/news/2009/02/18/News/Chi-Psi.Outside.Rule.Of.University.Police-3634867.shtml>

AASU appoints new police chief

[Savannah Morning News](#) | Thursday, February 19, 2009 at 12:30 am

Armstrong Atlantic State University has appointed Wayne R. Willcox as chief of the campus police.

Willcox has 35 years of experience in police management, most recently as chief of the Piqua (Ohio) Police Department from 2005 until last year, according to a university news release.

Willcox joined the Piqua department in 1972 as an officer. In subsequent years, he was promoted to sergeant and then lieutenant.

Willcox trained and studied at a number of public service academies, and he earned a master's degree in criminal justice administration at Tiffin University in Ohio. He has a bachelor's degree in the same discipline from the University of Findlay in Ohio.

At Armstrong, Willcox will oversee the police department, reporting directly to John McGuthry, the university's assistant to the president and chief information officer.



Wayne R. Willcox (Photo: [Savannah Morning News](#))

<http://savannahnow.com/node/673973>

Ayers Cancellation Upheld

Written by Chris Buchanan

Tuesday, 17 February 2009 21:44

Proponents of Bill Ayers' visit to campus made a final plea to President Grube on Monday when they brought in the results of an online petition for consideration at a faculty senate meeting.

Ayers' March 2 appearance was canceled last week following an estimated \$13,000 in security costs that were brought to the attention of Vice President of Student Affairs Teresa Thompson by the Department of Public Safety.

Late last week, Professor Michelle Haberland began circulating an online petition in hopes of shifting the university decision.

According to Haberland, the petition had approximately 261 signatures as of the meeting time at 4 p.m. During the meeting she urged that the university reconsider the visit.

Administrative officials including Grube and Thompson stood behind the university decision and reiterated that it was in no way politically influenced.

Grube also mentioned a recent quote from a faculty member's e-mail that appeared on Chronical.com -- the website for "The Chronicle for Higher Education" -- calling the security argument a "sham."

Students, parents, alumni and community members expressed their disapproval for Ayers' appearance at www.GADaily.com and in multiple Facebook groups last week bringing some to ask whether the decision was influenced by public opinion.

Grube said that he had received no contact from any member of the Board of Regents, the state legislature, executive branch of state government or any elected official regarding the potential visit by Bill Ayers.

Since the cancelation, several proponents of the visit have surfaced online in many of the same outlets -- some of these persons involved with the petition.

During the meeting, Grube also read letters from one constituent angry about the possible visit and his responses to that letter aloud to reassure the senate of the university's intentions.

Thompson explained that the decision to cancel the Ayers appearance was made in conjunction with the Public Safety, ATF, GBI, and the FBI.

Still others, including professor Michael Moore brought up the possibility that this situation, threatening student and speaker safety, would become a guideline for protesters of campus events.

Grube said that he hoped this particular scenario would be “anomalous.”

http://www.stp.georgiasouthern.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=610:ayers-cancelation-upheld&catid=1:local-news&Itemid=53

Locker room break-in

Matthew Chambers

Issue date: 2/20/09 **Section:** Campus News

The locker room: a place for towel snapping, sweat socks and Coaches' anger. This sacred haven for athletes is used to store belongings during practices and games.

So when the men's basketball team's Centennial Center locker room was broken into on Feb. 8, the team was caught off guard.

Redshirt freshman Marvin Harris Jr. took a well-timed restroom break, during team practice, only to discover two uninvited guests in the locker room.

"We were practicing and I came in to use the bathroom and they were just going through Mike Ross's wallet and I was like, 'What are y'all doing?' and they were like, 'Oh we're looking for something'," Harris said.

After informing the team of the break-in, Harris and the rest of the players ran back to the locker room to assess the damage. The team then took off running in search of the thieves.

"When we came back they were gone so that's when we went outside, and we couldn't find them for the first couple of minutes," Harris said.

