Spring Break has been an annual ritual for Columbia students since, well, probably since the fraternity Phi Kappa Psi attended the College Coaches’ Swim Forum in Fort Lauderdale in 1938. Hundreds of college athletes and their supporters descended on that quiet community to compete in the first of what was to become an annual event. The hundreds soon mushroomed to thousands, the post-event activities soon eclipsed the actual athletics, and Fort Lauderdale, thanks in part to the 1960 movie “Where the Boys Are,” became synonymous with beer-guzzling, rowdy college students looking for romance while on break from their studies. Today, as Spring Break locales have gotten more exotic (e.g. Cancun, Caribbean, etc.), and the behavior has gotten a bit more raucous (think “Girls Gone Wild”), it is imperative that students exercise some caution, especially when travelling abroad. A recent spate of shootings and violent crime in several Mexican cities has prompted the U.S. State Department to issue a travel alert advising Americans of the dangers in cities such as Tijuana, Ciudad de Juarez, and Nogales. As a result, many American universities are advising students not to venture south of the border this spring. The Columbia University Public Safety Department joins those universities in urging students to think carefully and do diligent research before venturing out of the country. Following a few simple safety precautions can help make your Spring Break adventure a more enjoyable experience.

**Before leaving:**
- Secure your dorm room or apartment.
- Unplug all appliances.
- Make sure all windows are closed and locked.
- Leave a copy of your travel itinerary with someone back home.

**Use the buddy system:**
There is safety in numbers and it is best to do things as a group. Try to have at least three members of your group with you at all times when leaving your hotel. Don’t leave a friend behind. If you go out together, come home together!

**Drinking:**
If you are of legal drinking age and you do decide to drink, do so responsibly. Reports indicate that 98% of spring breakers who suffered injuries were intoxicated at the time. Note also that drinking to intoxication leaves a person more susceptible to becoming the victim of a sexual assault or other serious crime. Keep your drink in sight at all times. If you must leave an unfinished drink to go to the bathroom or dance floor, discard it and purchase a new one when you return. Leaving a drink unattended gives anyone (including bar personnel) the opportunity to tamper with it.

**DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE.** Use a designated driver or choose public transportation.

**Traveling:**
- If travelling abroad, check the U.S. State Department’s Travel Alerts at: www.travel.state.gov
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Prepaid Travel money cards are best. For more info go to: www.visa.com/prepaid
- Leave credit cards & ATM cards locked in a secure place.
- Keep track of your baggage and personal belongings at all times.

Please see short video on a special report from CNN on Spring Break - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UhzYX9ubZQ
Stolen laptop Recovered as a Result of Mac Phone Home & Operation Identification

A SIPA student studying late at one of our libraries had fallen victim to the theft of her laptop when she stepped away for a short break. Little did the thief know, the victim’s laptop was equipped with Public Safety’s Mac Phone Home and Operation ID programs which the victim had joined during orientation. When activated, the MAC Phone Home program transmits a GPS signal alerting authorities to its location. Operation ID provides the owner of the computer (or any other type of property) with a unique number that is engraved on the property and registered with the local police. The student, who had feared the loss of the thesis she was working on for a final exam, was relieved when she learned that her laptop was recovered and the thief was arrested. Mac Phone Home, PC Phone Home and Operation ID are free for students, faculty and staff. For more information please call CU Crime Prevention 212-854-8513.

Public Safety Adds two new locks to Its Discount Bike Lock Program

Just in time for the warm weather, Public Safety has added two new LONG SHACKLE U-locks to its already extensive bike theft prevention program. The Kryptonite New York U-Lock LS (which comes with a NY anti-theft Guarantee) and the Kryptonite Evo U-Lock LS are available at discounted prices (NY U-Lock LS- $50 , Evo U-Lock LS- $30) through the Department of Public Safety. Locks can be purchased on the Morningside Campus, Room 111, Low Library 9am-5pm M-F or at the Medical Center, Room 109 Black Building 24 hours. Public Safety also recommends that you join our FREE Bike registration program, in which bikes are registered with the NYPD & CUPS. A unique number is engraved on the bike along with a non-removable police decal. For more information please call 212-854-8513.

Public Safety to Launch its New Defensive Driving Classes

Public Safety has teamed up with Team Traffic Consulting & the New York Safety Program to add a DISCOUNTED defensive driving class as part of its Crime Prevention Program. The six hour course, also know as the Defensive Driving Class will remove 4 points from your license and may reduce the collision and comprehensive portions of your insurance by 10%. There is no test to take, and the program is available to Students, Faculty, Staff and members of the Columbia University Community. Specific dates, times, and fees will be announced in the near future. For more information please call CU Crime Prevention 212-854-8513

Congratulations to Captain Delano Steele Winner of the 2009 Crime Prevention Award

Captain Delano Steele, (second from right) was honored for his hard work, dedication and teamwork in helping make Columbia University a safer campus. Also pictured are Mr. James McShane, Vice President for Public Safety (far right), Lieutenant Theodore Johnson (last year’s recipient, second from left) and Ricardo Morales, Manager of Crime Prevention.