

Police receive challenge to develop strategy | Butte inmate sues



District Attorney Mike Schrunk discusses newly adopted city ordinances that give police the power to clear the area of an arrest of spectators. Schrunk said he had not been informed of the or-

dinances' passage. Citizens complained that they had no opportunity to testify before the Council before the ordinances were passed. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Representatives of the Police Bureau were presented a letter Saturday, requesting that they meet and talk with citizens of the Black community regarding their complaints and concerns and then return in 30 days with a plan to address these complaints and concerns.

The letter, presented at the Police/Community Relations forum sponsored by the *Observer*, said in part:

"Recently the community has again spoken out about police/community relations. We have voluntarily assumed the responsibility of facilitating a series of community forums where the voice of the Black community could be heard.

"It appears that this is the proper time to transfer certain aspects of these activities to the police bureau. That is, we feel that it is your responsibility to go to the people to hear their complaints, and to formulate your own programs to bridge the ever broadening gap of disparity that exists between the police and Black citizens."

A document put together by citizens who had attended the forums will be held temporarily and then be given to the police bureau when they present their plan on June 20th. The document addresses the concerns that have been discussed in the forum series and includes suggestions for solutions.

"We don't want to give the Bureau the answers; we don't want to appear that we speak for the entire Black community," Mike Jones, a citizen who volunteered to hold the document said. "We want the Bureau to go out and see what the people are saying and then to present their own plan. We have offered to assist them."

The police bureau has been invited to bring their findings and their plans to a forum on June 20th, 9:30 a.m., at Bourbon Street.

Following that meeting, any plans for new police procedures will need to be presented for public testimony in a series of public meetings.

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door, and we were told to step out of our cell. (Note: Peter is of Mexican-American descent. At the time of the scene being described here, his two cellmates were also Mexican-Americans.) As we stepped out of our cell we were handcuffed to the bars on the walkway, while the officers searched both our persons and our cells.

"During the search of our cell, officer Rick Gaskell was going through my personal belongings, and when he was looking through my eye glass case where I had an extra pair of glasses identical to the ones I had on. Officer Rick Gaskell looked at the pair of glasses I had on, and back at the pair in the eye glass case, and asked me if the eye glasses in the case were mine; to which I replied that they were mine. Officer Gaskell then informed me that I could not have in my possession two pair of glasses and said that those in the case were contraband.

"I then told him that I had permission to have them; that the eye glasses were brought to me by my brother, who turned them in to the medical department, who in turn gave them to me. But officer Rick Gaskell chose to ignore my statement and did not even bother checking with the medical department to verify my statement. Gaskell just repeated his statement that they were contraband and proceeded to take both me and my property to the front office of A and B tank. (my hands handcuffed behind my back). And as officer Gaskell put it, he was going to place me in the 'hole' (B-Tank) for possession of contraband. So I was taken to the front office where there were several other officers present. I then observed officer Gaskell throw my eye glasses, eye glass case and other artifacts of my personal property into the office garbage can.

"Upon seeing what he did with my eye glasses and other property, I voiced a protest saying that I had

paid \$135 for those eye glasses and that he had no right in throwing them away and I stated that if for some reason I was not allowed to keep them any longer, that they should be placed in storage for me.

"But my protest only served to enrage him and he (Gaskell) said something about how I don't tell him what to do, and for me to shut-up, and face the floor. I then bowed my head down, but continued to watch him. Officer Gaskell then in a threatening voice ordered me to face the floor, and to stop looking at him. And as soon as he finished that statement he grabbed me by the hair on my head and forcefully pulled my head all the way down to where my face was touching the concrete floor. And said that when he told me to do something, for me to do it.

"He (Gaskell) then yanked me up by the hair along with another officer and I was thrown against a desk at the front of the B-Tank section. I was then thrown against some bars, head first, and from which time I really can't remember anything else. But I have been told that I was knocked out when my head hit the bars. And that I was dragged into the day room of B-Tank, which is the first cell and left there until I was taken to Portland Adventist Hospital and where I was kept a week until there was found bed space for me at OSH."

Continued next week . . . The official reply and Mrs. Barboza's attempt to find justice for her son.



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