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Inside This Issue

- Headline News Page 1
- Local News Page 2
- Regional News Page 4
- National News Page 5



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POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Gang Graffiti Relays Messages to Friends and Foes

06/03/2007 East Chicago, IN | Graffiti, or tagging, can be a simple nuisance or deliver a serious message -- one that can result in violence. Street gangs use graffiti to delineate territory and to communicate. And depending on how the symbols are used, the language carries messages on several different levels.

Last month, a day before 7-year-old Angel Silvas was killed in the crossfire of a gang-related gunfight in East Chicago, graffiti appeared on the garage of his father's house which spelled out the initials of the gang to which his father was alleged to be affiliated -- plus the letter K, for "killer."



Adding the "killer" signifier to a rival gang's initials is used as both a brag and a threat, akin to painting a rival's symbol. Through experience, police learn how to interpret the symbols, and can quickly tell if graffiti was intended simply as vandalism, misguided art - or something more serious, Lansing police Lt. Pete Grutzius said.

Spend 10 minutes with the Chicago Crime Commission's book on gangs, and it becomes fairly easy to not only make a distinction between graffiti intended as vandalism and that of a street gang, but also to decipher any messages.

Six and five-pointed stars, backwards letters, pitchforks, crosses or cartoon bunny heads are common symbols used by street gangs. Generally, these symbols are a brag. But painted upside down, the symbols are a threat.

In East Chicago, the night of the Silvas shooting, the same four initials were painted in 5-foot-high letters on the garage of an Emlyn Place house where one of the men believed to have been involved in the shootout once stayed. Less than 24 hours later, more than a dozen shots were fired into the house, sending a 70-year-old grandmother and her grandchildren fleeing for their lives.

Source: http://www.thetimesonline.com/articles/2007/06/03/news/lake_county/doc66e6d8bd632cafbf862572ee0081891b.txt

Investigator Believes Arsons Have Gang Links

Article published in the Indianapolis Star

06/11/2007 Indianapolis, IN | A gang with a history of arson might be tied to a string of fires set on the Southside, a key investigator said Sunday in the wake of the latest blaze.



The 13th suspicious fire in 15 days broke out in a garage in the 2000 block of Boyd Avenue early Sunday morning. No one was hurt, but the fire was set despite increased police patrols and while the man investigators call their main suspect sat in jail.

It was the third fire set since Robert L. Green, 30, was arrested June 1. He remains in the Marion County Jail on burglary charges after prosecutors dropped their arson case against him last week.

Sherron Franklin, an Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department officer assigned to the fire investigation unit, said Sunday she believes that someone Green knows from his days in the 2-1 FATAL gang is setting fires to confuse investigators.

"I stand by my probable cause I wrote up on Robert Green," said Franklin, who also is a member of the City-County Council. "A person told somebody else they were going to set those fires to take the heat off of Robert Green."

The 2-1 FATAL gang is mostly made up of white males and marks its territory with anti-black or anti-Hispanic graffiti, most experts say. The Indianapolis gang also sets fires and first drew headlines in 2005 when members burned down a vacant house because they mistakenly thought a black family was moving in.

Source: <http://www.indystar.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070611/LOCAL1801/706110376>



Curfew Sweep Rounds Up 36 Juveniles

Article published by the Indianapolis Star

06/08/2007 Indianapolis, IN | The first summer curfew sweep netted three dozen children, and more enforcement of the city ordinance limiting after-hours activities will come, officials said today

The violators were arrested throughout the city as late as 4 a.m. today and taken to Washington Park Community Center on East 30th Street, where parents or guardians were required to pick them up.

Officials said seven of the teenagers were taken to the Juvenile Detention Center because they had unrelated pending charges or were on probation for prior arrests. Officials declined to say when the next sweep would occur.



"This is as much about the protection of children as the community because bad things can happen to them," said Robert L. Bingham, Marion County chief probation officer. "Kids are very vulnerable running around at these hours and prone to be victimized."

Bingham said the children may be ordered to participate in a violence-reduction program. Police also could issue citations to their parents. Violations could bring fines of up to \$150.

"You certainly have to look at the parents and hold them accountable," Bingham said.

The seven children who were held were already facing pending charges that included battery, burglary, vehicle theft and fleeing a police officer, said Lynne Tobin, a probation department supervisor.

