

The MEADOWSWATCH

[formerly the Meadows Neighbors Association Crime Watch News]

meadowswatch@swbell.net
www.themeadowsna.org

972-282-8068
972-282-8073

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MeadowsWatch UPDATE/UPGRADE -- The Crime Watch newsletter has a new name. Although *MeadowsWatch* will still focus primarily on area crime reports and security-related topics, this neighborhood publication will expand to provide information about other local issues and events. Although this particular edition is a bit late the regular distribution schedule will continue, with news delivered to your email inbox or to your front door about every two months. Urgent alerts will be announced via email and on the Neighborhood Alert telephone hotline (watch for the green, purple and white signs near neighborhood entrances). **TO RECEIVE THIS NEWS VIA EMAIL AND AVOID PAPERS ON YOUR DOOR, CONTACT MEADOWSWATCH@SWBELL.NET.** We protect and do not sell or share your email information.

THIS ISSUE OF MEADOWSWATCH IS BUZZING WITH B's. Read on

BURGLAR BUSTING efforts continue as the North Central Subdivision of the Dallas Police Department reorganizes staff to increase and coordinate special patrols aimed at halting a disturbing series of home burglaries. Nine arrests have been made and police response time to emergency calls is just 2 minutes.

In addition to this year's frustrating epidemic of northern Dallas county vehicle burglaries, from March 8 to August 29 there were 71 residential burglaries. These began in the Preston/Forest area, but thieves have extended their operations to Northwest Highway along the Preston-Hillcrest corridor. Whereas intrusions in early spring occurred on weekend evenings, they now happen randomly. Most commonly stolen is jewelry from the master bedroom area, but any small valuables, such as cameras or electronics are at risk. Two recent meetings with police officials made it clear that the perpetrators are bold and daring. They have scaled fences or entered backyards through unlocked gates, and entered bedrooms while residents were in other nearby rooms. In one incident the burglar waved through a window at his victims as he departed! In another, the culprit made a 9-1-1 hang-up call from his target house in an effort to taunt police. North Central DPD Chief David Elliston believes that the criminals may be driving "nice" vehicles, possibly stolen, that would not be out of place in the victimized neighborhoods.

Many of the victims' homes have had UNLOCKED DOORS OR WINDOWS or OPEN GARAGES. The BAD GUYS JUST "WALTZED RIGHT IN" ! There have also been some incidents where windows were broken or doors kicked in, and where **alarm systems were not even activated.**

POLICE RECOMMENDATIONS TO HOMEOWNERS:

- Obscure the view into your home with blinds or curtains, especially at the rear and on the sides even while you're at home and around the house when you're gone.
- Don't leave small valuable items in plain site where they can be easily spotted. Make it difficult for a thief to spot your camera, laptop, jewelry, etc., just in case he does gain access and tries for a quick "grab-and-go."
- Put locks on gates. Be sure that all doors and windows are tied into the security system.
- Mow and trim vegetation in alleys and around driveways and perimeters areas of buildings that could create hiding places where criminals could wait and watch for opportunities.
- **Use your alarm system, even when you're home.** Most systems can be set to allow freedom of movement indoors.
- Be sure doors and windows are locked or otherwise secured to prevent intrusion.
- If at all possible, do some serious garage clean-out so cars can be parked inside.
- Keep garage vehicle doors closed and all other doors secured with deadbolts. Close and lock windows. Cover all glass with contact paper or paint so thieves can't "window shop."
- When parking outdoors, remove all personal possessions from inside the vehicles or at least hide items from view. One person's trinkets may be another's treasure!
- Even if you have "compounded" your driveway (fenced it from open access), lock up vehicles parked outside the garage.
- Trash bins make good burglar ladders, so the Police now advise moving them away from the alley and inside the fence if possible. (may affect "Dream Team" efforts)
- Light the neighborhood! Most criminals don't like lights that could expose their presence. The Meadows has few street light and the alleys are very dark. We can all help to brighten the nights with our outdoor lights. Inexpensive sensors are available that screw into sockets and turn light on at dark and off at daybreak. Motion detector lights may provide an extra measure of security.
- **Call 9-1-1 if you spot unknown or out-of-place individuals or vehicles in the alley.** If possible get license plate numbers and try to note the make, model, color and anything in the appearance (such as big dents, damaged lights or broken windows) that would help with identification. In so doing be careful not to jeopardize your own safety.

It has also been suggested that thieves may look like joggers or house hunters, but may actually be scouting the area while their colleagues break into a nearby home. Watch for unusual behavior. Another neighborhood has warned residents to stay alert for folks who "look alright, but not quite."

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BINS AND BURGLARS -- As was mentioned above, the Police now recommend that we move our trash and recycling containers out of the alleys and place them close to the house or inside the fence if possible. These bins have been used as ladders by thieves scaling back fences.

