EVENT SUMMARY

Mifflin Street Block Party 2011

Prepared by, Lieutenant Kristen Roman
Reviewed by, Captain Carl Gloede

Madison Police Department

Introduction

Earning an article page on the internet encyclopedia, Wikipedia, the Mifflin Street Block Party is described there as "an annual celebration held on Mifflin Street on the first Saturday of May…The party features widespread consumption of alcoholic beverages, as well as local and out-of-state musical acts playing on house porches, balconies and backyard stages." It is telling that Wikipedia and other sources readily cite alcohol consumption as a defining feature of this event. While the event's historical roots are grounded in political activism and later in community fundraising for various political or social causes, the event has evolved to become an end-of-year University of Wisconsin student party with a singular and unabashed focus on alcohol.

For the past three years, an attempt has been made to shift the focus somewhat through the issuance of a street use permit and official event sponsorship. DCNY PRO, LLC with support from WSUM, organized the 2009 and 2010 events. 2010 expanded the event to include an approved beer garden along with an additional music stage. 2011 brought a new sponsor partnership between The Majestic and Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc. It included the issuance of a street use permit that allowed for alcohol to be sold by licensed vendors throughout the event area and for consumption of alcohol on city property incorporated in the event zone (streets, sidewalks, and terraces) along the 400 and 500 blocks of Mifflin St. The 2009, 2010, and 2011 efforts attempted to temper the amount of alcohol consumption by providing food and organized entertainment as the primary focus to the event. In theory, establishing a reason to attend the Mifflin Street Block Party other than to consume alcohol is admirable but as this year's event demonstrated, the identity of the Mifflin Street Block Party as an opportunity to indulge in the overconsumption of alcohol is deeply entrenched. Attempts to mitigate the focus on alcohol through the use of an official sponsor and issuance of a street use permit have thus far fallen considerably short and have instead proven to exacerbate the problems associated with the Mifflin Street Block Party and the binge drinking that has become synonymous with this event.

Police control of this event has emphasized city ordinance enforcement to discourage underage drinking, open intoxicants, glass containers, unruly house parties, unreasonable noise, and public urination. While enforcement action remains an important and appropriate police response to this event, we have made efforts over the years to further address pro-active and co-active measures. We have worked with the University of Wisconsin administrators to encourage increased university involvement and recognition of the Mifflin Street Block Party as a student event in addition to a community event. We have engaged neighborhood stakeholders in discussions and endeavored to educate residents about specific public safety

concerns associated with the over-consumption of alcohol thus establishing a context for enforcement action and reinforcing behavioral expectations.

Central CPT

The Central District Community Policing Team (CPT) plays a considerable role in the planning and preparation for the Mifflin Street Block Party each year. Below are a few items of note that briefly detail Central CPT activities leading to and during the 2011 event:

- 130 hours devoted to event planning
- 115 hours for staffing the event and follow-up
- 50 citations issued directly related to house party enforcement
- 5 house parties contacted and enforced
- 10 kegs and 3 tappers confiscated and returned to appropriate liquor store

Central CPT efforts reflected the district's commitment to informing and educating the residents on Mifflin St. regarding the hazards and consequences to hosting large house parties during the event. Although the overall event faced significant challenges this year, the efforts and activities of the CPT leading up to and during the event should be viewed as a success and a model for preparation for future block parties or similar events.

"PARTY PATROL" CITATIONS

Address	UAL	Dispense	Procure	Encourage	Other	Total
447 W. Mifflin			3			3
430 W. Dayton		3	9	9	2	23
512 W. Mifflin		3	3	3		9
534 W. Mifflin			6	9		15
TOTAL						**50**

Event Overview

Weather is one of the most significant influences on this event. Fair weather this year seemed to prompt an earlier start to the house parties and alcohol consumption in the area. Detox was full by 8:00 AM, which necessitated the diversion of incapacitated persons to area hospitals throughout the day (approximately 20 conveyances related to the event).