Full Story: <http://www.indystar.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070608/LOCAL/706080549>

Frankfurt Aims to Decrease Gang Activity

Article published by The Times

06/03/2007 Frankfurt, IN | Mayor Don Stock and the Frankfort police force are working together to stop gang activity by holding public meetings to educate parents and community members. Though gang violence is not as prominent as in larger cities, the problem is one authorities want to address, according to police Chief William Moudy. "We want to get on top of it now," he said. "We'll do things that we're not going to (publicly) discuss and show local gangs that we're in charge and they're not."

Community members had approached Stock about having meetings on gang violence, and officials thought it would be a good discussion with summer near. Stock said the number of drive-by shootings has increased the past few summers, and the city noticed police were dispatched to more gang-related activities. The goal is to address the problem by bringing more attention to it in a subtle way. "If gangs see we find them to be the base of our problems, they might use that as a base for recruiting purposes," he said.



Parents are learning about what signs and symbols they should look for, should their children be recruited. Though off to a good start, Stock hopes that turnout increases.

Sylvia Kenley is the chief of staff with Project Gang Out, based in Columbia, S.C. The project's aim is to promote healthy living by educating and demonstrating positive alternatives and reducing the likelihood of "at-risk" behavior among youth. Parents are told to look for changes in behavior, their children's type of friends and clothing. If the son or daughter is leaning more toward one color or is adamant about certain colors, the parent should take notice. They also should look at backpacks, purses and question anything out of the ordinary, along with any hand-drawn or permanent tattoos.

Kenley said she finds that once the child becomes educated about gang life, there will be a change in opinion about joining a gang or the child will want a way out. "The bottom line is parents need to be in tune with their children," she said. "If there is no relationship, you're looking to have the children look elsewhere."

Source: <http://www.jconline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070603/NEWS/706030354/1141/NEWS>



Teen Sentenced to 90 Years for Gang Shooting

Article published by the Times

06/21/2007 East Chicago, IN | A judge who earlier gave an East Chicago teen a break, now has sentenced him to 90 years in prison. Steven Quinones, 19, didn't show up for his trial or sentencing, but that didn't stop a jury from convicting him in May of murder, attempted murder and criminal recklessness.



During the trial, Quinones sent Lake Criminal Court Judge Salvador Vasquez a letter saying he felt he was being railroaded and would not be in court, Vasquez said before announcing the sentence. Quinones is not in custody.

Jurors heard that Quinones fired into a group of seven teens on Feb. 22, 2006, killing Hayward Jackson Jr., 17. Deputy Prosecutor Christy Short said Quinones gave a statement to police after the shooting acknowledging his connection to the Imperial Gangsters street gang.

In a previous case in December 2003, Quinones took a handgun to Block Junior High School and pleaded guilty to a weapons violation. In that case, Vasquez sentenced Quinones to a day reporting program, the terms of which Quinones violated. He completed his sentence in the work-release program, where by all accounts Quinones did well.

Source: http://www.nwitimes.com/articles/2007/06/21/news/lake_county/doc3cc93635c30f3ef786257300007f6f21.txt

Daley: Charge Parents for Kids' Graffiti

Article published by the Chicago Tribune

06/13/2007 Chicago, IL | Mayor Richard Daley had no sympathy Tuesday for parents of youthful graffiti vandals, contending they should be fined for the sins of their children and scoffing at aldermanic inaction on his proposal to hit them in the pocketbook.

"Who should be responsible, the building owner?" Daley asked sarcastically. "The building owner should sue them."



Daley's measure, which stalled in a City Council committee on Monday, calls for smacking parents and guardians of juvenile offenders with fines ranging from \$500 to \$750.

Daley, first elected in 1989, made the battle against graffiti a top issue early in his mayoralty in an effort to improve the quality of life in city neighborhoods. The battle against unsightly scrawlings enjoyed success for many years, but officials have reported that the tide has taken an unwelcome turn.

The number of cleanups performed by city crews soared last year to 162,635, up from about 107,000 in 2004 and more than 123,000 in 2005, according to city officials. And there is no letup so far in 2007.

Officials say that vandals now increasingly use acids to etch their "art" into plate glass windows of businesses. That requires a costly sand-blasting procedure to take off the top layer of glass.

Full Story: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-daley13jun13,1,7285955.story?coll=chi-news-hed>



Two Accused in Girl's Slaying

Article published by the Chicago Tribune

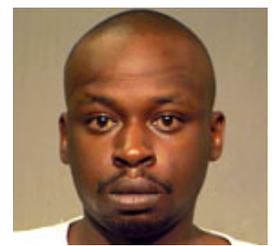
06/27/2007 East Chicago, IN | They cut up the children's playground like it was their own private shooting range. The YLO Cobras stood on the territory they claim on the west side of North Central Park, the Imperial Gangsters on the east. But that line was invisible to a 13-year-old girl standing between them in her neighborhood playground on an otherwise peaceful summer evening.



