

The Valley Breeze

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All-day concert to benefit Grimes investigation

CUMBERLAND - Tickets are on sale for an all-day benefit concert at The Blackstone nightclub in Pawtucket on Saturday, Nov. 17 that will boost the resources of family members reopening the unsolved case of the death of Cumberland police detective James Grimes.

The event, a mix of music and comedy, will run from 1 p.m. through closing, says organizer Cindy Fanning, who went to school with the late police officer.

Blackstone owner John LeFrancois has donated his club for the fund-raiser free of charge, Fanning said.

The Blackstone recently relocated from Cumberland to 1005 Main St. in Pawtucket.

Among those assisting Fanning are former friends of Grimes, Bonnie Large and Patty Tweadie.

Fanning stepped forward with the offer to help raise funds after reading about the efforts of Marianne Grimes Ezovski and other family members to pursue this 11-year-old case never solved by the Providence Police Department.

The family faces fees related to cost of private detective Thomas Shamshak as well as the cost of performing independent laboratory work.

Known to all as "Jimmy," Grimes was a 1981 graduate of Cumberland High School and 1991 graduate of the University of Rhode Island in criminology.

A popular officer known for his devotion to his work, he was found dead in a rental car parked in a lot at 122 Mathewson St. just past midnight on Monday, Aug. 26, 1996.

Grimes, 33, single, and a member of the Cumberland Police Department for more than five years, was off-duty that Sunday evening after attending a barbecue for the local Fraternal Order of Police.

Several days passed before officials ruled the death a homicide, but even then, the cause of death was withheld.

A smattering of subsequent news stories over the years continued to refer to the mystery surrounding his death and investigators' failure to make an arrest.

Now family members say they've waited long enough and are hoping the passage of time and a fresh investigator will lead to new information.

To track donations, a bank account has been created at Navigant Credit Union and checks may be made payable to the Det. James Grimes PI Fund.

Entertainers on Nov. 17 will include a band that performed in the area in the 1980s and 90s, BATW, headed by Fanning's husband Ed Blekicki.

Also, Steve Lally, a former Central Falls battalion chief with the fire department, will perform with his band, Classic Rock.

The complete lineup of performers was still being made final this week, Fanning said.

Those who purchase fund-raising tickets may also stay for the Blacktone's evening line up, Dino Club with Shawn Waters and Groupthink.

Tickets are \$15 and available at the Cumberland Police Station, 1380 Diamond Hill Road, T'Hair Place on John Street, or e-mail jimmy-grimes-fundraiser@googlegroups.com.

"We're trying to raise as much as possible," said Fanning, who noted that public interest may be as important as money.

"We would like to keep the story alive, because no matter how much money we make, if no one is pushed to help, it won't matter."

She added, "I am hoping to generate as much community involvement as I can. Especially around Jimmy's brothers in arms or helping hands, so to speak, as I prefer to see it."

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