During the event, an event log was maintained at the Command Post. A review of the event log noted the weather was sunny and mild for the duration of the festivities with the first arrests made between 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM. In years past, the crowd size gradually increased throughout the day, with overflow crowds not being forced into the backyards of residences along Mifflin St. until the early afternoon hours. This year, however, the crowd size reached its peak early on in the event making it difficult for officers to move through the packed streets and prompting partygoers into the backyards sooner than seen in previous years. Rather than a steady increase, plateau, and decrease throughout the course of the event, this year the street filled early and remained so until the event's end. Arrest activity peaked around 1:00 PM and steadily continued through the remainder of the official event and beyond. Activity associated with the event and in the district as a whole increased this year when compared with previous years' block parties. By 5:00 PM, the event log reflects that arrest-processing sites had processed 121 arrests – a number slightly down from the previous year at this same time. That said, given that open intoxicants and consumption of alcohol were allowed within the event zone, it is not surprising that certain violations would decrease with this year's event. Certainly, arrest numbers do not adequately reflect the level of activity associated with the block party, as officers working the event reported that larger crowds gathered and unprecedented amounts of alcohol were observed freely carried into the area during the event.

In an attempt to manage the flow of alcohol in the event zone, the organizers established a model for the event that included the sale of alcohol to those of legal drinking age at designated beer stands within the event zone. This process involved checking for identification at separate ID stations, and issuing wristbands to individuals intending to purchase alcohol at one of the beer stands. Organizers hoped that this model, coupled with the street use permit allowing for consumption of alcohol on City property (street, sidewalk, and terrace), would provide greater regulation as well as an outlet for partygoers to attend the event without carrying in their own alcohol. Yet, as stated earlier, officers observed significant quantities of alcohol carried into and consumed within the event area. Due to the larger crowd size this year than in previous years, and the failure of the event plan to regulate and reduce alcohol consumption, the street, terraces, and sidewalks reached maximum capacity early, forcing partygoers into backyards. Officers reported numerous items, including beer cans,

were thrown at them from balconies by partiers. While activity in the back yards was managed early on in the event, it quickly became a challenge to monitor due to the numbers gathered there. Even volunteers working the event expressed concern to officers on the street regarding the size of the crowd, and event security requested police assistance on several occasions to deal with various disturbances. The event log noted numerous injuries and Fire/Rescue calls to the area resulting from high levels of individual intoxication.

While the Mifflin Street Block Party has seen a more structured start and finish time in recent years, there remains an ongoing impact throughout the Central District hours after the event has officially ended on Mifflin St. Once the large-scale partying is over for the day on Mifflin St., the students migrate to the State St. corridor for round two at the various taverns in this area. Given this flood of students to the State St. area after the Mifflin Street Block Party, and their level of intoxication from having consumed alcohol throughout the day and into the night, there is typically a spike in disturbances, fights, batteries, and noise complaints long after the party is officially over. To address this issue, we have relied on added staffing throughout the evening hours until bar time. It has become necessary to build in to our Mifflin St. plan, a strong staffing contingency for this post event impact.

It is important to note that in addition to this event, other events were occurring during the same time period in the Central District (Crazylegs, Farmers' Market, Motorcycle Rally), taxing police resources and limiting officer availability for emergencies that may have occurred elsewhere in the City. Staffing for patrol was held over for 1st Detail, and additional staffing was called in early to bolster patrol in the Central District.

The number and variety of calls for service generated by this event are too many to outline in this report. A post-event analysis discussed later will provide an overview of the activities, however, it deserves mention here that three officers were injured policing this event – an event punctuated by two stabbings, four strong-armed robberies, three sexual assaults, three substantial batteries, and numerous reports of property damage.

Arrest and Processing

Disposition	Count	
Detox	16	*
Hospital	2	*
Mailed	0	
Released	132	
Warrant	0	
Jail	12	
* Add'l detox/hosp transports made from event but not processed on-site		
TOTAL	162	

BAC Level	Count
.000-.079	34
.080-.100	5
.101-.150	43
.151-.200	32
.201-.250	29
.251-.300	5
.301-.350	3
.351-.400	0
None	7
Refused	4
TOTAL	162

Violation Type	Count
Admin Code	0
Crim. Felony	4
Crim. Misdemeanor	5
City Ord.	197
TOTAL	206

Ticket Count per arrest	Arrest Count	Ticket Count
0**	9	0
1	111	111
2	31	62
3	11	33
4	0	0
5	0	0
TOTAL	162	206

