



Above: Richardson Officer M.W. Kincy detains a drunken-driving suspect who was spotted by members of the Citizens DWI Task Force. Below: Jerry Judkins

Jr. (left) and Mike Clark keep an eye out for possible drunken drivers. Some officers say they worry about citizen involvement in such unofficial efforts.

The Dallas Morning News: Matt McClain

Nov. 15, 1999

Citizen DWI patrol keeps eyes on road

Some police departments discourage effort because of safety concerns

By Alison Gregor

Staff Writer of The Dallas Morning News

Inching its way along a highway exit, a Buick Skylark with its blinkers pulsing in the darkness brakes sporadically and nearly sideswipes the concrete exit wall — twice.

Jerry Judkins Jr. snaps to attention, hitting the gas and turning on the police scanner in his Ford Explorer outfitted with state-approved blue and amber police lights.

"We're good to go," he says to Mike Clark, who checks to make sure a video camera is on and dials Plano police dispatch on the car phone.

Both suspect that the driver of the Buick Skylark will become the 40th drunken driver that the Citizens DWI Task Force will have helped remove from the streets in six weeks.

Looking for drunken drivers from 10:30 p.m. into the early morning hours on Fridays and Saturdays is not the pastime of choice for every 19-year-old, but Mr. Clark said he feels compelled to help



make the streets safer.

"We keep hearing about the number of fatality accidents involving drunk drivers," he said. "We help to make it a little bit safer for everybody everywhere."

Mr. Judkins, Mr. Clark's 29-year-old uncle, formed the task force in September to help police find and apprehend drunken drivers.

Four other Plano residents help the men patrol Plano, Richardson, Allen, McKinney, Dallas and Collin County. Members of the group work in pairs or trios.

Some law-enforcement agencies welcome the extra help, though others are more concerned with the task force members' safety.

Plano police spokesman Officer Carl Duke said his department is happy any time "we can get someone out there to be our ears and eyes ... as long as they're not trying to take enforcement action."

Allen police spokesman Capt. Robert Flores said his department will try to respond to a call from anyone who reports a possible DWI.

"We'll use all the help we can get in apprehending these drunk drivers," he said. "As long as it's not confrontational, I think it's a great idea."

But Dallas police have not encouraged the task force and do not respond to many of its calls.

"We would discourage citizens from involving themselves to this extent for their own safety," said Dallas Police Department spokesman Sgt. Jim Chandler.

Please see CITIZENS on Page 25A.

METROPOLITAN

Citizens take up patrol to keep drunken drivers off road

Continued from Page 21A.

"We welcome the information, but we would strongly discourage them from following any suspect — whether it's a DWI or other suspect."

Because of that message, task force members drop pursuits if cars head into Dallas.

"Going west or east, it's all Dallas, and Dallas just does not respond," Mr. Clark said.

The weekend patrols are mostly on U.S. Highway 75 south of Interstate 635 pursuing cars north into

Richardson, Plano and Collin County.

The task force hopes to expand its operation by getting another vehicle donated from a rental-car company, Mr. Judkins said.

When a possible drunken driver is spotted, task force members start the videotape rolling. They call police, follow the suspected driver and wait for a response.

"It wouldn't be safe for us to attempt to stop somebody," Mr. Clark said.

Mr. Clark and Mr. Judkins turn

over the tapes to police as evidence, which is admissible in court, according to the Dallas district attorney's office. They also write out and sign witness statements.

In some instances, the Explorer has reached speeds of 90 mph while following cars on U.S. Highway 75, though the pursuit is dropped if it approaches 100 mph, Mr. Clark said.

"Here's where you're going to have the problem — when they try to exceed the authority they have to do what they're trying to do," said Deputy Chief Larry Zacharias with

the Richardson Police Department.

"They have an obligation to obey all traffic laws. ... Just because they have taken this community service upon themselves doesn't mean they have any special rights or privileges."

He said the task force should be aware that some of the people they follow may not be drunk but just erratic drivers. Those drivers may become scared that they're being followed and take risky evasive action or call police.

Sgt. Chandler said group mem-

bers may be more effective by becoming reserve officers with the police department.

"To become involved, I think you do need to be informed on the law, and I think you do need to have some training offered by a local police agency," he said. "It sounds like they have good intentions — they're just going about it the wrong way."

Mr. Judkins and Mr. Clark, both Citizens Police Academy graduates, said they are considering becoming reserve officers.

"We are not interested in doing this to be police officers," Mr. Judkins said. "We are interested in doing this to get the drunks off the street."

And what became of the swerving Buick Skylark? Plano police officers responded to the task force call and found the driver about 4 a.m. stopped in a parking lot. Officers talked with him for a few minutes and decided to let him walk away, rather than get behind the wheel again. No arrest, but no reckless driver on the road, either.

Dallas soccer team players balance sport, daily lives

Continued from Page 21A.

nationally in the W-League of the United Soccer Leagues, a group that governs the country's minor league teams.

Although the Heat's regular season ended in August, they showed off their skills Sunday in an exhibition game against Texas A&M's women's soccer club. Their 12-1 victory was played at Reunion Arena before the men of the Sidekicks, Dallas' World Indoor Soccer League team, took the field.