Our **"Dream Team"**, neighbors who walk for exercise and pick up bits of debris along the way, may find that some of the neighborhood receptacles graciously volunteered by homeowners for the walkers' convenience may no longer be accessible. Bins have been available at 7111 Mimosa, 7112 Mimosa, 7333 Mimosa, 7230 Briar Meadow, 7308 Blairview, 7112 Meadow. We give a BIG THANKS to all these wonderful folks for their offering of time and bins, and hope we can continue this effort with a minimum of inconvenience. All of us can pitch in and help by just picking up the occasional bottle, can, paper, etc., that lands on or near our own property. The Dream Team got its name because the volunteers help to make the neighborhood the way we dream it could be. Many thanks to everyone for caring for the Meadows!

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BAD GUY ALERT - The **NorthPark Dillard's parking garage** is still suffering its bad reputation for the accosting of shoppers by criminals. Folks who park on the lower level outside of the Men's Department should maintain a high degree of vigilance when going to and from their vehicles. The usual time of year for reports of criminal activities has been the holiday shopping season, however we received a report of a summertime armed robbery of a female mall patron. Scan the area and listen carefully as you walk. Project an air of alert control. Carry your wallet and keys on your person and leave the handbags at home. Go back into the store and find security staff if you perceive any suspicious persons or vehicles. Be alert to being followed home. If you are concerned about this, do not attempt to "beat the bad guys" to your house.... go to the nearest busy public place and call the police.

A Fieldgate neighbor reports the theft of two large and expensive potted topiaries from the front entry in late August. The landscape thieves must have had a dolly or cart or been very strong as these were sizable items.

Bottle Bombers targeted Plano homes this summer. These pranksters/vandals were reported to have rung doorbells and then tossed bottles filled with noxious liquids at the doorsteps of their victim's homes. Upon answering, the residents were exposed to the fumes and broken bottles and also noted property damage. The North Central Dallas PD is monitoring the situation, but we know of no reports of such incidents in Dallas.

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BRINKS security company reports that a man is impersonating their staff. He shows up in uniform with an ID badge to check on "problems" with residential alarm systems which he then disables during the "repair" procedure. He returns later to burglarize the home. If you have a Brinks system or use their monitoring service you should have already been alerted by the company. Otherwise contact your local office right away.

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The **BUDGET** for fiscal year 2007-2008 for the city of Dallas has been presented by representatives of City Manager Mary K. Suhm in the various council districts. We regret that we cannot reprint, for your reading enjoyment, the 43-page itemized budget document and the 25-page "Executive Summary." However, **included under the heading "Public Safety" are the following improvements to:**

- ☛ recruitment and retention policies, procedures and benefits for both the Police and Fire Departments
- ☛ the number of police officers covering the city....this includes the hiring of 200 additional officers beyond the anticipated 160 new hires to compensate for normal attrition.
- ☛ Police vehicle fleet size and vehicle scheduling software.
- ☛ intelligence analysis procedures and records management, software upgrades, personnel training and hiring of two intelligence analysts
- ☛ operations and management procedures, staff size and geographical coverage, ambulance and fire fighting vehicles, including the purchase of 45 thermal imagers for detecting the presence of endangered individuals in smoke-filled environments.
- ☛ outdoor siren warning system that alerts the public to weather and civil emergencies.

The recommended public safety operating budget is \$636 million and capital budget is \$729 million.

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The BOARD of TMNA (The Meadows Neighborhood Association officers and committee chairpersons - all volunteers) announces the "retirement" of Blairview resident Joe Williams as Treasurer and Webmaster. We thank Joe for his years of efforts on behalf of the Meadows. Joe's successor is Fieldgate neighbor Mark Backofen. The CrimeWatch committee appreciates Mark's acceptance of the two TMNA positions and will help in all ways needed, especially in the updating of the neighborhood email list and other area communications media.

TMNA Board welcomes new residents to the neighborhood with a personal hello and a packet of helpful newcomer information. If you're new to the Meadows or if you know of a new neighbor, please call 972-282-8073 and leave your name and phone number or visit the Meadows website, www.themeadowsna.org. and email the webmaster to provide contact information. A board member will be in touch with you as soon as possible.

Board President John Baker has announced his upcoming "retirement" from his Board post. We thank John for his many years of dedication to the Meadows as TMNA President. This announcement creates an opportunity for a new volunteer to get involved, get to know lots of neighbors and work together with the adjacent neighborhood associations. Elections are held at the Spring Social (more info later) If you would like more information or are interested, or know of a good nominee, contact www.themeadowsna.org or call 972-282-8073.

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BLOOMERS FOR BOEDEKER ---- No, we're not making a middle-of-the-road fashion statement. We're **announcing the Fall Flower and Bedding Plant Sale sponsored by TMNA and scheduled for Saturday, October 20th.** Information and order forms will be sent out a few weeks before the scheduled delivery date and will be available on the website, www.themeadowsna.org. This event offers gardeners a nice selection and good prices for plants to enhance the landscape.