Processing Location	Arrests Processed
Bassett	63
Bedford	74
CCB	25
TOTAL	162

**Jail-No citations issued or Hospital/Detox- No citations

TIME	Bassett	Bedford	Central	Total
1000-1059	0	0	0	0
1100-1159	2	5	0	7
1200-1259	7	14	1	22
1300-1359	11	12	2	25
1400-1459	8	7	4	19
1500-1559	3	9	2	14
1600-1659	7	5	2	14
1700-1759	11	6	3	20
1800-1859	11	6	4	21
1900-1959	2	7	5	14
2000-2059	0	3	2	5
2100-2159	0	0	0	0
Not Recorded	1	0	0	1
TOTALS	63	74	25	162

Charges	Ticket Count
Open Intoxicants	12
Underage Poss./Con	69
Dep. Human Waste	24
Glass-Free Zone	44
I.D. Not Theirs	4
D.C.	11
Resist/Obstruct	13
Throwing Miss/Stones	5
Trespass	6
Other	18
TOTAL	206

Arrest and Processing (Continued)

University	Count
UW Madison	37
UW Whitewater	6
MATC	5
Minnesota	5
UW Eau Claire	5
UW Milwaukee	5
Alverno	3
Carthage College	3
UW Oshkosh	3
UW Parkside	3
UW Stevens Point	3
UW Stout	3
University of IL	2
UW Platteville	2
High Schools	4
Other UW	4
All Other Schools	14
No School Listed	55
TOTAL	162

Arrests by Age	Count
54	1
49	1
39	1
28	2
24	4
23	9
22	20
21	42
20	32
19	35
18	13
17	1
16	1
TOTAL	162

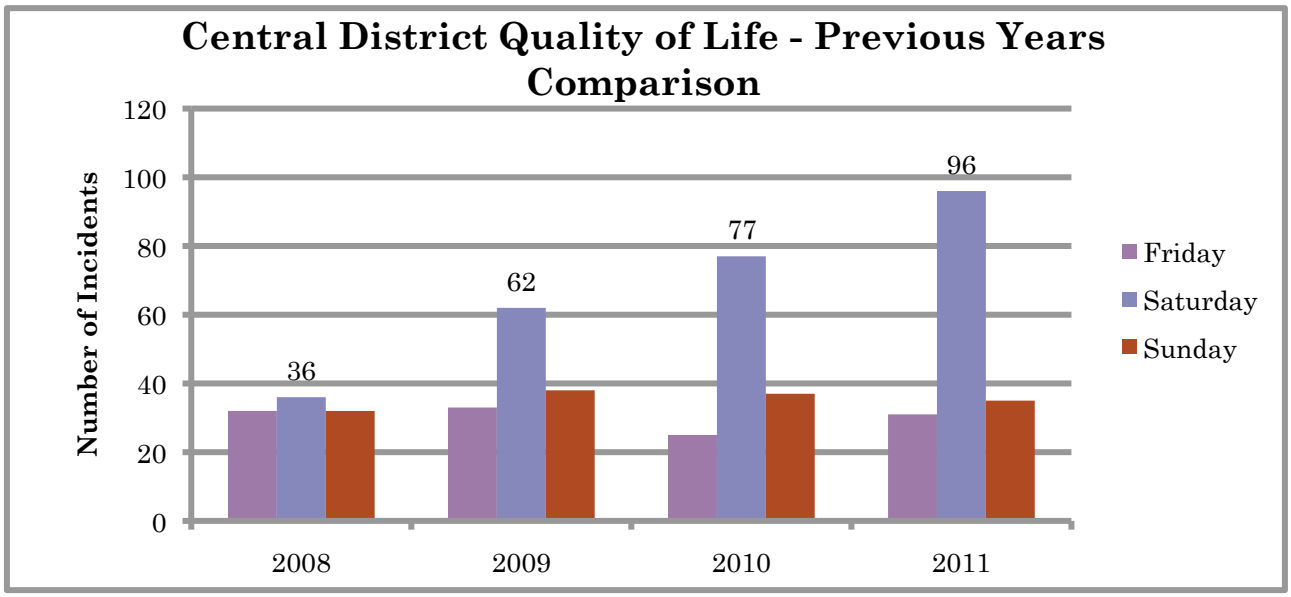
A total of 162 people were processed through the 3 arrest-processing sites during the event and charged with 206 different offenses or violations. These totals mark a decrease from the previous year. The allowance of alcohol consumption on City property likely contributed to this decrease in arrests, as did the larger crowd size this year, which impacted officers' ability to move through the streets to enforce various violations and effect arrests. Given the number of elements that add variability to the arrest numbers at this event (i.e. weather, number of attendees, levels of intoxication, officer discretion) arrest numbers are unpredictable. Officers are given the arrest philosophy for the event, but still have discretion for warnings on behavior. It is understood, as well, that event-assigned officers only arrest a fraction of the violations visible (for reasons previously articulated), and arrests are not a good measure of unlawful event activity.

