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Home >> Articles >> General >> Others >> Street brawl erupts--London, Ontario

**Title: Street brawl erupts--London, Ontario**

Street brawl erupts  
Mon, September 10, 2007

A house party turns into a violent debacle as students battle police officers on Fleming Drive in east London.

By NORMAN DE BONO, SUN MEDIA

A "huge house party" turned into a street brawl early yesterday as London police battled a largely Fanshawe College student crowd in an east London neighbourhood.

More than 30 officers were called to Fleming Drive shortly after midnight to subdue a "violent" crowd of 300 to 500 and used a taser on one person on the street known as a student residence area.

"It was nuts, it was just crazy," Const. Reed Holland said of the clash between youth and police.

"We received initial reports of a large disturbance and a number of officers were sent there to disperse the crowd. When we were trying to deal with the crowd, beer bottles were thrown and it started to get violent and unruly, and officers called for assistance."

One man at the scene said one bottle was thrown, narrowly missing an officer.

"That's when the police just went nuts," said Eric Cosman from Exeter, who was visiting student friends on the street.

"They called in other units and everything went wild. They brought out clubs, started hitting people, slammed people's faces into their (police) wagons."

The incident occurred as London Police launched Project LEARN (Liquor Enforcement and Reduction of Noise), an increase in police patrols in University of Western Ontario and Fanshawe College areas. The controversial program has been criticized by student officials as unfairly targeting students.

"Pretty much every night someone is out here, drinking and partying," added Brian Carey, a second-year Fanshawe student who lives on the street. "It is the first week of school and people party hard."

But Fanshawe College spokesperson Emily Marcoccia yesterday called the incident "hugely disappointing," and one to which the college will "aggressively" respond.

"We will take a day to determine what our next steps are, but we will meet with college officials and student leaders (today) and I tell you our response will be aggressive," said Marcoccia.

The college has student-awareness and -information campaigns to curb student partying, "but we will be debating whether they are enough," she added.

In March, 2006, an 18-year-old high school student struck his head and died following a night of drinking in a Fanshawe College residence room.

"We can only do so much but we hate to see students begin and end their careers in one week," she said.

The college has also met with landlords in the area and some have hired additional security for their buildings. The next step may involve contacting parents of some students, she added.

"Landlord have parents' names and addresses they sign the leases too. We will discuss whether we need to engage parents more," said Marcoccia.

The college does send crews to neighbourhoods to clean the area after such parties, she added.

Jack Goodwin, 68, has lived on Fleming Drive for about 10 years and is now considering moving as a result of the street parties.

"We wanted to stay here, but it hard to say now if we will with all the students here," he said.

There are only a few non-student homes in the subdivision, he added.

"The kids don't care, they are here for a good time. I don't mind them having a beer in their yard but there is litter everywhere and broken glass on the street."

London police described one incident in the area early yesterday in which two males were assaulted by a group of three, which resulted in one of the victims having a beer bottle broken over his head.

The victim needed 10 staples to close a wound in the back of his head. Kevin Cappon, 19, of London, was charged with assault and Zachary Longo, 18, of Etobicoke, was charged with assault with a weapon.

In another incident, Christopher Guerin, 21, of London was subdued by a police Tazer. He is charged with one count of obstructing police and one count of resisting arrest. At the same scene, Joshua Bach, 19, of London was arrested and charged with one count of causing a disturbance.

In addition, numerous arrests were made for breach of the peace and being intoxicated in a public place. But many of these people were released after being held for the night and they weren't charged, added Holland.

The incident was in sharp contrast to the scene there just 24 hours earlier. That's when Controller Gord Hume accompanied police in a cruiser to Fleming Drive and saw some parties.

"That area is almost entirely student housing and I saw hundreds of students wandering from garage party to yard party to house party," but there were no incidents, he said.

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