

The 1990's

The 1990's broke through as the age of electronics. Many changes took place that affect today's world.

- The World Wide Web was born in 1992 and by 1998 there were over 100 million people surfing it.
- Cyber crime was born and the good, the bad, and the ugly got to surf along with the rest of us.
- In 1992 the riots erupted in LA over the Rodney King video tape
- The World Trade Center was bombed in 1993
- The tragedy in Waco, Texas took place in 1993
- The O.J. Simpson trial ended in 1995 with a verdict that is still debated today
- The Federal Building was bombed in Oklahoma in 1995 by one of our own
- In 1999 the Columbine High School tragedy shocked the nation.
- "Grunge versus Preppy" fought for the young ones
- Hip hop styles with big pants for the boys and hip hugger pants for the girls came into vogue.
- In-line skates wowed the younger crowd as well as Beanie Babies, Furby, Tickle Me Elmo, and yo yos.
- The greatest rage with old and young alike was the personal computer. Also video games in the forms of X box, Nintendo, and Playstation riveted young and old to their chairs.

This new world brought many new challenges to law enforcement. Every arrest was scrutinized in regard to civil rights, which made it necessary for police units to have video surveillance of stops and arrests for everyone's protection. Officers were expected to keep up with the technology of the day so they could assist with investigations into identity theft, bogus money, predators preying on children via the web, and terrorism.



Sergeant Jerry Lenthall & Officer Al Webster

The decade started out with a bang in 1990. In April of 1990 the Poly Royal celebration spun out of control and became a riot that lasted for three days. The Poly Royal Open House weekend tradition started back in 1938 as an open house for students and parents to come and see what was happening here. It evolved over the years to include a rodeo, tractor pull, parade, and many other events.



Sergeant Pete Hubbard & Chief Jim Gardiner

However, something went terribly wrong in 1990 and the students and police clashed in a way that still resounds today. Over 120 people were arrested after three days of rioting. Any object within reach was hurled at police officers, including small explosives (cheery bombs and at least two Molotov cocktails). Bottles flew through the air and noisy revelers bashed store front windows. Much of the rioting took place at the Foothill-California intersection. When all was said and done, there was plenty of property damage and certainly damaged nerves. More than 100 people were injured, including 15 police officers. As a

result, Poly Royal was cancelled, though in recent years the school has brought back some of the low key events under the name "Cal Open House."

Understandably, the department is uneasy each spring when the Cal Poly Open House arrives with the more subdued program.

In 1993 the department brought a new program to the table. This was a system of Peer Party Police. On February 17, 1993, the Tribune ran an article entitled "SLO Council OK's Peer Party Police."

"Students will be the first to respond to loud party complaints under a peer policing program approved by the San Luis Obispo City Council. The Student Neighborhood Assistance Program (SNAP), a cooperative effort between the Police Department and Cal Poly, is set to begin next September. Trained students would assist police by responding to unruly parties first. Such calls, a staff report says, numbered 2,400 in 1991 and took up 900 hours of police time.

"SNAP presents a unique opportunity to develop a collaborative approach to deal with the issue of noise in the community,' said Chief Jim Gardiner. 'The intent of the program is for the student patrol to get partygoers to quiet down and avoid police calls. By doing so,' Gardiner said, 'SNAP could free police to deal with more serious crime.'

"The Council's approval concluded years of research on SNAP,' said police Captain Bart Topham. The program was approved by Cal Poly's Associated Students, Inc. in October 1992. 'We're very pleased,' Topham said. 'The City Council has been very supportive of the concept from the beginning.'

"Last night's action by the Council earmarked over \$15,000 to be spent from the police budget to get the program running,' Topham said. 'That money will be spent on student patrollers, equipment, and training. Details about continued financing of the program still have to be worked out,' Gardiner said.

"Topham said that between now and September, the SNAP program needs to be brought to the public's attention. During that time employees will be selected and trained by completing ride-alongs with police officers. Topham said the program would likely start with one or two teams of two people. The program will then be analyzed as to how it's working and how it can be expanded.

"Topham said he doesn't see any problems in sending students to break up student parties. 'It's a heck of a lot better than having a cop show up with a ticket,' Topham said."



Rick Crocker, DARE Officer 1992

Another innovation in the department was the Bicycle Unit. In October 1996 an article appeared, "SLO Bike Patrol Put On Fast Track." Pictured in this article is Officer Tim Hedges patrolling Pismo Street on his bike that was made possible through a \$500 donation from the SLO Bike Club.



"Police presence downtown will increase thanks to a collaborative effort that is providing office space and a bicycle for pedal pushing patrols.

"Tim Hedges, downtown officer for San Luis Obispo Police Department, will conduct police business from the downtown office, which will be linked via computer to the main police headquarters on Walnut Street. Copeland's Sports donated space for the office at 840 Marsh Street and the Business Improvement Association contributed money.