After two groups from the rival gangs shouted and flashed gang signs at each other Monday evening, a reputed member of the Imperial Gangsters, 19-year-old Tony Serrano, fired several shots from a silver 9 mm handgun, Chicago police said. But he missed his intended targets and struck Schanna Gayden, who was standing between the gangs as she bought fruit from a street vendor, police said.



Serrano fired because his faction's leader, Mwenda Murithi, 26, told him to do so, Grand-Central Cmdr. Joe Salemme said. And the fighting was all because of a turf war a year older than Serrano, police said.



Serrano and Murithi were arrested within hours of the shooting and charged with first-degree murder Wednesday, a quick arrest that police Supt. Philip Cline credited to Shakespeare District gang and tactical unit officers and a community that poured out information.

Dozens of neighborhood residents and children were in the park that night, and witnesses identified the suspects, police said. Both men admitted their involvement, Cline said.

Full Story: http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-070626girl_killedjun26,1,5228130.story?coll=chi-news-hed

Gang-Related Ball Caps Pulled from Shelves

Article published by the Plain Dealer

06/11/2007 Cleveland, OH | A New York company that makes baseball caps emblazoned with logos associated with local gangs has agreed to pull the caps off the shelves and will destroy logo patterns.

The Buffalo-based New Era Cap Co., which supplies hats to all Major League baseball teams and has been endorsed by numerous rappers, started pulling the hats off the shelves Saturday in response to local activists who said the logos festered gang violence.

"We plan to be a little more vigilant in the future," said Dana Marciniak, spokeswoman for New Era that ordered caps removed from Finish Line stores at Richmond and Randall Park malls, among others.

Community activists said the baseball caps bore the names of neighborhoods as well as local gangs such as "Da Valley" for Garden Valley housing project; "10-5" short for the 105th Street gang called Waste-5 and "HVD" referring to the street gang on Harvard.



Cleveland Ward 9 Councilman Kevin Conwell, head of the city's safety committee said phone lines were buzzing with complaints from residents upset about the gang-related logos. Removing the hats is a big step, he said.

"It is hard to measure prevention. But anything we can do to prevent violence is a good thing," said Conwell who plans to discuss the hat logos with other safety officials at the National League of Cities meeting later this week.

Khalid Samad, director of Peace in the Hood and a gang intervention specialist, said the hats, like gang colors, only increased tensions on the streets.

"It is only the beginning of summer and a lot of neighborhood conflicts that boiled throughout the school year will spill out on the streets. Anything we can do to stop the tension from escalating is good," Samad said.

Full Story: http://blog.cleveland.com/metro/2007/06/gangrelated_ball_caps_pulled_f.html



Anti-Gang Bill Clears Senate Hurdle

Article published by the Chicago Sun Times

06/15/2007 Chicago, IL | Sweeping anti-gang legislation sailed unanimously through the a key Senate committee Thursday, giving the proposed expansion of federal authority to combat gang violence its best chance in a decade of becoming law. The measure would be a boon to Los Angeles and cities across the country grappling with growing crime rates and would pour \$1 billion over five years into gang suppression and prevention programs.

Los Angeles and Southland leaders had heavily lobbied congressional leaders to support the measure and hailed the 17-0 vote by the Judiciary Committee as a major victory.

"It's going to mean a federal helping hand," said California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, who co-wrote the measure with Utah Republican Sen. Orrin Hatch. "Unfortunately, California has been a source ... for gangs, and as the years go on they become more vicious."

Feinstein's bill would make it a federal crime to recruit minors into a gang and to be a member of a street gang.

In addition, it creates a string of new criminal offenses in an effort to make the country's estimated 30,000 gangs easier to prosecute. And it would dole out millions of dollars to hire additional state and local prosecutors who can bring more cases against gang members.

The provision calls for a local and federal task force comprised of the departments of Justice, Education, Labor, Health and Human Services and Housing and Urban Development to identify successful prevention efforts. The bill now goes to the full Senate. Feinstein said Thursday she didn't know when a vote might be taken.

Source: http://www.pasadenastarnews.com/search/ci_6145694

FBI Plans to Integrate Nationwide Gang Data

Article published by FCW.com

06/06/2007 Washington, DC | The FBI seeks proposals to develop and integrate gang intelligence analysis and workflow capability for its National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC) to support law enforcement.