Confidence was high in the Heat's locker room before the game — even though players had forgotten to bring tape and the Sidekicks could spare none of their own — and the women were eager to get on the field.

Although W-League rules allow some professional players on the team, all the Heat players are amateurs. They maintain full-time jobs or attend college while practicing twice a week during the season and playing games on weekends.

Very long days

"It's all about balance," Ms.

would work hard and sell season tickets," Ms. deMarco said. "And they worked hard selling tickets. They hit their friends up and their parents. The ones who coached even hit up the parents of their kids."

Between 300 and 400 people paid to watch the team play at each game, said John Sutter, the vice president of development at NTSSA. Ticket revenues go to NTSSA, which pays for team trips and accommodations.

"There were 50 to 100 kids standing on the field after the games waiting for players to sign autographs," Mr. Sutter said.

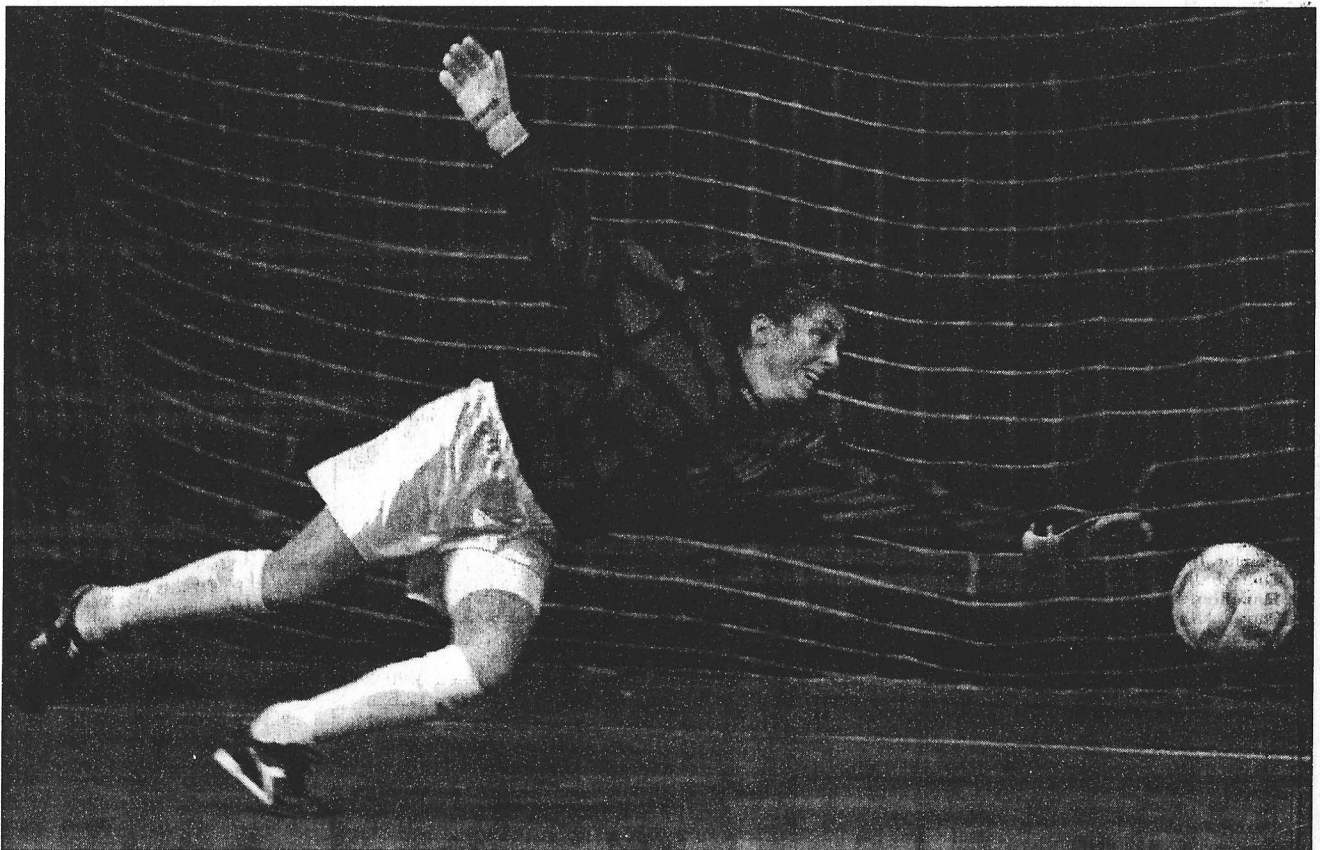
He expects more fans starting in May, when the team moves to the W-I division and finds a higher level of competition.

Flexibility a must

Many of the players have chosen professions with flexible schedules or understanding bosses who allow them to travel to games.

Janette Javet-Barton, a 28-year-old midfielder, works at her family's pool-construction business.

"You can call me any time.



North Texas Heat goalie Heather Bridgewater stretched for a

women's semipro team, which consists of amateur players who

The Dallas Morning News: Mona Reeder