Changes were made to this year's plan based on 2010 arrest numbers and other adjustments to the arrest function. The overall arrest figures were lower, with arrests starting at about the same time in the event as in the previous year. Future plans should continue to provide a flexible, mobile staffing plan to deal with the issues that arise based on fluctuating arrest

numbers at these field processing sites, and must consider other events taking place at the same time elsewhere in the district.

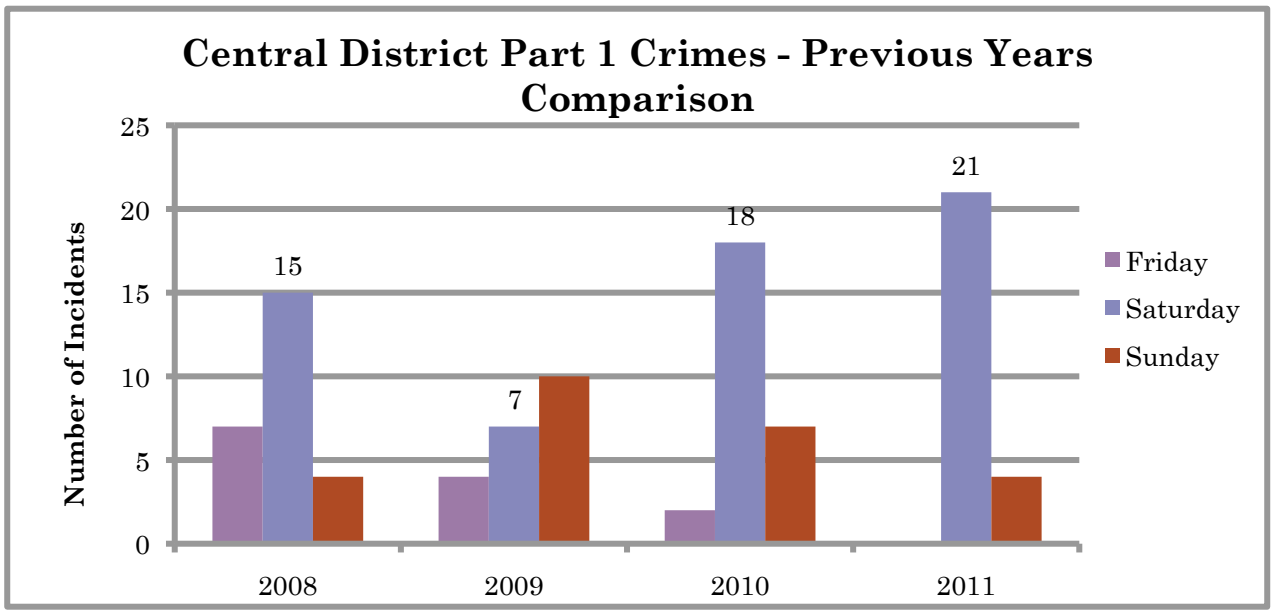
Post Event Analysis

In an effort to assess the impact of this year's event on the Central District, our crime analyst compiled comparative data from the past 4 years with a particular focus on Quality of Life incidents and UCR Part 1 Crimes. The tables below demonstrate incident data, rather than offense data, resulting in a larger margin of error. The raw data reveals that this year's event brought with it an increase in Part 1 Crimes during the event weekend, and negatively impacted the quality of life in the Central District when compared with previous years.



