

2013 Annual Report

To the Honorable Board of Selectmen and the Citizens of Stockbridge:

I hereby submit a report of the activities of the police department for the year 2013:

“Things are seldom what they seem.”

Gilbert & Sullivan’s *The HMS Pinafore*, said Buttercup to the Captain

In May of 1971, on my first day at the Stockbridge Police Department, Chief of Police William J. Obanhein imparted the mantra that would be his constant theme during our years together - “You are here to help people.” Several days later, as I was learning the ropes on the evening shift from Officer Louis J. Peyron, I was told the same words of wisdom - “You are here to help people.” That was a refrain I heard many times over the years from Officer Peyron. I have also learned that some people, when arrested and placed in handcuffs, did not always perceive our actions as helpful, but many an arrest, over time, turned into a friendship. I adopted Chief Obanhein’s and Officer Peyron’s mantra as my own and I close my career at the Stockbridge Police Department by offering a mea culpa for those times when I may have failed to live up to that philosophy.

“*There are lies, damnable lies and then there are statistics,*”

English Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli

Since 1985, when writing each annual report, I have struggled with what data to present and how to present it. The struggle comes from the commitment to accurately reflect the crime that the department deals with and the department’s overall activity, both reactive and proactive. Because we often work from a small sample of data, both the validity and the reliability of that information are at risk and can be misinterpreted without a full depth of knowledge of the nuances that are behind the numbers. However, the good news is that no matter what criteria is used to measure crime, the Town of Stockbridge, when compared to its neighbors, and the world at large, is a relatively safe place in which to work and live.

This past year (2013) was one of the quietest years with regard to criminal activity since the acquisition of a database program in the year 2000 and is reflected in the table that follows the narrative portion of this report. The *Daily Blotter Entries* in recent years reflect better record keeping and more proactive accountability and not an increase in crime. In contrast, The *Uniform Crime Report Offenses* reflects reported crime and are the best measure of the seamier side of life. Of course what becomes obvious is that in the absence of both a volume and seriousness of crime, the function of the police department is to be a service provider to the community.

The diversity of these services range from, mediating conflicts, to acting as medical first responders, to providing a police officer for school traffic (first at the Stockbridge Plain School and currently at the Monument Mountain Regional High School), to returning lost children to their parents or lost dogs to their owners, to assisting with the needs of traffic for funeral and weddings, to chasing bears away, to removing snakes and bats from houses, to sorting out summer traffic on Main Street, to running radar on numerous streets, to assisting with significant community events such as Mercy Sunday and the Chamber of Commerce’s Norman Rockwell Main Street Christmas, to providing a public safety presence for concerts at Tanglewood, and to providing services to dignitaries and up to one million visitors each year, who arrive here to enjoy our beautiful community.

"When you come to the fork in the road, take it."

Yogi Berra

Safety needs on our roads were also addressed during the 2013 year. I worked with Highway Superintendent Len Tisdale to resolve the long standing problems with speed limit signs. These included adding speed limit signs where there were none, replacing those that had long since fallen down, correcting the placement of signs that had been in the wrong location or in some cases that exhibiting incorrect speeds. These changes occurred in more than 30 locations on various town roads.

The paving of the business district was completed with a minimum of disruption. Repainting of lines was a much appreciated improvement, though the addition of the bike lanes has caused some consternation for local drivers. The creation of angle parking between South Street and Elm Street, where cars are backing into the bike lane may seem counterintuitive, but studies appear to support the safety of that layout. I would suggest a future repainting of the lines from the business block to East Street to recreate 12 foot lanes to mirror the width of the traffic lanes used on state highways, U.S. Route 7, East and South Streets and State Highway Route 102, East Main Street and West Stockbridge Road. Parallel parking in front of the town offices, has actually resulted in fewer parking spaces during peak times. I would recommend eliminating them and centering the traffic lanes. Lastly, Stockbridge is woefully inadequate in meeting the legal requirements of handicapped parking downtown, both in number and those that meet both the Federal Uniform Traffic Code and ADA requirements.

Working with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Firearms Records Bureau for the last several years has been a challenge with regard to the fingerprint criminal records check, which was on average, at times, almost to six months behind. At this writing we are now averaging less than a month from start to finish after the Mass State Police added more personnel to process the required fingerprint based criminal background checks. Residents seeking a License To Carry or a Firearms Identification Card, will, hopefully, be processed in one month's time.

