

Suspected drunken driver nabbed

Off-duty auxiliary officer helps capture 'dangerous' motorist

By **JEFF LIPTON**

An off-duty Five Towns auxiliary patrol officer helped police capture a drunken driving suspect who slammed into a utility pole and a parked minivan on Saturday night before speeding away, officials said.

Jonathan Isler, who joined the Five Towns auxiliary police Unit 109 about two months ago, said he had just left a restau-

rant on Central Avenue in Cedarhurst at about 10 p.m. on Nov. 25.

He was driving down Broadway in Woodmere with his wife and another couple in his car when a black Mitsubishi Gallant sped by him on the right-hand side.

"He zoomed right by me, and he started fishtailing and crossing the center line into

See **AUXILIARY**, page 26

Auxiliary officer aids police in 5-Towns

Continued from page 4

oncoming traffic," said Isler. "He was driving very erratically. The guy was dangerous, he was all over the road, on sidewalks and grass.

It was very frightening to watch. He then went to make a sharp right and crashed into a utility pole.

"I immediately called 911 and was going to see if I can help him when he began to drive on the grass and cut across Broadway and slammed into a parked minivan in the oncoming traffic lane," he added.

Isler said he remained on the phone with the 911 operator, describing the direction the suspect was driving and following behind him at a safe distance.

The suspect then made a right onto Willow Road in Woodsburgh and another right into a dead-end street.

"He then sped out of the dead end down willow at a high rate of speed. I tried to keep a safe distance as his driving was extremely erratic and out of control," Isler said.

Fourth Precinct police officers arrived and cornered the suspect on Broadway and Wood Lane South in Woodmere. The suspect, identified as Rafael Guerrero, 19, of Queens Village, was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated, police said.

No one was reported injured, officials said.

"It was fortunate that it was late at night or else it could have been terrible because

he could have mowed down pedestrians," said Isler of Woodmere, who said he joined the auxiliary police to help safeguard his neighborhood against incidents such as the one on Saturday night.

Comments about this story? Jlipton@liherald.com or (516) 569-4000 ext. 210.

Crime Watch

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