

SEQUIM POLICE DEPARTMENT

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STOLEN PROPERTY RECOVERED FROM A SERIES OF THEFTS FROM SEQUIM SCHOOL

Over recent weeks the Sequim School District had reported an on-going problem with the theft of expensive electronic equipment that included projectors, computers, digital cameras and other property. According to Sergeant Sheri Crain, "based on the initial crime scenes and leads that were developed by our officers, we were able to assign one of our investigators to coordinate an investigation that culminated on Tuesday, February 15, 2005 with the service of two separate search warrants in both Sequim and Port Angeles." The thefts were first reported beginning in the Fall of 2004 and continued into 2005.

Officer Tania Kohlman was the lead investigator working the case and piecing together a thorough crime investigation, according to Police Chief Robert Spinks. "It is really gratifying to see this kind of professional and thorough work that has now culminated in solving this series of thefts," said Spinks. "The reality is that we're talking about significant and multiple thefts from the school district that involved necessary pieces of equipment that help to improve the quality of education that our local kids receive. The thefts of projectors, cameras, computers, and other expensive electronic equipment not only slaps the taxpayer in the face, but it makes the demanding job of teaching even harder and it steals educational opportunities from our kids," according to Spinks.

Kohlman worked extremely hard in pulling this investigation together, said Sergeant Sean Madison, who was also involved in the execution of the search warrants. Kohlman "worked a lot of hours, was in constant touch with the school district, followed a lot of leads, and really worked tirelessly to piece this all together" said Madison. That investigation resulted in information leading to the execution of two search warrants at the homes of two Sequim School District janitors. The Sequim School District was also instrumental in the investigation and was kept informed of the successful turns that lead to this week's search warrants.

On Tuesday, February 15th, Sequim Police Department served one search warrant at 463 Miller Road in Sequim at about 5 p.m. Sequim police officers, as a result of that search warrant, recovered stolen property belonging to the school district. Additionally, Marijuana and Methamphetamine were located and seized at the residence. Glen A. Jonientz and Cynthia A. Haynes were arrested at the scene and booked into Clallam County Correctional Facility. Jonientz for Possession of Stolen Property 1st degree, Haynes was also arrested for Possession of a Controlled Substance, both charges are felonies. This investigation continues and further charges may be forthcoming after review by the prosecutor's office.

On Tuesday, February 15th at approximately 5:45 p.m., Sequim Police requested assistance from the Port Angeles Police Department to watch the residence at 1434 Lauridsen Blvd., which was the subject of the second search warrant. At approximately 6:09 p.m., Port Angeles Police watched the residence and saw a male exit the home carrying numerous items and attempting to

leave in a vehicle registered to one of the suspects in the school thefts. Port Angeles Police attempted to detain the suspect and after a short foot chase were able to hold him until Sequim police investigators arrived on the scene. The suspect, Peter A. Norton, was found to be in possession of numerous items of stolen school property and was arrested and booked into Clallam County Correctional Facility for Possession of Stolen Property 1st degree, a felony charge.

Police continued their investigation into the early morning hours of Wednesday, February 16th processing evidence, and doing follow-up on investigative leads according to Spinks. "This series of crimes hit just as the Department was focusing efforts on a series of unrelated, but significant felony investigations," said Spinks, "given our current staffing, it is really amazing that the police staff has been so successful in clearing up all of these felony cases, while still responding the general types of calls for service that face any city police department. We have a great crew of officers and without the help of our active Reserve Police Officer Unit, we might not have been as successful as we have been lately." With additional resources and staffing the Sequim Police Department hopes to increase it's ability to investigate and solve as well as to prevent crimes.

"Partnerships involve businesses, the schools, and neighbors all serving as the eyes and ears of the town to identify and report suspicious activity in Sequim," said Crain, "It takes a lot more than just our small police staff to prevent and solve crime here in Sequim, as a partner with all of our citizens we can all make a big difference."

Crain noted that the reserve unit contributed several officers to the search warrant service including Officers Sean Washburn and Maris Turner who were critical in assisting in the warrant service. Detective Cory Hall is now finishing the investigation on this crime working in conjunction with the Clallam County Prosecutor's Office.

"We want to especially recognize and thank the Port Angeles Police Department," said Spinks, "as the new Chief in Sequim, it is very gratifying to see the kind of cooperative inter-agency support that Port Angeles provided us this week. They went above and beyond the scope of just helping us in the service of our second search warrant in their city, their staff really helped put some of the icing on the cake to make this such a successful day, and our hats are off to them for the help," said Spinks.