*"...though we are not now that strength which in old days moved earth and heaven,
that which we are, we are, one equal temper of heroic hearts, made weak by time and fate,
but strong in will to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield."*

Ulysses by Lord Alfred Tennyson

Newly appointed Police Chief Robert M. Eaton, Jr. comes from the only nationally accredited police department in Rhode Island and he clearly exhibits the knowledge base and the energy needed to enhance the level of professionalism at police department. He has been a quick study and understands the needs of a small community. Chief Eaton is most interested in continuing the effort to solve the Jan Stackhouse case and has been brought up to speed on the investigation with the help of the lead investigator Massachusetts State Police Sergeant Brian Berkel.

Officer Brian Shaw, who has been with the Stockbridge Police Department since May of 1989 was offered and accepted the position of Chief of Police with the Town of Egremont. Stockbridge will miss his gregarious presence exhibited during his rounds of Stockbridge on a daily basis. We, at the department, will miss his skills trouble shooting computers problems and as the department firearms instructor.

Working for the Stockbridge Police Department, though a great responsibility, has been a wonderful experience, and I have often likened life in Stockbridge, surrounded by music, theater, art and dance, to

being the equivalent of a free liberal arts education. I am extremely grateful to all of the citizens of Stockbridge, the many Boards of Selectmen, as well as the other elected and appointed boards in town for their support over the years. Special thanks to Jorja Marsden whose support and patience enabled me to reach retirement.

Traditionally I have closed with a thank you to the staff of the police department because it is through their team effort as the backbone of the department that residents and visitors are provided with services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All I can do is try and set a tone and create a culture of service and community policing, but they are in the trenches responding to the needs of those who call. Thank you to full time officers: Brian A. Shaw, Bruce J. Stringer, Adelheid Teutsch, Darrell G. Fennelly and Rosario Messina and to our part time officers: Robert F. Nielson, Michael J. Stanton, Elizabeth McCormack, Kimberly Shaw, Paul F. Petrescu and Neil Raymond. Special thanks to my secretary Kristin Garner who keeps my math and English challenged brain in line and the police department's paperwork well organized.

	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Daily Blotter Entries	21,978	24,022	24,323	26,122	18,229	13,150	9,677	8,982	8,037
Investigations	323	351	445	505	449	558	563	553	447
Motor Vehicle Crashes	73	58	70	99	91	91	111	102	108
Uniform Crime Report Offenses	47	67	122	152	161	155	119	100	104
Motor Vehicle Citations	426	418	440	653	997	762	770	693	753
Parking Tickets	6	13	37	42	65	59	58	45	46
Alarm Calls	581	573	500	592	599	644	492	580	449
Business Open Doors	54	234	118	83	78	91	25	31	34

Offenses: National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The statistics below include all Reported Crime some of which may later be determined to be unfounded. One incident may involve multiple NIBRS crimes, but the computer that generates this report breaks them out creating the impression that there are more incidents by number than actually reported.

Kidnapping	1	Annoying Telephone Calls	3
Assault & Battery	6	Threat to Commit a Crime	1
Assault & Battery Dangerous Weapon	2	Larceny, Felony	19
Attempted Murder	1	Larceny, Misdemeanor	3
Resisting Arrest	1	Larceny from a Person +65	1
Intimidate a Witness	1	Larceny from a Building	1
Breaking & Entering a Building, Nighttime, Felony	8	Forgery of a Check	1
Breaking & Entering, Misdemeanor	1	Utter a False Check	1
Breaking & Entering Daytime, Felony	6	Credit Card, Improper Use	1
Breaking & Entering a Motor Vehicle, felony	2	Vandalize Property	1
Larceny Over \$250 by Single Scheme	2	Tagging	1

Destruction of Property, Felony	4	Vandalize a Cemetery	1
Destruction of Property, Misdemeanor	2	Statutory Rape of a Child	1
Larceny by Check	1	Disturbing the Peace	2
Indecent Exposure	2	Trespass	5
Operating Under the Influence, Alcohol	1	Hunt by Improper Means	1
Operating Under the Influence, Alcohol, 2 nd offense	2	Criminal Harassment	1
Operating Under the Influence, Alcohol, 3 rd Offense	2	Trash, litter	2
Violation of an Abuse Prevention Order	3	Attempt to Commit a Crime	4
Violation of a Harassment Order	1	Speeding Citations	332

Respectfully submitted

Richard B. Wilcox
Chief of Police