Having split up, the men's basketball team was able to track down the two Early College students, who were hiding in the parking lot under a white Isuzu Rodeo. Then the team kept the juveniles from running off until Public Safety could arrive.

Sergeant Nick Reonas was the officer to respond to the call. Upon arrival, Reonas searched the two troublemakers and discovered some cash in their pockets and few cell phones in the general vicinity but not the all the missing items.

Another pair had taken the rest of the stolen money and cell phones before the team found out about the break-in.

"There were actually two more that had already left and that's where a lot of the items that were taken were, with the other two, they weren't with the two I found," Reonas said.

Following an investigation, all the stolen property was returned, except for one cell phone, which the parents of the children compensated the player it belonged to.

"We ended up having a total of five cell phones missing and also a sum of cash around \$250

somewhere in there," Reonas said. "Everything was retrieved or paid back or the person was reimbursed for it."

Currently, the four students have not been charge with any crimes because all the belongings and cash has been returned or the rightful owners compensated.

Harris feels that the four should not be let go without any sort of punishment due to their actions.

"Something should be done," Harris said. "They shouldn't just get off the hook for stealing and then they lied the whole time to try and get out of it."

Men's basketball Coach Terry Sellers has the same kind of attitude regarding the juveniles being let go.

"They need to learn that there are consequences for those actions and if you do those kind of things you will be punished," Sellers said. "With these young kids it might save them later on."

Because they were part of the Early College Program here on campus, the two caught in the locker room have been banned from all GCSU property except for Kilpatrick Education Center to attend school.

Sellers is using this break-in as a learning experience in terms of locker room security.

"It was a wake up call to be a lot more careful about that locker room door, making sure that it's locked," Sellers said.

Sellers is going to try and install an automatic locking door with a keypad on the locker room to increase security of players' valuables.

"Until that time, I was going to go to Wal-Mart and buy an inexpensive safe and put cell phones, wallets, whatever [in the safe] until we really get better security," Sellers said.

The team remains in shock that their locker room and belongings would be the target of a crime.

"I never would have thought that anybody would just go in the locker room because that's our home when we're here. We treat it like a home," Harris said.

Freshman Mike Ross was just as surprised as Harris at the break-in.

"I really didn't see it coming, I mean just a normal day at practice and then - practice over, we got robbed," Ross said.

[http://media.www.gcsunade.com/media/storage/paper299/news/2009/02/20/CampusNews/Locker.Rom.BreakIn-3639496.shtml](http://media.www.gcsunade.com/media/storage/paper299/news/2009/02/20/CampusNews/Locker.Room.BreakIn-3639496.shtml)

Students wary of identity theft

[Lee Sandow](#)

Issue date: 2/20/09 Section: [Campus News](#)

Identity Theft. Together, these two words strike fear in the hearts of people all across America, and we in the college community are not exempt from victimization.

"Although [identity theft] is a fairly new crime," said Sergeant Michael Baker. "It's also the fastest growing crime."

The Identity Theft Resource Center encourages teens and college students to learn more about identity theft on their website. "Identity theft can affect everyone, including teenagers," stated the IDST Web site.

While identity theft can be broken down into many sectors--such as business, criminal, financial and medical-- the most common form found on campus deals with the international sector often known as a Nigerian scam.

Baker has seen students become victims of this scam while selling their books online. The scam occurs when, as a form of payment, students receive a check that is written out for more than the amount requested.

The scam artist then requests that the seller cashes the check and sends the extra funds back to the purchaser. Because this is actually a fraudulent act, the check bounces and it becomes the responsibility of the seller.

Selling books is something that many college students are very familiar with, but knowing this type of fraud exists should make them more cautious.

Knowing that no one is immune to this crime and that it can happen to anyone is the first step to preparing yourself to properly protect your identity. However, many people find that identity theft is far too complex of a crime and they tend to brush it off.

According to the ITRC, identity theft continues to flourish, especially online identity theft and check fraud.