The center, established in 2005, collects, analyzes and shares data about the growth, migration and criminal activities of gangs for federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement. The FBI plans to modernize and integrate the center's disparate systems and provide more connectivity with other regional networks with gang-related intelligence.



Currently, NGIC does not possess a centralized information system that can receive, store, manipulate or exchange gang information, including photographs and other identifiers, from federal, state and local law enforcement. In addition, the center does not connect to either the Regional Information Sharing System Network or GangNet, two major gang intelligence systems that law enforcement agencies nationwide use. NGIC participants agree that equal and equitable information sharing is a key to the center's success.

The vendor also would develop and integrate other electronic capabilities for the center, such as providing a single point of entry for gang-related intelligence analysis and a Signs, Symbols and Terminology database that identifies the characteristics of gangs and facilitating information sharing among law enforcement agencies. The NGIC information technology support system will be a sensitive-but-unclassified system.

The contract would have a one-year base period and four option years. The base period will start one year from the award date. Proposals are due July 9.

Source: <http://www.fcw.com/article102910-06-06-07-Web>



Fight at Prison said to Involve Gang Members, Muslims

Article published by the Baltimore Sun

06/05/2007 Baltimore, MD | A melee at the Metropolitan Transition Center that sent 18 prison inmates to area hospitals on Friday with stab wounds involved a dispute between the Bloods gang and Sunni Muslim prisoners, according to corrections sources.

Maj. Priscilla Doggett, a spokeswoman for the prison system, acknowledged for the first time yesterday that a gang might have been involved in the violence that erupted at the state-run prison in Baltimore. But, noting security concerns, she would not provide more detailed information. "In terms of naming specific groups, we're not prepared to do that at this time," Doggett said.

She said that prison officials are "reviewing various methods to deal with violence in our correctional system that is the result of gang and non-gang violence."

Last year, Maryland prison officials visited New Jersey, where authorities have assigned gang members to a designated prison with specially designed gang-management programs.

Several corrections sources said the more established and generally older Muslim inmates were tired of the younger and more aggressive Bloods trying to run things at the prison. The sources asked not to be identified because of department policies that prohibit them from speaking to the news media.

The Bloods are well established in many of Maryland's prisons, along with several Muslim groups.

The transition center has been on lockdown since the fight. As of Sunday, authorities had found at least 80 hand-made weapons around the prison- mainly shanks fashioned from Plexiglas, broken pieces of metal or other materials, she said. Doggett said there were about 200 inmates in the recreation yard at the prison when the fight broke out.

Source: *The Baltimore Sun*

Feds Bust MS-13 Gang Members for Ordering Murder from Prison Cells

Published by the Columbian

06/03/2007 Washington, DC | Three Salvadoran members of the deadly street gang MS-13 were indicted Tuesday on federal charges that they ordered U.S. gang members to carry out cold-blooded murders and other vicious crimes — directing it all from their prison cells in El Salvador.

Dany Fredy Ramos Mejia, Saul Antonios Turcio Angel and Rigoberto Del Transito Mejia Regaldo conspired in a racketeering plot with murder, robbery, obstruction of justice and witness tampering, according to the 30-count indictment.



The indictment says the three defendants and at least 13 others conspired to commit murder and other violent crimes with firearms, baseball bats, machetes, bottles, and knives.

The three are members of MS-13, La Mara Salvatrucha, a violent street gang of immigrants or descendants of immigrants with members in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico and the United States.

Two of the members allegedly directed other MS-13 members to commit crimes, including murdering two people in the United States, from 2001 to March 2007. They also are connected to eight murders in Maryland and a murder in Virginia, the Justice Department said.

In 2004, Mejia and Angel videotaped themselves and fellow gang members in El Salvador planning gang activities, according to the indictment. In 2005, Angel used a cell phone to call members of the Teclas Locos Salvatruchos clique in Maryland to discuss crimes. Later that day, gang members killed two people and wounded a juvenile.

If convicted, each defendant faces a maximum sentence in the U.S. of life in prison for conspiracy to participate in a racketeering enterprise.

Full Story: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,278274,00.html>



Early Marijuana Use a Warning Sign for Later Gang Involvement

Article published by PR Newswire

06/20/2007 Washington, DC | John P. Walters, Director of National Drug Control Policy, today released a new Special Report showing that teens who use drugs are more likely to engage in violent and delinquent behavior and join gangs. Early use of marijuana -- the most commonly used drug among teens -- is a warning sign for later gang involvement.