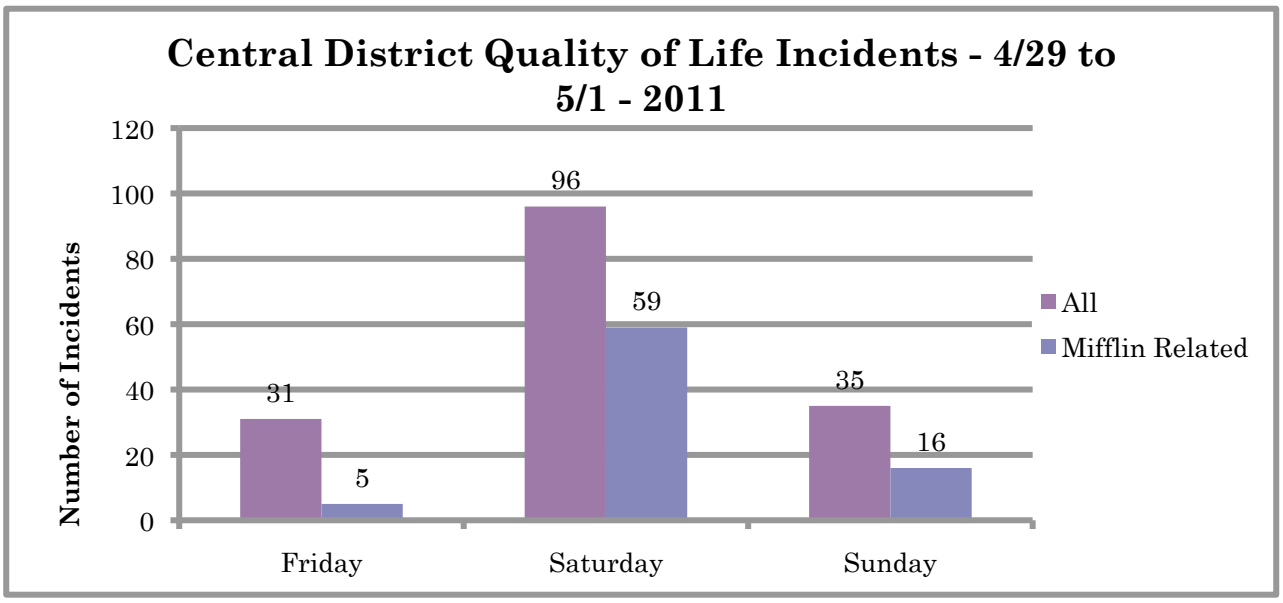
(Figure 1)

Figure 1 portrays all of the specified QOL issues (see LIST A) that occurred on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday of the Mifflin Block Party for 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011.



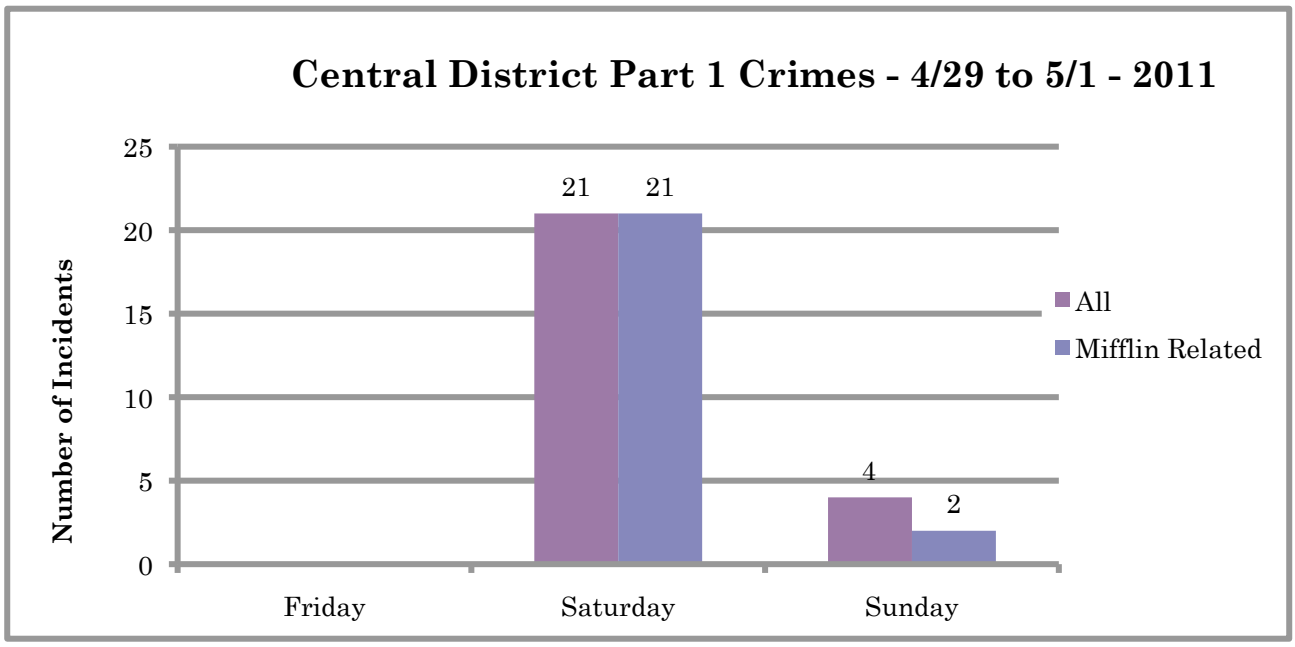
(Figure 2)

