

Domestic Dispute results in Murder Charges

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

VALDOSTA, Georgia – Valdosta Police Department (VPD) Chief Leslie Manahan has released information related to a murder investigation, which began Sunday. “This was a tragic domestic violence incident, which should have never escalated to the point that this young woman lost her life,” said Manahan.

According to Valdosta Police Department records on January 14, Sunday, about 2:00 p.m., VPD Officers responded to an Econo Lodge, located on 3022 James Road. Lodge employees called E911 to report a dispute between a male and a female at the Econo Lodge. According to the caller, a female was on the floor and bleeding from the head. The caller also indicated that a male had left the scene.

VPD Officers responded quickly to the emergency call. When they arrived at the motel, officers found the victim. The victim was later identified as Jessica Lee Hilliard (41) of Rockford, Tennessee. On the floor, Hilliard was unresponsive. As VPD Officers attempted to provide Hilliard with life saving measures, they determined that she had a gunshot wound to her head. Also responding to the incident, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responded. EMS transported Hilliard to South Georgia Medical Center (SGMC), where she was later pronounced deceased.

As life saving responses were administered to the victim, other VPD Officers at the motel immediately got a description of the offender. The male offender was later identified as Robert Melvin Loge (57), also of Rockford, Tennessee. Loge had fled from the scene.

VPD Officers continued to search the area. During their search, a citizen called E911 and stated that Loge was at the Valdosta Days Inn, located in the 1300 block of North St. Augustine Road. Numerous officers and detectives responded to the Days Inn. While searching for the male suspect, officers located Loge at the motel Loge where he was found hiding in a maintenance utility closet.

Loge was taken into custody without incident. VPD Detectives recovered a firearm, along with other evidence from Loge, connecting him to the shooting.

Detectives and crime scene personnel took over the investigation. Both the victim and the offender were from the Rockford, Tennessee area.

Loge was transported to Lowndes County Jail. He has been charged with:

- Felony murder-felony;
- Aggravated assault-felony; and
- Possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony-felony.

The public’s help is requested by the VPD. They



ask that if anyone has any information on this case, please contact the Valdosta Police Department Bureau of Investigative Services at 229-293-3145, or the crime tip line at 229-293-3091.

VPD Chief Manahan has said, “I am proud of the continuous work our officers and detectives along with other law enforcement in the area to find this offender and take him into custody without incident.”

CAC Valdosta Honored LCSO staff on National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day



By Carol A. Gasser Moore

LANIER COUNTY, Georgia – Last week, a Child Advocacy Center (CAC) Valdosta staff person showed up at the Lanier County Sheriff’s Office (LCSO) on the National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day and officially honored the unwavering dedication of our Lanier County law enforcement officers, who selflessly serve our communities and county, often risking the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

“We are very appreciative of these kind gifts, but are equally thankful for our community partners who work so hard to make Lanier County a better place,” said Sheriff Nick Norton.

Tuesday, January 9th was the official National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. Increasingly police agencies across the country are recognizing the work they do to keep their communities safe. In addition, organizations that those law enforcement agencies work with closely also acknowledge the efforts of our law enforcement. One such agency, the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) of Valdosta actively showed their appreciation by delivering a goody bag of snacks to our Lanier County Sheriff’s Office (LCSO) staff in recognition of their effort to protect our youngest citizens.

The CAC representative indicated that the CAC Valdosta staff wanted to thank law enforcement officers in this area, who faithfully risk their lives to protect our communities. In conversing with the CAC Valdosta representative, that representative pointed out that these brave men and women put on a badge each day, knowing that they may encounter unsafe circumstances while carrying out

their duties and may find themselves the object of abuse and violence. The CAC conveyed that despite these challenges, those law enforcement personnel continue to serve with the maximum commitment and are persistent in working tirelessly to protect and serve the public, and deserve thanks for what they do.

Several Lanier County citizens have agreed that they hope all Lanier Countians take the time to thank our local law enforcement personnel for their sacrifice. Those individuals also indicated that they hope others will encourage support and respect those personnel for everything that they do to keep Lanier County safe. Their commitment, courage, and willingness to safeguard others are a source of inspiration to all of us.

Historically, Law Enforcement Appreciation Day began when multiple organizations joined efforts to express gratitude for law enforcement officers throughout the United States. Those organizations’s intention was to provide the public opportunities to gain greater insights into the integral role that these individuals play in our society, while also strengthening the social bonds between law enforcement officials and the communities that they serve.

The Lanier County News (LCN) says, “Thank you for your service, sacrifice, and commitment to protecting and serving.” The LCN hopes that law enforcement personnel’s efforts are deeply appreciated as well as expressed.

The Lanier County News wants to hear Lanier County citizen’s good news. If you have a positive law enforcement story, please email it to publisher@laniercountynews.com/.

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