

Cape

Hello Kitties in Keerom Street

Bilingual readers of the April 2007 issue of *Advocate* will recall a short story about a local version of *Chicken* (4X4s against sedans) being enacted on a daily basis due to traffic congestion in Keerom Street caused by motorists ignoring traffic signs and road markings. The story ended by expressing hope that the traffic department would take the necessary steps to address the situation.

Alas, some members of the Cape Town Metro Police became part of the problem in Keerom Street whilst others simultaneously ticketed vehicles in Long Street. For non-Capetonians: Long Street runs parallel to Keerom Street one up towards Signal Hill. The two are joined by Leeuwen Street and the latter forms a T-junction with Keerom Street on the steps of the Cape High Court.

Once again the photographs on this page tell the story better than a thousand words.

Are these officers breaking police rules by parking where they park on red lines in front of the High Court, and allowing other motorists to do the same? Why ticket offenders in Long Street when observant officers can witness the same offences being committed in Keerom Street by simply taking a peek down Leeuwen Street towards the High Court or up Keerom Street towards The Mountain?



Maybe Colonel Pongpat Chayaphan of the Bangkok Police found the solution to this problem. According to a report on the front page of the *The Cape Times* of 6 August 2007, Colonel Chayaphan, the acting chief of the Crime Suppression Division in Bangkok, was faced with the problem of police officers 'littering, parking in a prohibited area, or arriving late - among other misdemeanours.'

Colonel Chayaphan decreed that police officers who break police rules will be forced to wear hot pink armbands featuring 'Hello Kitty' sitting atop two hearts. The Kitty in question is the cutest little kitten character aimed at the children's market by Japanese company Sanrio specialising in character-branded stationery, school supplies, gifts and accessories.

Commented Colonel Chayaphan: 'Simple warnings no longer work. This new twist is expected to make them feel guilt and shame and prevent them from repeating the offence, no matter how minor. Kitty is a cute icon for young girls. It's not something macho police officers want covering their biceps. We want to make sure we do not condone small offences.'

Are there any suggestions for a South African version of 'Hello Kitty'?

(Hello Kitty with the permission of Sapa-AP)

Long Street on a Monday morning



Keerom Street on a Monday morning