Figure 2 portrays all of the specified Part 1 Crimes (see LIST A) that occurred on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday of the Mifflin Block Party for 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011.



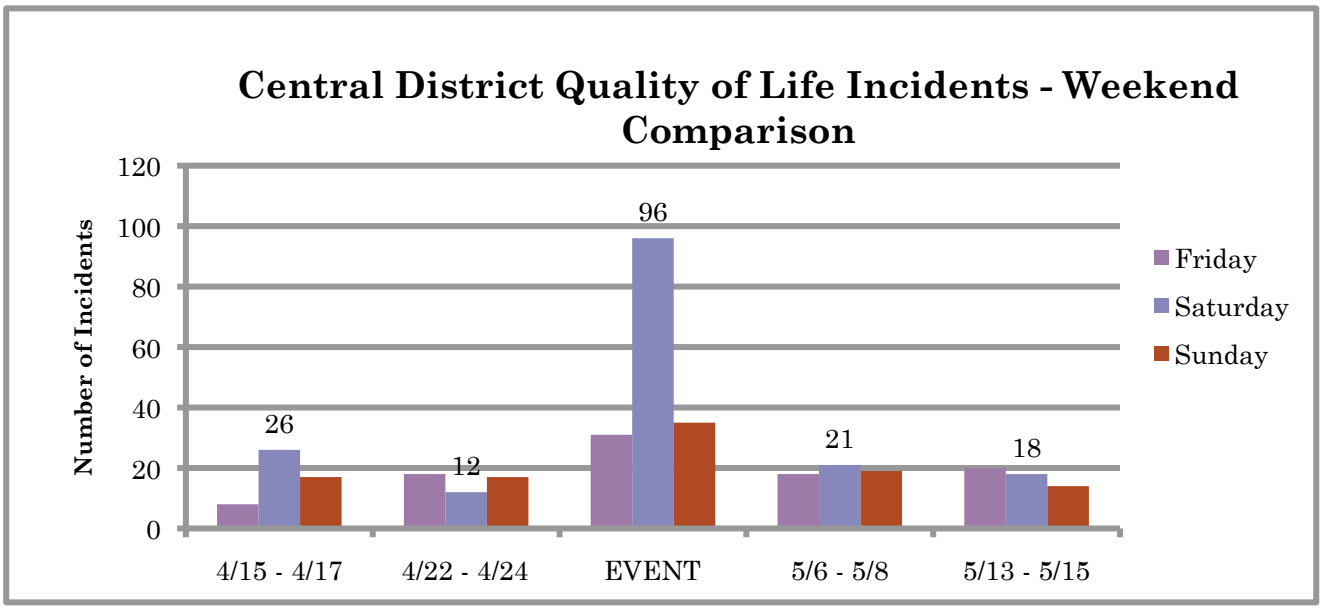
(Figure 3)

Figure 3 portrays all of the specified QOL issues (see LIST A) as well as the QOL issues that can be directly attributed to the Mifflin Block Party that occurred on Friday, Saturday and Sunday of 2011.