The report, "Teens, Drugs, and Violence," released by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) today in Philadelphia, shows that teens who use drugs are twice as likely to commit violent acts than those who do not. It also shows that the more drugs a teenager uses, the more likely they are to engage in violent behavior. They are also more likely to steal and use other illicit drugs and alcohol than non-users.

"It is time -- in fact, it is past time -- for us to let go of 60's-era perceptions about marijuana," said ONDCP Director John Walters. "Today's research shows what too many families and communities have had to learn through painful experience: Drug use by teenagers isn't a 'lifestyle choice' or an act of 'personal expression;' it is a public health, and, increasingly, a public safety dilemma."

Although overall teen drug use has declined by 23 percent in five years and youth marijuana use is down by 25 percent over the same time period, more teens use marijuana than any other illicit drug. Research shows that other than alcohol, marijuana is the most widely used substance in gang life, and children who use marijuana are nearly four times more likely to join gangs.



Full Story: <http://sev.prnewswire.com/health-care-hospitals/20070619/AQTU06719062007-1.html>

Three Teen Girls First Arrested Under Gang Law

Article published by the Gwinnett Daily Post

06/08/2007 Lawrenceville, GA | Three teenage girls recently became the first people arrested and charged with violating Lawrenceville's new street gang terrorism and prevention ordinance. The suspects, Asia Jemila Watson, 19, Virgilia Carlyle Gladney, 18 and Marquita Shaholony Gladney, 17, will have a preliminary hearing in Lawrenceville Municipal Court July 18, said the case's investigating officer, Sgt. Brad Groves of the Lawrenceville Police Department. The three could face a mandatory two months in jail if convicted of violating the city's street gang ordinance, passed May 7.

A police report said the three were involved in a brief, but violent fight in the Collins Hill Wal-Mart parking lot May 16. The fight left the victim with swelling, scrapes and lacerations to her face, arms and legs. The trio affiliate themselves with a street gang known as ABG and the incident stemmed from an argument the victim had with another member of ABG, the report indicated.

Grove said the three were initially charged with disorderly conduct, which opened the door for them to be in violation of the street gang ordinance as well. Grove said after a crime such as disorderly conduct or possession of marijuana is committed and police have enough evidence of the suspects being involved in gang activity (through indications like tattoos, brandings, colors and statements of affiliation), the suspects can also be charged with violating the street gang ordinance.

Prior to the city enacting its own ordinance, Lawrenceville police had only been able to charge people with gang activity under a state law that required them to have committed a felony first, Grove said. "A lot of times we've been on the street patrolling and we've identified a gang person, we have a database and a file on them, but there's really nothing we could do about it unless they commit one of these serious crimes," Grove said. "Now we have more teeth in the law so that when we see these individuals commit minor violations we can hit them with the city ordinance." Offenders convicted of the street gang ordinance face a mandatory two months in jail for their first offense, six months in jail for their second offense and a year in jail for their third offense.

Source: http://www.gwinnettdaily.com/index.php?s=&url_channel_id=32&url_article_id=28871&url_subchannel_id=&change_well_id=2



Girls in Gangs, Yakima Authorities See More Female Membership

Article published by the Columbian

06/03/2007 Yakima, WA | Maria Ball is as tough as any man. But as one of the few girls in the male-dominated Chicanos Por Vida (CPV) - Chicanos for Life - gang, the 17-year-old Yakima resident has a lot to prove. Hidden under her short boylike haircut, tattoos, body piercings and baggy brown clothing, Ball says she was ready to take punches - and bullets - to demonstrate her loyalty for CPV and her toughness, just like the men.

"Girls want to prove we can do everything guys can," Ball says. "And sometimes even better."

When Ball joined the gang nearly five years ago, she says, there were only two other girls. So she was initiated, or "jumped in," like the men - taking beatings from six guys.

However, Yakima gangs and women's involvement have changed within the last few years. As women in society juggle the roles of wives, mothers and professionals, female gangsters wear the hats of attractive, submissive girlfriends while being violent members. And just like in the work force, girls in gangs get fewer benefits, credibility and recognition for doing the same work as the men.

Mike Fairbanks, a Yakima County juvenile probation officer who works out of Sunnyside and oversees many gang members who've gone through the detention center, notices more girls have been recruited lately. He knows that older gang members are racking them up through their younger siblings or watching for potential newbies outside elementary, middle and high schools. And many girls join gangs because their boyfriends are involved in them, he adds, while others seek them for drugs, friends and a sense of belonging.

Source: <http://www.columbian.com/news/state/APStories/AP06032007news148699.cfm>



From the Editors

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter.
We are always trying to improve the quality and effectiveness of our products

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