

# "Noise Free America Helps Savannah"

by Patrice Thomas, RN

Savannah, Georgia and Chatham County have a major problem with loud car stereos, or "boom cars."

We have been battling "boom cars" in our area since 1998. We are subjected to their noxious sound around the clock, both in our neighborhood and nearby highway. "Boom cars" have made our quality of life very poor, and our neighborhood has really gone downhill since they arrived.

In 2001, finally exasperated, we got online and began researching noise and the type of sound that "boom cars" are known to produce. We found NOISE FREE AMERICA.

Ted Rueter, Mark Huber, Carla Moore, and our fellow members at NOISE FREE AMERICA helped us begin our campaign against "boom cars" in our area. They provided advice, support, research, and encouragement to us during our struggle for peace and quiet.

In 2001, we notified all of our local and state officials regarding "boom cars." The response was lackluster, despite the fact we sent a wealth of information on noise and "boom cars."

We called the police repeatedly to our home for noise calls. As the police visited our home, we attempted to educate them in regard to the hazards of "boom cars" and the type of sound they produce. EVERY officer that visited our home told us that "boom cars" were a major problem in the city.

In addition, we called our landlord repeatedly to see if he could stop the noise in our neighborhood.

The noise and "boom cars" continued...

We decided the cure to the problem was to move to the surrounding counties, where it was quieter and safer. Unfortunately, a LOT of other people had the same idea, and we were unable to locate the amount of land we wanted to seclude us from noise. We were stuck!!

In 2002, we traveled extensively. It was GREAT being away from our noisy neighborhood and city. Though disruptive, life on the road was much more peaceful than Savannah. In that entire year, we were home only 3-4 days per month, and those 3-4 days at home were filled with noise and "boom cars."

In 2003, we chose a job with local opportunities. We were now back at home, and the "boom cars" were worse than ever. Plus, several of our 6-8 noisy neighbors had gotten loud home stereo systems. We were, again, getting nowhere. And, there was, again, no large amounts of land to purchase in the surrounding counties...

We contacted several local police officers, and they began to assist us in solving our "boom car" problems. A roadblock was set up near our neighborhood. A lot of warrants and arrests were made from that event--but "boom cars" were not the main focus.

As a result of our noise plight, in July 2003, NOISE FREE AMERICA voted Savannah as a NOISY DOZEN recipient. This press release was sent to our local TV stations, radio stations, and newspaper.

The local newspaper reporters had varied reactions to the press release.

One newspaper reporter was very hostile in regard to me. Though she never bothered to contact us directly, she made it plain to Ted, at NOISE FREE AMERICA, that she did not want to publish a story that would hurt Savannah's tourism trade on just the word of one person-- namely, me!! I contacted this reporter via email twice, sending her a wealth of information on "boom cars" and the list of people in Savannah I knew were bothered by "boom cars" and noise themselves. In addition, one of my contacts even emailed this reporter as well.

Again, no word was ever received from this reporter!

Another newspaper reporter was just the opposite!

He was very concerned over our city and "boom cars." He received our "boom car" information with open arms and listened to our story! In addition, the city was getting ready to pass an anti-cruising law that would help get "boom cars" off the streets as well. As a result, he published our story and information about the the upcoming anti-cruising law -- on the FRONT PAGE!! WE MADE THE HEADLINES!!

As a result of my police contacts, and the coverage in the Savannah newspaper, a second road block was set up near our neighborhood. This time, "boom cars" were also targeted. The road block did not yield as many "boom car" citations as we hoped, but some of the ones that did get pulled over were interesting events.

From this roadblock, several things happened:

(1) One "boom car" boy was approached at a convenient store. He had left his car stereo playing while he went to shop in the store. When he came out, the officer was waiting for him. The "boom car" boy was found to be driving a car that was not his, the license plate was not the right one for the automobile, and he was found to be behind on his child support...

(2) One "boom car" girl was found to be drinking and driving, no license, no registration, no proof of insurance, and she was under investigation for ARSON! Seems her house burned down recently in a bit of a suspicious nature... Anyway, when the police went to arrest her, she began to resist arrest, by hollering, "HELP! HELP!! THE POLICE HAVE ME!" As they settled her down, she demanded her purse. She went on and on about the purse. Finally, they gave it to her, but they had to search it first... Found in the purse were crack pipes, drug residue, and various tools used by regular drug users!

(3) Several "boom car" boys rejected being pulled over, citing the fact they had FACTORY stereo systems in their cars. Well, FACTORY systems are now very powerful, but they don't have to be played at full blast!

Meanwhile, we sent an 11-page letter to each city and county official and law-enforcement personnel. Our letter told our story, gave a wealth of "boom car" information, and listed solutions to this noise plight. So far, the letter has generated GREAT response from the county commissioners and city police.

We are still hearing "boom cars" in our neighborhood and nearby highway -- but there is a noticeable difference. At this point, there doesn't seem to be as many. We are going to work with our police, city, and county officials in every way possible to provide Savannah and Chatham County with a safer and quieter environment!

Thank you for helping us--Ted, Mark, Carla, and everyone at NOISE FREE AMERICA!!!

Sincerely,

Patrice Thomas, RN  
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