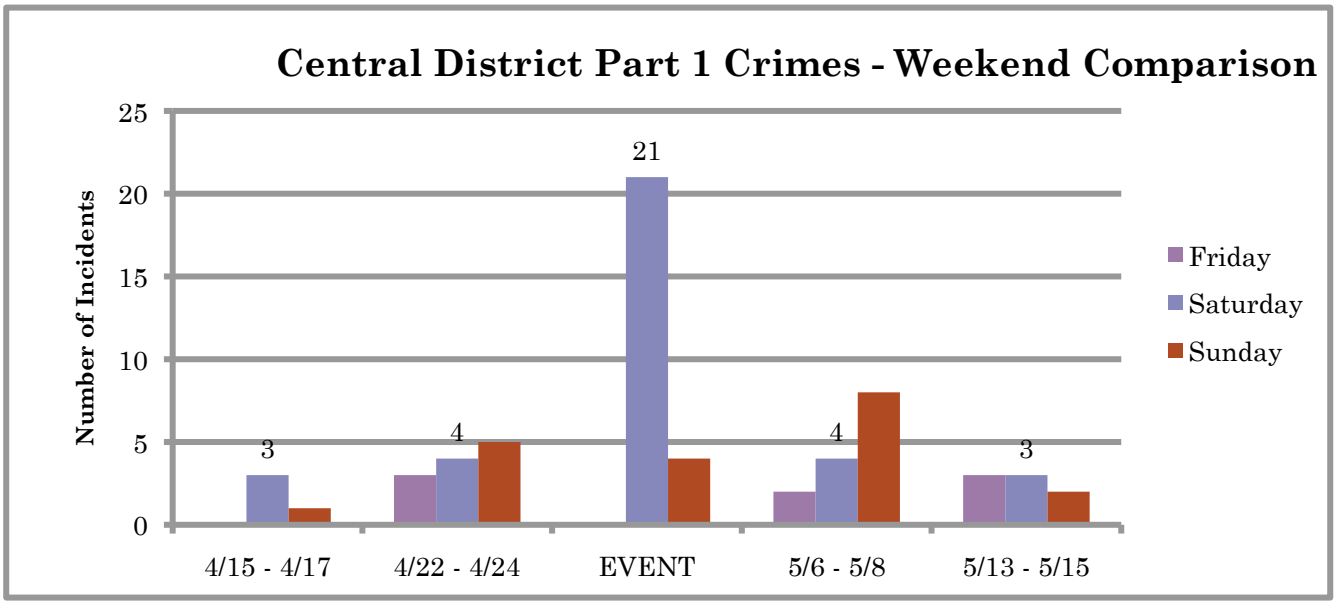
(Figure 4)

Figure 4 portrays all of the UCR Part 1Crimes (see LIST A) as well as the UCR Part 1Crimes that can be directly attributed to the Mifflin Block Party that occurred on Friday, Saturday and Sunday of 2011.



(Figure 5)

Figure 5 portrays all of the specified QOL issues (see LIST A) that occurred on Friday, Saturday and Sunday for the two weekends before the Mifflin Block Party, the weekend of the Mifflin Block Party, as well as the two weekends after the event in the year 2011.



(Figure 6)

Figure 6 portrays all of the specified UCR Part 1Crimes (see LIST A) that occurred on Friday, Saturday and Sunday for the two weekends before the Mifflin Block Party, the weekend of the Mifflin Block Party, as well as the two weekends after the event in the year 2011.

List A

COMPILED LIST OF UCR PART 1 CRIMES AND QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

Part 1 Crimes

- Aggravated Battery
- Arson
- Battery
- Non-Residential Burglaries
- Residential Burglaries
- Robbery-Armed
- Robbery-Strong Armed
- Sexual Assault 1-2-3-4/Rape
- Sexual Assault of a Child
- Stolen Auto

Quality of Life Issues – Identified specifically for this event

- Damaged Property Complaint
- Disturbance Call
- Drug Incident
- Exposure
- Fight Call
- Noise Complaint
- Theft from Auto
- Trespassing Complaint
- Unwanted Person

Findings

- The total number of QOL and UCR Part 1 Incidents (Figures 1 & 2) display an increase from 2008 to 2011.
    - This information is for all of central district and not specifically related to the Mifflin Block Party for 2011.
- Over half (59) of the QOL incidents (Figure 3) that occurred on Saturday, April 30th, 2011 can in some way be attributed to the Mifflin Block Party.
    - It should be noted that since there is no universal way to deem an incident to be associated to the Mifflin Block Party, there may be discrepancies depending on who reads the reports.
- While it appears there were the same number of Part 1 Crimes (All/Mifflin specific) on Saturday, April 30th, 2011 (Figure 4) the following describes the differences:
    - "Mifflin Related" numbers include three University of Wisconsin-Madison Police reports.
    - Of the 21 "Mifflin Related" incidents that took place on Saturday, four of them were from reports that were completed outside of the 4/30 to 5/1 timeframe.