"I really want to emphasize the partnership that allowed this thing to happen," said Police Chief Jim Gardiner during a kick-off presentation Thursday morning. "We needed space and the Copeland family stepped forward." In the future, the office may become open to the general public, according to a police department release.

"A specially equipped bicycle, which Hedges will use to supplement his regular foot patrols, will allow him to patrol the downtown with greater frequency. While police officers have patrolled on bicycles previously, Hedges will be the first official bike officer, Gardiner said. Hedges said the bicycle will afford him more visibility downtown. "People will see me more often," he said.

"Deborah Holley, administrator for the Business Improvement Association, said Hedges has provided a great service to the downtown since the city began the Downtown Officer Program about a year ago. "He has been very helpful in addressing complaints that people have. He is very accessible and very quick to respond," she said. The BIA donated \$1000 to assist the expansion of the program."



Rachel Newhouse

On November 13, 1998, the police received a report of a missing person. It was reported that a 20-year old Cal Poly student named Rachel Newhouse had not been seen since she left her friends after socializing at Tortilla Flats Restaurant downtown. She left on her own, walking toward home around

midnight. Her roommate became concerned when she did not return and called police the following day.

A massive search was launched to find her. Police called on her family, friends, and acquaintances. Flyers were posted all over town and the media got the word out to assist in the search. Her picture was everywhere and police, the FBI, and Sheriffs deputies contacted anyone connected in any way with the student. Rewards were offered for information as to her whereabouts. Some blood was reported on the Jennifer Street Bridge near the Amtrak station. This was analyzed with the result of a DNA match--the blood was an 8 million to one chance of most likely belonging to Rachel Newhouse. It appeared that she had been there, she had been hurt, and likely taken somewhere else by vehicle. In spite of extensive efforts by all the local authorities there was no trace of Rachel.



Aundria Crawford

On March 12, 1999, a frantic mother called the authorities to say she was concerned because she wasn't able to contact her daughter who lived in San Luis Obispo. She had been trying to get in touch with her both by phone and pager and there was no response. Her daughter was Aundria Crawford, a 20-year old Cuesta student. Aundria and her mother were very close and spoke to each other frequently. For her to be out of contact was very unusual. The police sent a unit to her home and found signs of a break-in and a struggle. It appeared she had been unloading her groceries from her car and someone was in the house when she entered. He had come in through the bathroom window and had been waiting for her return. Aundria, too, became the subject of a massive manhunt by all the law enforcement agencies in the area.

On March 20, 1999, parole officer David Zaragoza paid a call on a parolee, Rex Allen Krebs, in his home in Avila Valley. Mr. Krebs was a known sex offender and was checked on periodically by Officer Zaragoza. Rex Allen Krebs was a 33-year old, originally from Idaho, who had been convicted in California in 1987 on charges of rape, sodomy, assault with intent to commit rape, and three burglaries. The crimes involved a rape in Oceano and a rape attempt in Arroyo Grande. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison but he was paroled in 10 years. He had been living for the past eight months in Davis Canyon and worked at a local lumber store in San Luis Obispo. On this particular visit Officer Zaragoza took Krebs into custody for parole violations that included having a simulated firearm and alcoholic beverages in his home. What was later discovered, as the details of the two missing girls was shared among law enforcement personnel, was that property that matched a description of something belonging to Aundria Crawford was seen by Zaragoza in Krebs's home.

Krebs was taken into custody and questioned by police and DA Investigator Larry Hobson. He confessed his involvement in the girls' kidnappings and subsequent murders to Hobson. As a result of these confessions the police were able to get a warrant to search his home and surrounding land. The bodies of both women were recovered. It was discovered that they had been brutally raped, tortured, and murdered. The trial took place in Monterey, as a change of venue was awarded the defense. It was completed on July 21, 2001, and Krebs was sentenced to the death penalty.

So ended a very sad and very difficult case. Rachel and Aundria are still commemorated each year by other young women who mourn their loss to violence. The hard work of everyone involved speaks to the commitment and untiring efforts of countless officers in law enforcement who gave hundreds of hours of time and dedication to solving these terrible crimes.



Downtown Bike Officers Eric Lincoln & Cindy Dunn

On September 3, 1999, an article appeared in the Tribune titled "Thin Blue Line Getting a bit Thicker in SLO." It reads as follows.

"A steady rise in bad behavior downtown has spurred the Police Department to hire two new officers. The new cops, whose presence will allow for the Downtown Unit's current force to increase from one officer to three, should be on the streets by mid-September. The Police Department has timed the staff additions to coincide with the influx of college students at the onset of the new school year.

"'Downtown calls account for about 20% of the department's workload,' said Bart Topham, a captain with the department. 'There's no question that assaultive behavior has been up in the last couple of years. There's more drinking, more fighting, more traffic, more skateboarders, more everything you can imagine.'

"The police proposed the additions last winter in a two-year budget that kicked in this July."

