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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

"Party bus" crammed with 90 people cited by Boston police

Posted by Your Town October 29, 2010 06:13 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

A "party bus" packed with 90 young people came to a grinding halt in Allston last week when police cited the operators for a variety of violations including allowing underage passengers aboard, open alcohol containers, loud music, displaying emergency vehicle lights without a permit and overcrowding by three times its capacity, according to city police.

Police said officers watched the bus, with music blaring and lights flashing, make multiple stops – at times blocking traffic – to pick up and drop off dancing passengers last Friday along Commonwealth Avenue.

The bus picked up a large number of partiers in the Boston College area, before heading inbound on Commonwealth Avenue at a slow, 10 mile-per-hour clip, and often occupying both of the busy roadway's lanes, according to a police report.

The name of the driver and the bus company were redacted in a report released today.

In general, party buses charge a group fee to transport passengers from bar to bar, so party-goers don't get behind the wheel of their own cars.

The red, black and white trolley bus's windows were painted and covered and it had "hockey type" markings and blue lights along its exterior, while a hanging disco ball and blue, red and white flashing lights inside – visible through the windshield – made it "appear as though this bus was a piece of emergency apparatus, such as a fire truck with engaged emergency lights," a police report said.

When detectives in an unmarked vehicle turned on their own blue lights and sirens, other nearby drivers moved out of their way. The bus driver, however, did not pull over for five blocks, "presumably because the operator could not hear the multi-tone sirens and could not distinguish between our emergency lights and his own," the report said.

At the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and Gorham Street, the driver was asked to turn off the "deafening" music and police asked if he had checked passengers' identification. The driver repeatedly said all on board were of legal drinking age, according to the report.

Other detectives, who police said were familiar with the driver from a prior

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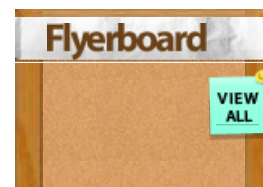
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encounter elsewhere in the city, then arrived.

As police checked the passengers' IDs, they counted 90 people on the bus, which has a capacity of 30 people. Most were holding open containers and drinking, while surrounded by a tub of beer cans and ice, five bottles of wine and champagne and a mixture of full and empty beer cans littered on the bus' seats and floor.

Two underage Boston College students attempted to crouch down and sneak off the front of the bus past officers. They were picked up by campus police.

Citations were issued for the bus's steady, exterior blue lights and for operating blue and red flashing lights inside without a permit; obstructing traffic, running idle over five minutes; open alcohol containers; impeded operation as the driver's hearing and visibility were impaired by the bus' situation; loud music; obstructed windows; and being over capacity.

License premise violations were also issued for overcrowding, transporting over 20 gallons of alcohol, failure to properly check IDs allowing minors onboard a bus with open alcohol containers, no supervision system, and excessive noise.

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