Central district experiences a drastic increase in the number of incidents (both QOL & Part 1 Crimes) that occur on the day of the Mifflin Block Party compared to other weekends leading up to and directly after the event.

Financial Impact

The overall costs for the event increased from the 2010 event by $42,983. The costs to date are as follows:

Overtime & Benefits	$106,417
Premium Pay	$1, 294
Straight Time & Benefits	$22,653
Supplies	$178
TOTAL	**$130,542**

Although MPD personnel have worked diligently for years to try and reduce the costs of overtime associated with this event, changes in the structure of the event this year led to a substantial increase in the length of time employees were required to work. The event changes resulted in an inability to stagger the start times for the SET platoons, and the number of significant incidents (stabbings, batteries, robberies, disturbances, etc.) related to the event resulted in many employees working longer than anticipated hours.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This event continues to present as a large overflowing party, with numerous houses in the area "hosting" gatherings on the same day. The inclusion of a sponsored stage in 2009 was speculated by some outside law enforcement to have been responsible for a reduction in arrests from the previous year. Based on the significant increase in arrests in 2010 and an increase in overall activity within the Central District related to the 2011 event, it is clear that no one element is responsible for the number of arrests and that arrests alone cannot provide an adequate measure of success for policing this event. Central District command has continuously emphasized voluntary compliance for this event through pre-event education, ongoing dialogue with the neighborhood residents, and a consistent enforcement stance. Additional variables introduced to this year included new sponsors, a single music stage, and the allowance for alcohol sales and consumption on City property within the event zone. This resulted in the free flow of alcohol, excessive consumption, and disorder, injury and violence often associated with high levels of intoxication.

Our overall goal for the 2011 Mifflin Street Block Party was to ensure a safe and orderly environment that prevented injury to personnel and attendees as well as protected public and private property. As stated

earlier, three officers were injured policing this event, and officers and investigators responded to two stabbings, four strong-armed robberies, three sexual assaults, three substantial batteries, and numerous reports of property damage related to this event. Feedback from officers who worked directly in the event zone consistently noted a greater level of hostility from partygoers, and that enforcement was challenging, particularly for the glass ban, due to the enormous crowd size. These officers reported an increase in items, such as beer cans, thrown from balconies at officers and into the crowd, and an escalation of physical altercations as a result of the excessive drinking and limited police resources to address these issues. Given the free flow of alcohol into the event zone, partiers were seen passing around jugs, pitchers, and various other containers full of alcohol. And though the sponsors attempted to shift the focus from alcohol to music, the location of the stage at one end of the event and the size of the crowd made it difficult for people to migrate to the music stage. Instead, most opted to simply consume alcohol in the streets, or at one of the many independent parties up and down the 400-500 blocks of Mifflin St.

Because the permit allowed for alcohol to be sold and consumed in the street this year, an overall attitude of "anything goes" seems to have pervaded not just the Mifflin Street area, but the Central District as a whole. Individuals were observed far from the Mifflin Street neighborhood carrying open intoxicants and/or consuming alcohol on public property. In this way, the event was in essence expanded to a much larger geographical area than was intended or that the permit dictated. As a result, police staffing in the district was strained both during the event and well into the late night and early morning hours.

The prevalence of alcohol at this event remains an ongoing concern. Efforts to stem the flow of alcohol and minimize its over-consumption have been and will continue to be a focus of the Central District approach to this event. Yet police education and enforcement related to this recurring event issue will not mitigate its impact without the influence of other entities – namely mayoral and aldermanic support; the specific sponsor/promoter; landlords; university administrators; and the students themselves.

In the planning stages for this year's event, Central District Command advised stakeholders that only two options existed with respect to the future of the block party: Either improvements to the event were made to make it safer and to shift the focus of the event from alcohol consumption to music entertainment, or disband the event entirely. For the third consecutive year, attempts have been made through the issuance of street use permits and the implementation of sponsored music stages to shift the tide of this event and to no avail. There is little else that has not been tried, which leaves only the conclusion that an event of this size – with its longstanding focus on alcohol consumption – in this particular neighborhood simply cannot continue.