Proceeds from plants sales fund the operations of the Neighborhood Association. The Beautification Committee is currently focused on landscaping the medians on Boedeker at Walnut Hill Lane, the main entrance to the Meadows. The sprinkler system is now installed and Committee members Keith Kinney and Lynn Sloan are discussing designs and bids with a number of landscapers. In an August Board meeting, Keith stated that he hopes to see soil turning by October. Landscaping of the medians will add to the visual appeal of the area and help to attract the interest of potential home buyers.

Please support the Plant Sale. If you don't need plants, consider making a donation to support TMNA's efforts to enhance and maintain the desirability and quality of living in our neighborhood. Every dollar benefits your neighborhood! Watch for the flyers to be distributed soon.

And speaking of BEAUTIFICATION we now have **Beauty Duty**: The City of Dallas reminds us that we are responsible for maintaining the alley area behind our homes. That includes the strip along the alley side of the brick wall for residents of Fieldgate and Briarmeadow. City Codes require the mowing of grass and trimming of any vegetation that could create an "eyesore" or interfere with vehicle passage. It also includes picking up debris dropped by the trash trucks, contractors, passersby, animals or the wind.

We may not appreciate being reminded of the "mow-down low-down" by the Office of Code Enforcement but there is **another very good reason for tidying the alleys: RATS!** Over-grown, trash strewn vegetation is habitat heaven for these dangerous pests who too frequently make their way into yards, garages and homes. That also includes criminals that could conceal themselves as they wait for opportunities. Please do check the condition of your alley area.

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BEYOND THE WALL -- Heavy machinery was recently spotted over our east wall on the vacated Lakeside Apartments property at Walnut Hill Lane and Central Expressway. This should signal the beginning of demolition of the complex. Provident Realty Advisors has been meeting with a joint task force of representatives from the Meadows, Glen Lakes and Windsor Park to design a mutually acceptable development that would enhance the area aesthetically and economically and minimize traffic impact. In the near future, look for information about the proposed development at Provident's website, www.ProvidentRealty.net or at www.shopwalnutpark.com.

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BUGGED? This summer has brought an increased number of fire ants, miscellaneous ants, and landscape infestations by webworms, bagworms, caterpillars, white flies, aphids (followed by black moldy aphid honey dew) , and scale insects, just to name a few. A neighbor mentioned that there are two websites that are very helpful in understanding these critters and minimizing their effects when necessary. Check out <http://citybugs.tamu.edu> and www.crapemyrtletrails.org These agricultural sites provide information for both organic and conventional gardeners.

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Be Alert -- Slow down to save a life: Please remind your repair services, maintenance personnel and family members to drive cautiously on our streets and in the alleys. We have had several reports of cars and trucks traveling very fast and we do have a fair number walkers, joggers, cyclists, children playing outdoors or folks just crossing the streets.

Crime statistics from the DPD - May through August --

Beat	Location	Date	Time	Offense
645	7*** Lakehurst Avenue	5/4/2007	10:00 pm	Theft/Burglary of a Motor Vehicle
645	7*** Lakehurst Avenue	5/8/2007	12:00 pm	Theft/Burglary of a Motor Vehicle
645	7*** Stone Trail Drive	5/8/2007	11:30 pm	Theft/Burglary of a Motor Vehicle
645	7*** Mimosa Lane	5/15/2007	12:10 am	Theft/Burglary of a Motor Vehicle
645	7*** Lakehurst Avenue	5/18/2007	7:00 pm	Theft/Burglary of a Motor Vehicle
645	7*** Briarmeadow Drive	5/18/2007	11:00 pm	Theft/Burglary of a Motor Vehicle
645	7*** Lakehurst Avenue	5/18/2007	11:00 pm	Theft/Burglary of a Motor Vehicle
645	7*** Blairview Drive	6/11/2007	8:21 am	Theft/Burglary of a Motor Vehicle
645	7*** Meadow Road	6/28/07	7:28 pm	Theft/Burglary of a Motor Vehicle
645	7*** Aberdeen Avenue	8/9/07	4:15 pm	Burglary-Residence
645	7*** Meadow Road	8/28/07	8:48 pm	Burglary-Residence

E-MAIL reminder -- Please let us know if you change email addresses so we can update our distribution list. Also, add meadowswatch@swbell.net to your contacts list or address book so the newsletter is not blocked from your inbox by your spam/junk/bulk mail filter. **If you're not receiving this newsletter by e-mail, please consider signing up. You'll avoid papers stuck to your front door and help out your busy block volunteer** who has a profession, family and house to manage. Take a few seconds to e-mail the above address and you're done! Your info is protected and never shared with businesses or other organizations.

Questions? Call 972-282-8073.

Think Autumn!

Jo Aronoff