

Gladstone Police raid suspected prostitution house

by Cheryl McDermott

Earlier today, Gladstone Police and Clackamas County Interagency Task Force detectives raided the Gladstone home of a husband and wife suspected of running a thriving prostitution business.

Detectives executed a search warrant at 1400 Cornell Avenue, and interviewed Christina Lee Smith, 43, and her 24-year old husband Austin J. Batchelor.

Suspected prostitution house at 1400 Cornell Ave., Salem. (Inset: Austin J. Batchelor) Photos provided by GPD
Police began the investigation after community members reported frequently seeing young women come to the home, followed a short while later by men driving up and also entering the residence. After a brief time period, the men would leave, followed by the women. "It didn't take the neighbors long to come to a conclusion on what they believed was happening," said police.

The investigation is continuing, and findings will be delivered to the Clackamas County District Attorney's (DAs) office for consideration of charges. Possible charges for the couple could include promoting prostitution (a Class C felony), punishable by up to five years in prison and \$125,000 in fines.

Charlene Clayton, 40, who arrived at the house during the raid, was also interviewed and later released pending possible charges to be determined by the DA.

Statistically, police said, the City of Gladstone has low arrest numbers for prostitution and related charges. "It is not a common crime in our jurisdiction when compared to other crimes we investigate. And, having it organized in a home within a close-knit neighborhood is even more rare. This case would not have come together had it not been for the help of our community."

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