The following may help protect your identity and gives suggestions for handling identity theft if it happens.

Let's start with the basics. The best way to deal with identity theft is to do all you can to make sure that you do not become a victim in the first place.

"The smallest things can go a long way," Baker said.

In order to be an active player in keeping your identity yours, shred important papers that have personal

information on them, keep a close eye on your accounts and check your credit report at least once a year, which you can do for free.

The Federal Trade Commission recommends you contact one of the three consumer reporting companies: Equifax at 1-800-525-6285 or www.equifax.com; Experian at 1-888-397-3742 or www.experian.com; or TransUnion at 1-800-680-7289 or www.transunion.com.

If an identity has been compromised, the reporting company will notify the other companies.

If you believe you are a victim of identity theft, what next? This seems to be a tricky question for college students who spend some of their time at the parent's home and the rest living near college.

Baker reveals that in a college student's case this is looked upon as a jurisdiction issue.

"The crime should be reported wherever the victim is founded," Baker said.

The term "founded" means nothing more than where one resides or spends the majority of his or her time.

As a GCSU student, you would want to contact the Public Safety Department.

Paul Grigsby, Wells Hall resident director and GCSU graduate, agrees that identity theft is definitely a crime that needs to be taken seriously. "I check my bank statements, and I make sure that all the Web sites I visit are secure," Grigsby said.

Also Grigsby suggests "only using credit cards when making online purchases, because credit is a lot easier to undo."

While technology aids in the rapid growth of identity theft, Baker reminds students to "never be afraid to report (identity tampering)."

<http://media.www.gcsunade.com/media/storage/paper299/news/2009/02/20/CampusNews/Students.Wary.Of.Identity.Theft-3639508.shtml>

Elks honor outstanding officers

By Angie Thompson/senior reporter

TIFTON —

Trooper Melvin Simmons of Tifton's Post 13 was presented the Tifton Elks Lodge's Public Safety Officer of the Year during a reception held Thursday night at the lodge. The event was attended by members of all local law enforcement agencies, Elks members and others who support the work public safety officers perform on a daily basis.

Simmons was recently one of 50 Georgia troopers who served on the security detail for the presidential inauguration in Washington, D.C. The security detail for President Barack Obama's inauguration was one of the largest in the country's history.

Simmons was previously named the Tifton Optimist Club's Raymond B. Merritt Officer of the Year. He also won the Elks' award in a previous year. His supervisor, Commander Sgt. Scott Woodell, presented Simmons the award.

Each year, the Tifton Elks Lodge has honored a representative of each public safety-related office in the City of Tifton and Tift County with the awards. The overall winner of "Officer of the Year" is submitted to the Georgia Elks Association's Public Safety Officer of the Year competition.

Department heads of each of the public safety agencies in the county are asked to submit nominations for officer of the year. A committee of Elks members then chooses the honoree from those nominations. Each nominee from every agency received recognition and a handsome plaque during Thursday's banquet.

Also honored were:

- Officer Dorminey McCrae with the Tifton Police Department.
- Deputy Jeremy Little with the Tift County Sheriff's Office.
- Capt. Bobby Bennett and firefighter Elliott Whitley with the Tifton-Tift County Fire Department.
- Chase Lott with the Tifton-Tift County Emergency Medical Service.
- Lt. Billy Purcell with the ABAC Police Department.
- Detention officer Sabrina Barnes with the Tift County Jail.
- Amy Culpepper with Tifton-Tift County Animal Control.
- Sgt. Richard Young of Georgia's Motor Carrier Compliance Division.
- Assistant Director of Tifton-Tift County E-911 Christine Day.
- Thomas Godfrey with the Tift County Sheriff's Office's Explorer Award.
- Louise Spradley with the Tift County Sheriff's Office received the Elks Lodge's Citizenship Award.

To contact senior reporter Angie Thompson, call 382-4321.

http://www.tiftgazette.com/local/local_story_058221916.html