

NEW HAMPSHIRE

College parties: rite of passage or nuisance for neighbors?

By SARAH HODDER
Concord Monitor

HENNIKER — It happens in just about every college town.

Raucous parties in student-rented houses aggravate the community. Neighbors get fed up, colleges feel their hands are tied, and students want to be left alone. The police, meanwhile, are cracking down.

In Keene, college security officers and the Keene Police Department have stepped up patrols in neighborhoods near the college after neighbors petitioned the Keene City Council to do something about loud, late-night noise.

Neighbors "certainly should have a quiet neighborhood where they are not awakened by noise," Keene State President Judith A. Sturnick said when she announced the stepped-up patrols.

And, in Henniker, police brought their concerns directly to about 200 New England College students who had just returned from mid-semester break earlier this week.

Getting tough

Police Chief Tim Russell outlined a new, tougher enforcement plan at the new science center. He said the unruly culprits are a minority of partygoers, and that the unacceptable behavior usually occurs when people are leaving parties. Nonetheless, party hosts have to be responsible for their guests, Russell said.

Students leaving parties at 3 a.m. wake up children and parents who need to get up in a few hours to go to work.

Following the new policy, which went into effect this week, when police respond to a complaint and find a disruptive party, they will:

- request assistance from neighboring towns and the state police.

- allow no students to leave the party until they show identification. Students who are drunk, or under 21, will be taken to the police station.

- arrest the hosts for disorderly conduct, a violation. Repeat offenders will be taken to jail. Anyone who is verbally abusive toward an officer will also be taken to jail.

- give copies of the police report to the dean of students, the landlord or manager of the property where the party occurred, and to the director of college security.

Angry response

Students responded angrily to the new policy, saying hosts could not be responsible for the hundreds of students coming and going from their parties.

Some said they were offended that police came to the meeting with the policy already decided and called the process a dictatorship. Others felt that the residents should realize they live in a college town.

"If I live two houses down from a smelly pig farm, can I tell them to get rid of their pigs?" said one student. "No, I have to live with it."

"Tell (the residents) we're financing the town," called out one student to Russell.

But the students who live on Hall Avenue in Henniker were particularly nervous that the new policy would come down hardest on them. Many said they have tried to work with neighbors who, instead of approaching them with complaints, go right to the police.

"We'd like to do anything we can for the community, but the neighbors don't come to us," said Gary Herr, a junior who lives in an old fraternity house on Hall Avenue. Herr and the five others who live in the house have had more than 15 parties this year, but they try to warn neighbors and clean up after themselves.

"At least we keep it neat," Herr said. "The cops are being way too strict," said Chris Ritchie, a senior who lives on Hall Avenue. "It's like a big prep school."

"I feel harassed," Herr said. The students say many neighbors are tolerant and realize the town is full of college students.

"We're kids," Herr said. "We're in college. There's nothing else to do."

Constant conflict

There are three student houses on Hall Avenue and for years there has been conflict with nearby residents.

Students leaving parties at 3 a.m. wake up children and parents who need to get up in a few hours to go to work. Some neighbors report that cups and bottles are strewn throughout the area. Others complain of shouts of profanity in the middle of the night.

"Hall Avenue is the worst problem in town," Russell said, who lives one street over and has been awakened at night by neighborhood parties.

"I have done everything I can — so now my immediate response is to take enforcement to the next level," Russell said. "Everyone has a right to have a party. I'll defend that right to my death. But everyone also has an absolute right to live in peace. You have to control your parties," he told the students.

Since Sept. 10, 10 Hall Avenue students have been warned or arrested for noise or disorderly conduct. The College Pub in downtown Henniker closed this fall, eliminating the most popular hang out for students. As a result, the house parties have doubled.

The Henniker police force has lost three part-timers and one full-time officer, making it increasingly difficult to deal with the increased partying, Russell said.

Off-campus housing is outside college jurisdiction, so the most parties on campus security can only be used as backup, said Russell. "Some of the

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Students responded angrily to the new policy, saying hosts could not be responsible for the hundreds of students coming and going from their parties.

Some said they were offended that police came to the meeting with the policy already decided and without the process of a referendum. Others felt that the residents should realize they live in a college town.

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The Henniker police force has lost three part-time and one full-time officer, making it increasingly difficult to deal with the increased partying, Russell said. "If campus housing is outside college jurisdiction, the most part, campus security can only be used as a backup," said Councilor of Students Ken Smith.

NEW ENGLAND NEWS BRIEFS

Church told of abuse?

PORTSMOUTH, N.H. (UPI) — A federal grand jury told a church official that he was sexually abused by a priest in the 1970s. James P. Porter, a 50-year-old Freeborn, Maine, man, said he was sexually abused by a priest in the Freeborn, Maine, area in the 1970s. The FBI agent told the Freeborn, Maine, priest was a supervisor at Freeborn, Maine, and had molested him twice or three times. The priest, who was in Washington, D.C., at the time, was asked if he would be sued by the priest. Porter said he never told his family about the priest.

Murder trial consolidated

DEERHAM, Mass. (UPI) — Three trials of Kenneth E. Ruggie, charged with killing a young boy, will be consolidated in a single trial in Middlesex County Superior Court. Ruggie was charged with killing a young boy in Deerham, Mass., in 1988. The trials were scheduled for next month.

Madison County Attorney

Madison County Attorney James F. Reilly agreed that New Hampshire Attorney William Deshaies should advise the children's attorney. Deshaies was appointed to the position after a separation of the Madison County Attorney's office. Deshaies was appointed to the position after a separation of the Madison County Attorney's office.

Statewide election

The state election results were announced. The results showed that the Republican Party won the majority of seats in the state legislature. The Democratic Party also won a significant number of seats.

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Governor William Weld announced his plans for the state budget. Weld said that the budget would focus on reducing state spending and increasing efficiency in government operations.

Keene

Keene residents are urged to support the new police policy. Residents are encouraged to report any disruptive parties to the police and to support the efforts of the police to maintain a quiet neighborhood.

Porter was quoted in a newspaper in 1986 and he was paid a rate of \$1,000 a month for the article. He remained a priest during the 1980s although, according to the newspaper, he had been accused of several molestations.

Church officials have no personal knowledge of Porter, although they know of his whereabouts.

Porter, who lives with his wife and four children in Mountain View, N.H., moved last month to the Keene area and is now living in a house with several other people, including 11 other men and women in Mountain View.

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